CHAPTER-2

POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND CHINA

By the early 1980s, leaders in Soviet Union realized that friendly relations with China was key that would help it to reduce its military expenditure and exploit its vast Far Eastern resources. Relationship between Russia and China took a new turn with appointment of Gorbachev as General Secretary of CPSU in 1985. Gorbachev had begun the process of over hauling the Soviet foreign policy immediately after he took over the leadership of the country. His new thinking in international relations certainly sought to add some new dimensions to the framework of Soviet foreign policy by novel ideas and concepts. However, its aim appealed to be mid course correction and adjustment rather than replacement of the traditional framework of Soviet foreign policy. By his new thinking, Gorbachev wanted to update it, and in this process, he put Soviet foreign policy on a new course (Imam, 1991, pp. 156-157).

As a consequence of new thinking in international relations, Soviet policy in Asia had logically moved to acquire a new look during the second half of eighties. It marked the activation of Soviet policy in Asia Pacific region. Improvement of relations with China was included in Gorbachev's speech to Central Committee on March 1985, who wanted to establish a rejuvenated socialist grouping on the basis of new type of Soviet-Chinese relationship. The creation of new socialist community, in which, due respect towards other viewpoints could be assured was one of Gorbachev's initial aims. The Soviet Union also sought China's cooperation against US military strategy in the Asia Pacific region in the name of socialist grouping. (Imam, 1991, 56-57).

Gorbachev who took a major initiative towards improving relations with China, declared in his famous Vladivostok speech on 28 July 1986:

The USSR is prepared, at any time and at any level, to discuss with China the question of additional measures for creating an atmosphere of good neighborliness. We hope that the border dividing (I would prefer to say
linking) us will become a line of peace and friendship in near future ... we do not want to view Amur river as a 'water obstacle: let the basin of this mighty river unite the efforts of Chinese and Soviet people in using for mutual benefit - the rich resources available there and for building water management projects. An intergovernmental agreement on this account is being jointly worked out and the official border might run along the main shipping channel. (FBIS-Sov-. July 29, 1986, p. 20)

Thus, the sign of improvement in the Soviet-China relation was clearly visible after Gorbachev took the charge as General Secretary of CPSU in 1985. Later Boris Yeltsin first president of newly independent Russia indicated inclination to further strengthen the relationship with China. Russia under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin reaffirmed its commitment to all the positive achievements of Russo-China relations. Russia further pledged to continue implementation of obligations of the treaties and agreements signed by Soviet Union and China in May 1989 and May 1991. On 15 September 1992 President Yeltsin signed the "order of Russian Federation's relations with China" and reaffirmed that -

a) there is only one China;

b) the PRC government is the sole legal representative of China;

c) Taiwan is the part of China; and

d) Russia will never establish official relation with Taiwan. (Chufrin, 1999, pp. 292-96).

Russia and China shared views on increasing numbers of international issues in the light of the challenge from the USA and its allies. In the first year after the collapse of Soviet Union, Russia adopted a pro-western foreign policy, hoping for economic aid from the west and for recognition as a strong power and an equal partner of the USA. Soon, however, Russia was deeply disappointed by the level of western aid. Moreover, it faced fierce competition from the west over the sphere of influence in the newly independent states. These realities forced Russia to switch to an 'omni-directional' or 'two headed eagle' (Russia's national emblem) policy, pursuing relations with countries of both the
East and the West. Especially after 1995, under heavy pressure from NATO's eastward expansion led by the USA, Russia attached greater importance to its relations with China, India and other Asian countries. Russia termed Asian countries as 'natural allies', among which China got the top priority. Despite odd relationship in the past both countries evolved consensus on various national and international issues.

2.1 Areas of Common Concern

On the question of separatism, religious extremism and terrorism both countries share common view today. In March 1995, Chinese president Jiang Zemin visited Moscow to participate in the celebration of 50th anniversary of victory over Fascism. In an agreement between the two, Russia reiterated its support to China on Taiwan issue and on its part, China extended its full support to Russia in dealing with the Chechnya problem. (Chufrin 1999, pp. 292-296).

Both Russia and China are opposed to US hegemonic policies and favour a multi-polar world order with different power centres. In April 1997 Chinese president Zemin paid another visit to Moscow on April 23 and the two countries issued a joint statement on the multipolarisation of the world and establishment of new international order. The statement rejected hegemony and power politics, and stated that 'Cold War' mentality must also be abandoned and bloc politics opposed. They called for preservation of the Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 between Soviet Union and USA and they supported lifting the UN Security Council sanctions against Saddam Hussain regime in Iraq.

On 24 November 1998, when Jiang Zemin paid another crucial visit to Russia, the Russian side reaffirmed its "four nos" position. The basic thrust of which was - no support for any conception of 'Taiwan's independence; no acceptance of the position of 'two Chinas' or 'one China and one Taiwan'; no support for Taiwan's participation in the UNO or other international organizations in which only sovereign states participated; and no sales of weapon to Taiwan.(Jingjie, p. 528).
NATO bombing on Yugoslavia from March end to mid June 1999 without getting any authorization from the UN Security Council sent shock waves in both Russia and China and tended to bring together the two in joint opposition of NATO action. NATO's intervention on 'humanitarian ground' was an ominous development. Being multi-ethnic and multi-religious states, both Russia and China have their own separatist movements, Russia in Chechnya and China in Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang province. Being a Slav country, Yugoslavia was traditionally friend of Russia and attack on it, aroused Russian sentiments in the form of massive-protests in Moscow. (Saiget, 2000:11-18).

a) NATO Eastward Expansion

With the end of cold war, Warsaw Pact ceased to exist. However its western counterpart, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) kept on expanding and adopted a new strategic concept in 1999, which permits out of area operations.

Thus, NATO forces entered in Asian territory for the first time in Afghanistan in 2001 during US lead war on terrorism. Both Russia and China are concerned about the unilateral actions of NATO by passing UNSC. Further it has started inducting erstwhile USSR republics like Poland and Czech Republic thus coming very close to the Russian borders.

NATO works on the principle of collective security under which attack against one member is considered as attack against all. The way NATO forces attacked Yugoslavia, Iraq has raised apprehensions in the minds of Russian and Chinese strategists.

Russia and China apposed the expansion plan of NATO and the US plan of unilaterally withdrawing from Anti-Ballistic Treaty of 1972. NATO bombing on Yugoslavia in 1999 without UN approval and adoption of a new strategic concept permitting out of area operations were apposed by Russia and China, which brought their convergence of interests further. Russia felt that a number of states are stepping up efforts to weaken Russia politically, economically, militarily and other ways.
Both Russia and China felt that they are under western pressure. Russia apposed of NATO's eastward expansion (without prior constrainty on further expansion and with consideration of explicit inclusion of the Baltic States). Western pressures on Chechnya issue and more generally because of perceived broader US design on former Soviet republics, including central Asia and the Caspian Sea region. Whereas China is experiencing pressure on the human rights issue and feel threatened by the US arms sale to Taiwan and more generally, an East Asian security policy which moves towards greater role of Japan in balancing China.

The NATO bombardment on Yugoslavia was the most glaring violation of international laws by the US led forces. With the war in Yugoslavia (before which the world had witnessed three US bombardment of sovereign states- Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan), it appeared once more that the world was left with one single super power, the European powers being unable to act as an independent actors.

With the NATO's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia, the conviction grew that US was now overemphasizing the use of force. This experience Moscow watched an alliance that westerners had traditionally characterized as purely defensive, made into a domestic conflict, China watched a US B-2 bomber reduce its embassy to the Yugoslav Capital to rubble.

Russia and China also felt the need to maintain their strategic autonomy and independence vis-à-vis the west that has financial resources. China is determined to define its four modernization model “based on socialism with Chinese characteristics” and perceives the US use of human rights and democracy as excuses to interfere in China's internal affairs to permanent instability. China treats Taiwan as its internal part and seeks to bring about Taiwan's return at the earliest possible date, while Washington is perceived as trying its level best to prevent this move. The strengthening of Japan-US alliance established during the cold war period is perceived as anti-Chinese as well as the US willingness to develop a regional anti-ballistic missile system.
Similar contradiction exists between Russia and US where the US is perceived as doing its best to hinder Russia’s integration with the other CIS countries in order to prevent the restoration of a Russian empire, whereas Russia favours establishing an all European security system which each country of Europe participates equally. US favours a system dominated by a US led NATO. Finally the US is perceived as trying to upset the existing nuclear balance formed by itself and the USSR during cold war, through missile defence system.

However, there are some specificities as well as a certain degree of ambiguity in the relationship of each of the two countries with the US. This ambiguity is largely due to the degree of mutual economic dependence between China, Russia and USA. As already said that good relations with the sole superpower are beneficial for all but both Russia and China can generate the same interest from Washington whose attitudes and policies are determining factors.

The US policy vis-à-vis China during the Bush and Clinton administration and so far, despite initial tension even the Bush administration for example has been neither punchy of engagement, nor of containment but constrained elements of both. On engagement side, it has been sucking normal trade relations by granting China most favoured nation for trade relation facilitating Chinese entry in WTO, allowing Chinese companies to operate in the US and reducing the number of goods and technologies covered by export control.

Politically, both Clinton and Bush administrations have tried to bring China into various multilateral regimes, whether on arms controls, weapons of mass destruction etc. while militarily, they enhanced military to military contacts, thus trying to avoid conflicts with China but promoting its participation in regional organizations such as ASEAN Regional Forum. The two countries are bound together through extensive commercial ties.

Sino-Russian strategic cooperation culminated in the increasing close condition of their response to the NATO attacks against Yugoslavia in the spring of 1999. In the protest against air strikes, Primakov, who had been on the way to Washington on March 25, the
day the bombing began, ordered his plane to turn back to Moscow. From the very beginning of Kosovo war, Russia and China had the similar view that UNO should be respected and not substituted by NATO. However, China became more furious after NATO mistakenly bombed Chinese embassy resulting in three deaths and numerous injuries. Washington regretted the incident and agreed to compensate Beijing with $28 million for the destruction. (Wishnick, 2001, pp. 146-150).

The problem of the NATO enlargement that Russia faced in full complexity in the middle of the 1990s posed a serious challenge to the Russian foreign policy thinking and practice. Moscow faced the necessity to find a new role as an actor of world politics after the “cold war”, to draw the distinction between its real and imaginary foreign policy capabilities, to re-consider the motivation and political values of the key players of the international system. This process was taking place in the context of violent domestic struggle, with the variety of ideologically biased perceptions of the world scene. Given such conditions, the practical recommendations of various political factions were contradicting to each other.

With the heat of discussions on the NATO enlargement becoming higher, the proponents of the “the China card” became more and more active. In the opinion of the pro-China pundits, this “card” was the “irresistible” anti-NATO measure of Russia. With different nuances in understanding, in general, the notion of the “China card” was perceived as the close military and strategic ties with Beijing, close to, or even “beyond” the distinction line of the military alliance. Such sentiments in Moscow grew stronger since 1996 as the result of the two groups of factors. First of them was directly related to the new Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia E. Primakov. He was known as the tough negotiator, with the “centrist approach” in understanding and upholding of national interests of Russia, having personal experience in “oriental” countries. The second group of factors was related to the positive by that time dynamics of the Russian-Chinese relations, which created the perception - adequate or imaginary - about the big future of ties between Russia and China. Many analysts viewed considerably big volume of Russia’s arms sales to China, progress in settling the territorial problem, progress in achieving the military detente between Moscow and Beijing as the grounds for such optimism. The results of
the Russian-Chinese summits, with the formulas of "confidential strategic partnership, facing the 21st century" were fueling such optimism.

One can distinguish three basic trends in Russian political science in analyzing the foreign policy problems of Russia in general, and relations between Russia and China in particular. 1. "Leftist" or "propatriotic". 2. "Rightist" or "pro-western" 3. "Centrist". The essence of political and intellectual disagreements among these three trends ascends to different systems of political-ideological beliefs, to different understanding of the basic problems and contradictions of the modern international relations. In compliance with this, the political analysts differently understand the balance of power in the modern world, disagree on the question: who are the basic international allies and contenders of Russia.

At the level of practical policy, the key moment, in which the proponents of the different views disagree, is the orientation of Russia either towards the US or towards China.

The "leftist" analysts view the modern international relations through the concept of the contradictions of the "poor" and "rich" states of the world, as the demonstration of aspiration of NATO, led by the US, to fix and to cement their victory in the cold war. Those analysts view NATO and the US as trying to transform the international relations in order to guarantee their prevailing and dominant role and to control natural, financial and human resources of other world. According to the "leftist" views, China, as the growing Asian power, which has not abandoned the communist ideology, is the only country capable to constrain "hegemonist" ambitions of the US. Hence, China is perceived as the obvious ally of Russia, and their "confidential strategic partnership" is recommended as the long-term Russia's policy, aimed to limit the domination of the Western powers in the world. (Yakovlev, 1997: 136-137).

The apologetic. noncritical approach to China's domestic political reality, to the practice and results of Chinese economic reforms, questionable comparisons of political and economic transformations in Russia and China, are the characteristics of this trend.
The policy recommendations of the proponents of the "leftist" trend are based on strong anti-American sentiments. They stress the symptoms of growing domination of the USA and NATO in the world that was clearly visible during the Kosovo events. These analysts argue for broad military cooperation with China for the sake of curbing the "hegemonism" of the US and NATO. They give recommendations of the similar type to the Russian policy in other directions - in Asia, in relation with Japan, on the Korean peninsular.

Accessing the reality of the modern world, political analysts, belonging to the second - "rightist" or "pro-western" - trend, are building their recommendations on the other hand at disputable premise. According to this premise, both global and regional foreign policy interests of Russia could be most successfully realized in close cooperation with the United States. The publications of this trend being pretty visible in Russian media three – four years ago are very rare now.

The alarmist attitude to China’s policy, both foreign and domestic, strong criticism of Chinese authoritarianism, focusing on the traditional issues of the Western media – human rights, Tibet – are the characteristics of this approach. Consequently, the authors of this trend are critical to the long-term strategic partnership of Russia with China. They consider close military ties and the arms sales to China as detrimental to the Russian interests in Asia. (Chudoduv, 1998: 15).

The analysts of the "centrist" trend in the similar negative way -though not in such strong formulations, as the "leftists" - assess an offensive pressure of the US in building the monopolar world. The centrists also pay the due tribute to successes of the Chinese modernization and point out the obvious parallelism of foreign policy interests of China and Russia. This parallelism, in their opinion, stems from the fact, that both populous societies are now being in the process of large-scale pro-market reforms. Notwithstanding the obvious difference of starting conditions, strategy and tactics of socio-economic transformations, Russia and China share the same future in the sense, that both are transforming itself into market societies with the "nonwestern" structure of ideological, social and political values. Facing the competitive pressure of the outside market world,
China and Russia are inevitably bound to interact with each other, including the cooperation in security sphere. (Chudoduv, 1998: 20-32).

At the same time, the “centrists” do not exclude the probability, that in the process of increasing of its economic power, the military and geopolitical ambitions of China will grow too. These ambitions could be visible not only in the southern and southeast geopolitical direction – where as the basic financial, transport and economic flows to China are coming from now - but also in the northern direction, in the direction of Russia. Taking into account the demographic problem in China, geopolitical projection of densely populated northeast provinces of China on the poorly managed and deserted territories of Russia’s Siberia region and the Far East, weakened connections of these regions with the central part of Russia, the “centrists” are sober in seeing the obvious risks of development of the Russian-Chinese relations in the mid-term and long-term future.

The “centrists” argue that in parallel with development of comprehensive economic and limited military-political cooperation with China, Russia should fix a line of “soft restraint” of China. Russia’s strategy, both regional and global, according to the “centrists”, should avoid excessive pro-Chinese tilt.

Some Russian analysts, belonging to the centrist trend, believe that the interests of Russia in the long-term perspective would be mostly favored, if being related to the “US-centered” security structure in Asia Pacific. It is necessary for Russia to be insured from a quite probable aggravation of the geopolitical contradictions with China in the future and to have an opportunity to counterbalance this threat. (Bogaturov, 1997: 44)


Political and security relations between Russia and China has been steadily progressing from 1992 - the actual starting point of Russian independent diplomacy. The main stimuli of this progress were the relevant similarity of the phases of pro-market social and economic reforming of the two countries, shared security interests and the benefits of close economic cooperation. However, till 1996 China was, obviously, a supplementary,
than dominant foreign policy priority for Russia. The inadequate understanding of the Russian status and interests in the post-cold war international relations together with ideologically biased domestic motivations resulted in obviously “pro-western” orientation of Moscow’s diplomacy. This diplomacy was closely associated to the name of Russia’s then Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

Primakov’s coming to the Foreign Ministry, was the result of the growing frictions that Russia was experiencing in its relations with the West as well as the obvious evolution of the Russian political elite from the “anti-communist” towards more “centrist” values. Increasing importance of China in Russia’s foreign policy became the benchmark of Moscow’s new course.

In 1996, China and Russia reached an agreement to arrange summit talks on the regular basis: once a year on the level of Presidents and twice a year on the level of Premiers. The same year the "hotline" telephone channel between two Presidents was arranged to demonstrate the growing need for policy coordination. Noteworthy that the Chinese Premier Li Peng was the first foreign visitor that was, received by Yeltsin in December 1996 after the Russian President started his second term and recovered from illness.(Blank, 1997: 121-134).

Almost simultaneously the contacts of the Russian and Chinese Defense Ministers have been intensified. These contacts now were arranged on the regular basis. Such meetings were mainly focused on the demilitarization and confidence building measures on the border, the growing arms transfers and security situation in Asia Pacific.

The exchanges between the Head of the Parliaments, as well as the key economic, financial and “power” ministries (internal affairs, intelligence, border guards troops, etc.) took place in 1996-1997. Many bilateral agreements were signed during this period, thus laying the legal basis for cooperation in different spheres. These were the agreements on peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear security, energy, intellectual property rights, antitrust legislation, space research, foreign currency control, control of the quality of exported goods. (Rakhmanin, 1999: 166-173).
The third Russian-Chinese summit (since 1992) - the first one after Primakov held the office of the Foreign Ministry - took place in April 1996. This summit was held in the situation of the growing strain of bilateral relations of both Russia and China with the United States.

In Russia's case this deterioration was caused by the evolution in the issue of NATO expansion. Moscow considered this evolution as jeopardizing its previous accords with the US. At the US Russian summit in October 1995 in New York, President Clinton and Yeltsin reportedly agreed that Russian cooperation in Bosnia with the NATO forces would delay NATO enlargement decisions. However in January 1996 the US Congress passed Public Law 104-107 endorsing the principle of NATO enlargement, though not identifying candidates and deadlines for admission. Reacting to these developments, Russia demonstrated the growing toughness in Moscow's approach. In February 29 Primakov declared: “We are not against speedy NATO expansion, we are against expansion”. (Salmon, 1998: 156)

In China's case, the deterioration of relations with the US were related to the growing tension at the Taiwan strait and the chronic frictions between Beijing and Washington on Tibet and the human rights issues. These difficulties were exacerbated by the visible internal struggle in Beijing on the eve of Deng's passing away. The imperatives of this struggle was orienting Jiang Zeming, as Deng's successor to firmness and "ideological purity" in his relations with the West.

This Russian-Chinese summit of 1996 took place shortly after the G-7 meeting in Vancouver with Russia's participation in this meeting as an associated guest. For the first time in Russian-Chinese official dialogue, Moscow claimed for mutual firm stand against "one dominating power" – code word for the United States. The inclination of the both parties to start the new phase of "equal and confidential partnership aimed at the strategic cooperation in the 21st century" – the expression initiated by President Yeltsin - was included in the Joint Declaration of this summit. However the direct naming of any states as the sources of domination was avoided in the text of the Declaration. The NATO expansion issue was also omitted from the text of the Declaration, but was mentioned in
the final Communique. "China understands Russia's position aimed against the expanding of NATO eastward", Communique said. At the same time Russia confirmed its solidarity with the Chinese stand on Tibet and Taiwan problem. (Solomon, 1998: 156-158).

Agreement on the confidence building measures (CBM-1) among China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - the one that was signed by the leaders of the five states in Shanghai - was another practical result of the 1996 summit. However, at that time these five states failed to agree on the key item of negotiations - on the reduction of troops and armaments in the regions along the borderline of the former Soviet Union with China. In 1996, this reduction was being negotiated already for six years. Moscow and Beijing hasn’t reached the compromise on the limits for deployment of the troops in the border areas. (Blank,1997:123-134).

At this summit the Chinese side confirmed its decision to join the Treaty on Complete Banning of the Nuclear Tests (CBNT) till the end of 1996. Russian President B.Yeltsin acted as a broker in this issue between China and the West after he suggested to take this role during the G - 7 meeting in Vancouver. China – the only nuclear state that abstained from the Treaty at that moment - kept his promise to Russia and the world community.

The next summit meeting between Russia and China took place in the April 1997 in Moscow. The deepening of the contradictions between Russia and NATO - notwithstanding the formally compromising the Russia-NATO Founding Act, prepared for signing in May – formed the background for the new summit on the Russian side. The Chinese position was strongly influenced by the death of Deng Xiaoping in February 1997. His successor Jiang Zemin entered the critical period of consolidation of power. His diplomacy towards Russia was considered domestically as one of the strong points of his leadership and statecraft. The new-wave of hostilities on the Taiwan Strait made the Chinese-American relations even tenser.

Given this background, it was not a surprise that the Russians during this summit were more actively and rather successfully exploiting the "anti-hegemonist" sentiments of
Moscow and Beijing. The military and security component of their relations has become more vivid.

The central document of the 1997 summit was the “Declaration on the Multipolar World and the Formatting of the New International Order”. This document stressed that nobody should seek hegemony, pursue the policy based on force and trying to monopolize the international relations. Both sides showed their firm support of the UN; they stressed that nobody should curb the authority of the UN Security Council UNSC, including the rights of the UNSC Constant Members for veto. (SWB, SU/2811 B/6, January 8, 1997).

Notwithstanding the agreed text it's noteworthy, how differently both leaders assessed the signing of the Declaration. B. Yeltsin praised the document highly, saying that "for the first time in thirty years Russia and China make a joint assessment of the world affairs... We have not signed the similar document with anyone else" (Solomon 1998: 157).

Jiang Zemin was more cautious in his comments. Speaking at the State Duma, he only stressed the “necessity to establish the relations of confidential partnership in different spheres as the basis of the strategic cooperation in the 21st century.” He hasn't made the slightest reference to NATO in his public speeches in Moscow, though he is reported to criticize the NATO expansion behind the closed doors.

The Chinese leader probably was closer to reality in assessing the practical importance of this Declaration than its Russian counterparts. This document couldn't be even compared to the Russian-Chinese Treaty on Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance signed at 1950. However the Declaration manifested the visible intention of both parties to transform the “equal partnership” in their relations to the model of “strategic partnership” in the 21st century.

During this summit of 1997 the multilateral agreement among China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan ‘On Confidence Building in the military field in the Border Area’ (CBM-2) was eventually reached. The agreement set the limits for ground troops, air force and air defense planes in the 100 km zone on the both sides of
the border line between the former USSR and China. Notwithstanding the fact that the specifications of the agreement were kept close to public, Russian analysts were discussing it and they were not unanimous in their comments.

The analysts of the pro-western orientation argued that this agreement is weakening Russia's military posture at the Far East since Russian ground troops should be reduced on the greater scale than the Chinese ground troops. The main bulk of the Chinese ground forces deployed on the Chinese-Russian border, were deployed beyond the 100-km zone, in the depth of the Chinese territory.

The analysts of the "leftist" orientation were not sharing this view. According to CBM-2 agreement, they argue, strategic missiles, air defense missiles, long range air force and fleet were not scheduled for reduction. Therefore, the overall military balance between Russia and China at the Far East remained favorable to the Russians.

The evolution of the negotiations on the CBM-2 agreement shows that Russia, evidently, paid the higher price for it, than the Chinese. The breakthrough in the negotiations that was being held for more than 7 years was done only in December 1996 during Li Peng's visit to Moscow. Russia's effort to speed up the process and gain this important security commitment from China was evidently related to the mounting pressure that Moscow was facing from NATO. On September the 6th 1996, the US Secretary of State W. Christopher stated at Stuttgart, that a 1997 NATO summit "should" invite "several" partners to begin accession negotiations. Later this year on October 22, President Clinton proposed 1999 as a deadline for admitting the first group of new NATO members. (SWB, SU/1753 B/I,October 24,1999).

In parallel with development of security dialogue the settlement of territorial problems between Russia and China was equally important element of detente.

Given the complexity of territorial delineation between Russia and China starting from the end of the 21st century, China was always reluctant to acknowledge the full legitimacy of Russia's rights for vast territories of Siberia and Far East Region. The scale of this claims has reached its peak during Sino-Soviet rift, especially in the mid-sixties,
when the Chinese side actually claimed territories up to 1.5 million square kilometers. Border negotiations, started in 1964, and being held for nearly three decades, were fruitless during the period of confrontation.

Only at the Gorbachev era, in the situation of political detente between two countries, the breakthroughs at the border negotiations became possible. At 1991 and 1994 Moscow and Beijing signed two border agreements fixing the border line on the two main parts of the Russian-Chinese border: eastern part, from Korea to Mongolia (4200 km) and western part (55 km).

However almost all the governors in the Russian Far East (governors of Primorski and Khabarovski krai, Amurskaya and Chitinskaya oblast) have expressed their dissatisfaction with the agreements. They argue that these agreements were not reflecting the interests of their regions and making too many concessions to the Chinese side. The process of demarcation of the border according to the Agreements of 1991 and 1994 was slowed down and partially blocked by the regional authorities’ regulations.

Only after 1996, due to the effort of the central government, the demarcation process was resumed. For the first time in bilateral history the territorial belonging of a plenty of islands on the frontier rivers was defined. 1163 islands were defined to belong to Russia, 1281 - to China. Besides that, Russia and China still have two sites, negotiation on which was postponed “up to the future generations”. One of them is located in the region of Khabarovsk, another - on the river Argun. At the present moment the status quo is kept: the disputed islands remain with Russia. (Godwin, 1998: 171-193).

On November 1998 Presidents Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin stated during their first informal meeting that the demarcation process on the border according to the Agreements of 1991 and 1994 is completed. At the press conference Yeltsin stated that the border problem between Russia and China is “solved forever”.

In the process of evolution of the Russian-Chinese relations in the 1990-s the policymakers were facing the necessity to formulate Russian interests in the various spheres of these relations. One of these spheres appeared to be the most delicate and controversial -
arms sales to China. Realizing this necessity, we would like to set up our vision of the Russian interests in this issue.

c) Arms Sales to China: Motives and Risks

The negotiations on the arms sales to China have started as early as 1990 under Gorbachev government. Arms sales, the concrete parameters of military cooperation between any countries, for obvious reasons, are confidential topics. The details of the arms purchases for the several past years - types of weapons, and amount - are little-known to the public. Inevitably, there are distortions and "phantom" fears in Russian and world press, relating to the deals, that the military and political leaders has really made behind the closed doors. China's military modernization requires substantial improvements in its air force, command control and communications, naval power projection, and space technology capabilities. Russia has accommodated or appears willing to accommodate China in all these areas. It has sold China a range of electronics, air-to-air and surface to air missiles and air defense systems, armored fighting vehicles and T-72 tanks, and SU-27 fighters (including the license to manufacture this aircraft, provided in 1996). China is reported to place the orders for several "Kilo" class submarines. There are also reports that China is trying to acquire other types of advanced technology, such as the TU-22m bomber ("Backfire") cruise missile technology, missile guidance and satellite systems, and nuclear weapons related technology. (Pierre & Trerrain 1997: 19-20).

The arms sales between the two are the sign of the certain trust between them, especially if they are close neighbors. Russia has obvious grounds for such trustful reasoning, taking into consideration the visible rapprochement between the two countries during the last decade and the absence of any serious contradictions at the present moment. Such situation is stemming from close interdependence of security interests of Russia and China. Maintaining, as the minimum, the nonconfrontational atmosphere on the demilitarized border and, as the maximum, the high level of economic interdependence and the goodneighborly ties along more than 4200 km-long Russian-Chinese border – is
the sign of political wisdom for any government, whether it be in Moscow or in Beijing. (Godwin, 1998:171-193).

Speaking about Russia, without the stable and deep partnership relations with China, including partnership in the military area, it is impossible to guarantee necessary stability on Russia’s eastern borders. This is especially true in the situation of mounting pressure on her western borders and direct contiguity of the NATO borders to Russia as the result of the enlargement of the block.

Without decent relations with China it is impossible to solve such a critical problem for Russia as reverting the backwardness and preventing the centrifugal tendencies of the regions of Siberia and Russian Far East.

However, it is necessary to distinguish several possible levels or stages of military interaction: 1) arms trade; 2) military cooperation; 3) political-military partnership; 4) military alliance. Speaking about the Russian-Chinese military ties, we believe, that only the first stage of such interaction (arms sales) with some elements of the second stage (military cooperation) could be favoring Russia’s interest at present.

The logic – both strategic and commercial – suggests that at observance of the certain obvious criteria – rational limits, proper bureaucratic control (done both within the related governmental agencies and on the inter-agency level) control on the part of the legislative branch (with strict observance of the state secrets) such cooperation with China is reasonable. The selective and portioned arms export to China is undoubtedly favorable to Russia and does not jeopardize the interests of her security.

Firstly, the technological superiority of the Russian army in comparison with the PLA creates a situation, in which delivery of separate types of the Russian weapon - , in particular, fighters, antiaircraft missile systems, submarines – at the scale that are taking place now, could not undermine this superiority.

Secondly, most part of the world arms market now is being controlled by the West. China - one of the few segments of this market, that is accessible by Russia.
Thirdly, the Chinese orders are very profitable for Russian defense industry. Many Russian plants are standing idle because of the ill rationalized policy of conversion. At the same time the market price of one Russian fighter varies between $30 - 50 million.

At last, fourthly, any deliveries of high technology arms and, furthermore,—licensing of its production, leads to the certain "binding" of the exporting country to the importer. This can be useful in the context of long-term development of the Russian-Chinese relations (Paramonov and Strokov, 2007:3).

However the rational limits - how many, what type of weapon and on what conditions to sell to China - remain the main problem. The optimum choices could be made while analyzing the three sets of criteria – related to military, commercial and foreign policy. This is the only possible way to arrive to the decision, that is dictated not by the corporate motives but by long-term interests of Russian security.

In the military sense, the decision-makers, should, at minimum, know the answers on the following set of questions:

- how big is the qualitative, technological gap between Russian and Chinese military capabilities, especially, with relation to the types of weapon, that Russia delivers to China; how this gap changes after the acquisition of the Russian arms;
- what is the evolution of the military balance between Russia and China at the frontier zone, in particular as a result of the CBM agreements of 1996 and 1997;
- to what extent the obvious advantages of Russia in firepower and offensive weapon are being compensated by the superiority of the Chinese army in manpower, by quantitative superiority in the certain types of armaments (in particular, in military aircraft), in the situation of remoteness of the Russian Far East theater from the core part of Russia and vulnerability of the long stretched line of the Russian communications;

Also Russia should be sure that its arms deliveries to China will not violate the general military balance between China and its regional neighbors, including Japan, otherwise leading to the new wave of arms race at the Asia Pacific and striking with a boomerang
on Russia. Similarly important to take into account the opinion of Russia’s CIS partners - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, other Central Asian countries, whose interests are indirectly involved in the Russian arms sales to China.

Speaking about commercial issues, the competent marketing of the Russian military technology, reasonable price policy, optimum schemes of payments are necessary. Last but not least, in view of uniqueness and high profitability of the arms deals, Russia needs strict control over Chinese re-export of Russian-made Russian-licensed weapon. The Russian public and legislative branch has all the rights to be informed, who, how legitimately and how competently is dealing with the export of such delicate production to such a delicate buyer. The corruption and shadow lobbying in this matter can bring unprecedented damage to Russia’s security interests. (Kuhrt, 2007: 121-145).

The foreign policy problems, related to export of arms to China, can be even more difficult, than military and commercial considerations. It’s difficult to forecast medium and long-term international consequences of Russian arms sales to China.

Among risk factors in this sense – the uncertainty of political future of China. This uncertainty stems from two main reasons.

First of them relates to the character of the political regime of China. Due to the weakness of the representative power and the dominance of the military high command, the role of the individual leader or the narrow group of leaders in China’s foreign and domestic policy is extremely high. The process of formulation, coordination and implementation of China’s foreign policy is not well institutionalized. It is not grounded upon wide social base.

The other source of instability - complexity of a present stage of economic reforms related to conversion of the large state-owned enterprises. The problems of the huge manpower surplus, economic frictions between center and the provinces, uneven development of the rich maritime provinces and considerably poor internal regions remain to be serious. (Kuhrt, 2007: 235-243).
Taking into account this knot of political and economic problems, one cannot exclude the possibility of the crisis of a present regime in China. If such crisis occur, drastic shifts of the basic vectors of China’s military strategy and foreign policy are highly probable.

The development of military cooperation between Russia and China, undoubtedly, relate to the relations of Russia with the USA and the West as a whole. Russia being unilaterally oriented on increasing of its arms sales to China, is facing the risk of eventual confrontation with the United States, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and the ASEAN countries, which are feeling anxious about Chinese military might. It is also a foreign policy risk factor, which Russia should take into consideration while developing military ties with China.

It is noteworthy, that the USA, having an extensive foreign market for US-made weapon, has never delivered this weapon to the states even hypothetically capable to pose a threat to the US. On this background, Russia’s policy is contrasting. The key buyer of Russia’s military production is the state that both, historically and potentially, could not be excluded from the list of Russia’s military competitors.

To be fair, it is necessary to note, that presently known volumes of contracted deliveries of the American weapon, for example, to Taiwan essentially surpass present Russian sales to China. (Jacks, 1997: 132). In this sense it is unfair, to blame Russia as a state that is destabilizing the military balance in Northeast Asia.

But, first, Taiwan at any circumstances can not pose danger directly to the US. Secondly, it is necessary to take into account psychological anxiety with which Washington perceives the current trends of the Russian-Chinese ties. China is considered by the US as its basic global competitor in the next century. The fears concerning the Russian fighter aircraft at the Chinese airfields raise the probability of inadequate reaction of the US on the Russian-Chinese arms deals.

There is a reasonable question: should the psychological complexes of the US be considered as the factor limiting Russia’s military deliveries to China? The answer, to this, we believe, should be “yes”, but qualified “yes”. This qualification pertains to the
argument, that the fact that matters is not the ephemeral and unsteady "psychological complexes" of the third side (i.e. US) but quite firm and pragmatic reasoning of Russian interest. (SWB, SU/1472, A1/1 August 29, 1992).

This reasoning should be based on her solid national priorities - socially balanced pro-market reform, openness to the external world, constructive co-operation both with the West, and with the East, including to the East the non-Chinese part it too. (Japan, Korea, ASEAN). The one-sided bias in Russia's military-commercial policy, exceeding the rational limits of arms sales to China could damage and even ruin all these priorities.

Thus, we are not speaking about the extremist and, as a matter of fact, a "deadlock" scenario, sometimes offered by Russian analysts. In this script the present sale of the weapon is considered as an intermediate phase towards to closer political-military partnership or even to military alliance with China. This is considered to be a "strong" Russian counterplay against the West. (Jenks 1997: 137). Such scenario is an obvious foreign policy trap for Russia, leading to the new global confrontation and, besides that, the confrontation on the "etnical-civilizational" basis.

It is not necessary to idealize the West and to neglect its contradictions with Russia on many points, that resulted, first of all, in NATO enlargement, in crisis around Kosovo, in the US policy within the the CIS. It is necessary to bargain with the West and to press back Russian interests everywhere, where it is possible. Nevertheless, in conditions of present deteriorating relations with the West after Kosovo, Russia should use positive foreign policy experience of China itself. During recent two decades China, on the one side, managed to cooperate rather efficiently with the USA, within the framework of the "open door" policy, and, on the other side, to keep independence and evenhandedness of its external strategy, thus being not overwhelmed by the nationalist ambitions and confrontational mentality. (Anderson, 1997: 121-133).
d) China’s Approach to the NATO Expansion: Compatibility with the Russian Interests.

Up to the middle 1980s Europe and NATO was the peripheral sphere of China’s foreign policy interests. China was not linked to Europe neither through its own security interests, nor through active trade and large investments. The volume of China’s trade with the countries of EU in mid 1980-s did not exceed 15 % of China’s total trade. Consequently, China’s approaches to the military balance and the problems of security of this region were bearing the imprint of “secondary” priorities: Beijing was viewing Europe only as a sphere of rivalry between China’s key competitors - USSR and USA - and was interested in Europe only from the point of view how the balance of power between Moscow and Washington was changing.

Approximately since the first half of the 1990s China’s approach to the European realities started to change, China’s European diplomacy became more active and “nuanced”. This evolution was stimulated by the obvious globalization of foreign policy interests of China, the rapid growth of its external economic activity as the outcome of the successful course of economic reforms inside the country. The drastic reshuffle of the entire system of international relations was the other incentive for such change: with the dissolving of the Soviet Union the status of China, as the potential contender to the United States has raised considerably.

Almost simultaneously, with the news on NATO enlargement became public, the negative attitude of China to this process became explicit. The NATO enlargement was unequivocally assessed by Beijing as strengthening of the American control over Europe. The alternative scenario, leading to the “Europesation” of NATO, strengthening of Europe as the independent center of power, was considered in China as less probable. The main argument of the Chinese analysts, supporting this view, was that only US was capable to provide the overwhelming security to the European allies and to face any military challenges, including those coming from Russia. Only Washington, they argued, is capable to carry the basic financial and technological burden of admitting the new member-states to NATO. (Rearming of the new members, standardization of military
arms equipment, reorganization of the structure of management). According to Beijing’s view, such developments in Europe actually would block the tendency to global "multipolarity", that is more beneficial to Chinese interests than the monopolar international system under the control of the US. (ITAR-TASS, and SWB, SU/1707 A1/5, June 5, 1999).

To add to this strongest anxiety, the Chinese were also concerned, that the US could extrapolate the European mode of behavior to the Asia Pacific. While the European members of NATO consider the fear of Russia and destabilization of this country as the basic reason for the block’s enlargement, China was afraid of being treated in the same capacity as Russia in Asia, by Beijing’s regional neighbors – Japan, Korea and the ASEAN member-states. The Chinese were not excluding the developing of its relations with the regional neighbors according to the worst possible scenario: deteriorating of Beijing’s security and economical relations with Washington and consolidating the latter’s strategic and political links with Japan and Korea for the purposes of containment of China.

Therefore China was seriously anxious about the “new guidelines” on military cooperation between Tokyo and Washington, that was signed in the autumn of 1997 on the basis of the existing US - Japanese Security Treaty. The new arrangements, which in 1999 were approved by the Japanese parliament, actually provide the further enlargement of the military role of Tokyo in vaguely defined “surrounding zone” of the northeast part of the Pacific ocean, that was considered to be the “zone of responsibility” of Japan (ITAR-TASS Oct 14, 1999).

One more factor relating to the NATO enlargement and to the strengthening of the American influence in this block, also irritated the Chinese. The NATO enlargement was posing the additional political obstacles to Chinese penetration to the trade markets of Europe. Such prospects were even more painful for China, given the permanent trade frictions with the US, difficulties of China’s admission to the WTO and deteriorated situation of the global trade market as the result of the world financial crisis of 1997. Under these negative circumstances, expanding trade with the countries of EU would be
rather desirable compensating factor for China. Its notable that, starting from 1992, the volume of trade of the EU countries with the Asian countries of Asia Pacific has exceeded volume of trade of the Europeans with the USA ($249 and $206 bn.) And the volume of direct investments of the countries of the EU in Asia Pacific has reached the level of the US investments in the region. The volume of trade of the majority of the countries of the Asia Pacific now in comparable parts are distributed on three equally important parts - trade with the US, with Europe and within the Asia Pacific region (John, 1998: 27).

One more quite probable consequence of NATO enlargement that could have a far-reaching negative impact on China. With consolidation of this block under the leading military role of the USA, Beijing practically loses hope for the alternative to Russia donors of modern weapons. Previously, under certain circumstances, China could have expected to acquire considerably sophisticated weapon, for example from Czech Republic or Poland or even, possibly, France. Under current tendency of the growing of the US role in NATO, and facing the high probability of developing of the Chinese-American relations according to the worst – “deteriorating” scenario (that has proved to be true recently) - such prospects for China actually disappear. The outcome of this - becoming the “hostage” of Russia in delivery of modern arms, with all the inevitable political linkages, is very unfavorable to Beijing.

At last, one more essential motive of China’s negative perception of the NATO enlargement. The situation when the military structure of NATO will eventually move close to the borders of Russia, (especially if the Baltic states are, eventually, admitted), will inevitably stimulate Moscow’s effort for the utmost political-military consolidation of the CIS countries under Russia’s leading role. Notwithstanding all the obstacles for such consolidation, Moscow still possesses a set of political-military levers to invigorate this process. To name first, the threats from Islamic fundamentalism to the southern states of CIS (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), "detonating" role of Russian community in Kazakhstan, ethnic conflicts inside the Transcaucasian states (Azerbaijan, Armenia) are giving such levers to Moscow’s hands. (Ziegler.1999:537-543).
China has little interest in consolidation of the CIS under Moscow leadership. The more friable and unconsolidated CIS will be, the less problems for Chinese security in the future. Besides, China itself is willing to penetrate into the economic space of the CIS, especially in Kazakhstan and some Central Asian states. Beijing is very interested in raw, and energy resources of these countries, while facing the necessity to expand the resource base of its actively growing economy. Thus, it is possible to see the whole array of negative consequences that China is facing as the result of the NATO enlargement.

These were the reasons that caused growing solidarity of Beijing with Moscow during the summits of the 1996-1997. It reached its peak in first half of 1997, when the clauses about “understanding” of the Moscow’s concerns of NATO enlargement began to appear in the text of joint statements.

At the same time it was clear, that the approach of China and Russia to the NATO enlargement, though obviously parallel in many principal characteristics, was not identical or coinciding. More than that, many facets of Russia’s behavior towards NATO, especially in 1997-1998, in the period before events in Kosovo, was viewed with suspicion by the Chinese counterparts.

For Russia the most important problem is the growing proximity of the military infrastructure of NATO to its borders, the dramatic decreasing of “buffer” geopolitical space between Russia and the West. For China, to whom this infrastructure directly does not threaten, the main problem is the development of cooperation and interaction between Russia and the Western alliance. In opinion of China’s analysts, if this cooperation will be unfairly close and leading to Moscow’s loosing its independence in military planning and security strategy, the Chinese interests will be seriously damaged. (SWB, SU/3077 B/10, November 1997).

From the very beginning of the bargaining process between Russia and NATO on the problem of enlargement, Beijing was watching very attentively the evolution of negotiations, being mainly focused on evaluation of the tendencies “of struggle and cooperation” between Moscow and NATO.
The signing of the Russia – NATO Founding Act in May 1997 was met in Beijing with obvious coolness. Judging by the tone of the some Chinese published commentaries, it was possible to make conclusion, that Beijing was mainly disappointed by a complaisance of Moscow, which has signed the Founding Act on such unfavorable terms. Official Chinese press was pretty ambivalent in assessing the Founding Act. On the one hand, it was stressing the historic importance of this agreement, comparing it with the Versailles and Yalta Treaties and noting, that Russia and NATO opened the “critically new phase” in bilateral ties. On the other hand, Chinese official media pointedly stressed the fact that Russia failed to sign the really effective and legally solid document with NATO. Thus, it was argued, the Founding Act could not prevent the serious contradictions and frictions of the partners in the future. “Time alone could evaluate the political effectiveness of this Document” - was the dominating tune of the official comments (China Daily, 28 May, 1997).

Many Chinese political analysts shared the evaluation of the Founding Act as the amorphous document, unable to prevent the future pressure of NATO on Moscow’s vital military interests. According to the view of the expert from the Chinese Institute of Modern International Relations Feng Yujun, this pressure will be especially detrimental for Moscow in three basic directions: 1) In the problems of the intra-European security, where the Joint Committee of Russia – NATO doomed to only decorative, and not a meaningful role. 2) In the problems within CIS, where Russia will most probably be separated from its traditional allies. 3) In negotiations on arms control on both global and regional levels. Moscow’s inability to achieve the firm promise on the side of NATO not to place the nuclear weapons on the territory of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic was considered to be the weakest point in the Russian position. (John, 1998: 15-16).

Shortly after signing of the Founding Act in 1997 President of China Jiang Zemin paid his first official visit to the US. (October, 1997) During this visit the Chinese and American presidents have stated the mutual inclination to develop “constructive strategic partnership” (Ribao 1997: 230). Both in essence and in phrasing, this inclination resembled the similar approach to “confidential strategic partnership” with Russia and indirectly devaluated the importance of the latter formula. Such devaluation could

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possibly be linked to the Chinese dissatisfaction with the Russian arrangements with NATO.

In June 1998 the next summit between Jiang Zemin and Clinton took place in Beijing and the Chinese-American dialogue has advanced further. During this summit the new agreements were achieved, some of them being similar in essence to those in the Russian-Chinese relations. The US and China have agreed not to orient their nuclear weapons on each other (the similar agreement between China and Russia was concluded in 1994.) Clinton made important statement on Taiwan (three “no” statement) which was evaluated as the compromising step towards Beijing. (Washington Post, 23rd June, 1998).

Noting the obvious elements of parallelism and concurrence in the approach of Russia and China to the NATO enlargement, it is quite reasonable to raise the question: does this parallelism mean Beijing’s readiness and ability to take the definite practical actions of “strategic partnership” with Moscow?

The forms of “strategic partnership” vary. Such partnership can exist in the form of the full-fledged political-military agreements with the distinct clauses of mutual defense guarantees or in the form of tight military cooperation, including coordination of the military procurement and training policy and “unification” of the military doctrines. It could take the forms of deliveries of sophisticated types of weapons and close diplomatic interaction, including, as the example, the “diplomatic bloc” in the UN Security Council.

From this point of view, real “strategic partnership” between Russia and China, especially those in the tight military forms mentioned above, are unlikely. Such type of partnership would contradict the basic priorities of Chinese foreign policy.

China’s central political priority at the present stage is to maintain open, flexible, evenhanded foreign policy that is not binded by any obligations of alliance and thus not leading to any international confrontation. Such strategy provides the maximum possibilities for China’s foreign economic ties - active trade and inflow of the foreign investments into the country. At present China’s security is not facing any challenges that could justify Beijing’s closer strategic tilt to Moscow. though this should not be
interpreted as Beijing complete satisfaction over its strategic position now. (Hasegawa, 1999:318-337).

The obvious parallelism of the Chinese interests with the interests of Moscow towards NATO is not sufficient to be the basis of real political-military bloc of the two countries. This bloc could be destructive to Chinese interests in several ways.

Firstly, such bloc unequivocally would put China in confrontational, unfavorable or extremely burdened relations with the entire Western world and, first of all, with the US, thus excluding active economic interaction with the group of countries that China needs most.

Secondly, the alliance with Moscow, almost for certain, would result in the scenario of the international relations in Asia Pacific that is mentioned above the consolidation of political-military ties of the US with Japan, Republic of Korea with, most probably, supportive approach of the ASEAN countries towards such consolidation. It is exactly the situation that would create serious problems to China’s security – the problems that Beijing is not experiencing now.

Thirdly, any forms of close partnership with Moscow and, consequently, developing confrontation with the US, would freeze the solution of the problem of Taiwan, since this solution is impossible without Washington role as a broker. (FBIS-EAS-97-01, October 1, 1996).

The close partnership of Moscow and Beijing oriented against NATO or US is also inhibited by the set of both - explicit and hidden -“conflict zones” that are existing in bilateral Russian-Chinese relations.

To name such zones it is necessary to start from the geopolitical friction between the two countries. The striking contrast between deserted, ill-managed, and rich with mineral resources territories of Russia’s Siberia and the Far East on the one side, and overpopulated, physically exhausted and highly polluted territories of China’s north – east provinces is the obvious ground for such frictions.
Notwithstanding the rapprochement of the last years, arms sales and serious breakthrough agreements in security, the friction zones based on the geopolitical contrasts has not vanished. Moreover, due to the different pace and results of the economic reforming in China and Russia, strengthening of the centrifugal tendencies at the Russian Far East, exacerbated by the financial decay of the Russia’s center, these contrasts became more visible.

Such view is not contradicting to significant progress in settlement of border disputes that was mentioned earlier. The fact of the bilateral legal registration of the line of border in the recent border agreements, though confirm the present status quo in territorial control, is not drawing the final line in the geopolitical competition of the two neighboring states for “living space”. China repeatedly claimed its rights for extensive territories of Siberia and Far East in the past. Symptomatically, that in 1991, already after the main basic border agreement between Russia and China was signed, the Chinese official press, nevertheless, declared again, that “imperial Russia teared away almost 1.55 million square kilometers of China’s territory”. (China Daily, Nov. 11, 1997).

The forms of competition for concrete geopolitical space are definitely not limited to negotiating the border delimitation. Such competition includes various methods of penetration – legal and illegal emigration, economic projection, support of the separatist movements. Thus, the territorial delimitation, though important, should be viewed only as a phase, but not the last phase, in geopolitical competition.

Besides, even within the framework of the present border agreements of 1991 and 1994, Moscow and Beijing failed to reach an agreement in two dispute areas, having left the decision of these disputes “to the future generations” and having accepted the compromising formula of “joint economic usage” of these areas. Despite the insignificant size, such “blank spots” can be the pretext for the future arguments of “incompleteness” of border delimitation between the two countries. (ITAR-TASS, and FBIS-SOV-94-194, October 6, 1994).
Another friction zone of the bilateral relations could be designated as the factor of "immanent threat". At any present level of cordiality of the bilateral relations and demilitarization of the border, the fact of physical proximity of military machines of Russia and China, different in capabilities, but posing potential danger to each other, hasn’t ceased to play a role in the calculus of both governments. The decision makers of both capitals has always been closely watching the evolution of the military possibilities of their counterpart. Very often in the past military and strategic orientation of both Moscow and Beijing was assessed with bias and suspicion. Prevailing nuclear capabilities of Russia, including all components of its nuclear triad, potential ability of the Russian armored troops pose a threat of the brisk offensive operation aimed directly at Beijing, on the one side, no less than obvious superiority of the Chinese PLA in manpower, exacerbated by strategic vulnerability and remoteness of the Russian Far East from the center, on the other side, continue to be taken in full consideration in military planning of Moscow and Beijing. (FBIS-SOV-94-197, October 12, 1994).

Naming the conflict zones, existing between Russia and China, it is necessary to point out, that during the 1990-s these negative factors exerted incomparably smaller influence on dynamics of the bilateral relations, than the motives of mutual gravitation and détente. The relative influence of these latter factors could be explained, besides all other things, by high economic cost of geopolitical confrontation, obvious benefits of economic interaction, similar processes of pro-market reforms obviously inducing many shared values of both political elites.

By virtue of these motives, the recent period was marked by the obvious evolution from irrational and ideology biased confrontation to normal good-neighborly state of relations. During this evolution the motivation for political rapprochement and military détente prevailed over all other motives.

c) NATO’s Involvement in Kosovo and Its Impact on Russia-China Ties

The crisis over Kosovo marked by itself a critical stage in the international development after the end of the cold war. It has the visible impact not only on the foreign policy
motivation of the countries, directly involved in it, but also on all participants of international relations. Since the main events of the Kosovo crisis are well-known, bearing in mind the topic of our research, we would mainly focus on the impact of these events on the development of bilateral partnership of Russia and China, on analyzing these two countries' motives of conduct in this crisis, the new developments in Russian-Chinese tandem in the aftermath of the crisis.

The main conclusion, which the two capitals - Moscow and Beijing - have arrived to in the course of this crisis is the following: the events that they were fearing most and were trying to prevent, eventually happened. The global "superpower" – United States - has used the powerful military machine of NATO for resolving the urgent international problem according to its own consideration, without the sanction of the world community, represented by the United Nations, using almost exclusively the methods of military force, having achieved rather doubtful results. While doing this, NATO actually violated the sovereignty of the independent state of Yugoslavia and created the extremely dangerous precedent in jeopardizing basic values and principles of the international stability - the national sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, international legal regulation of the conflicts, prerogative of the United Nations and its Security Council.

This is against such type of events both sides - Russia and China - have joint their forces earlier, while signing the Declaration on the multipolar world and formation of the new international order (1997), that became the important codification of principles for bilateral relations. As a result of events in Kosovo, it became explicit, that the world is far from moving towards multipolarity, it is actually moving towards dictate of one most powerful power - USA. To counteract this tendency, Russia and China appear to be "doomed" on the further rapprochement and coordination of their policies. Moscow and Beijing arrived to the obvious conclusion, that for the sake of higher priorities of opposing the unilateral dictate in international relations, both countries have to increase effort at all directions of Russian-Chinese cooperation, including the military sphere, and to downgrade the priority of the existing or potential frictions on the bilateral level. (ITAR-TASS and SWB, SU/3065 N 14, November, 1997).
The positions held by Russia and China during the Kosovo crisis were similar in many respects. Both sides claimed for resolving the crises through political and diplomatic effort, both were opposing the use of the military force without the approval of the UN Security Council, both were striving for the immediate ceasing of NATO bombings as the necessary precondition for political settlement. The differences between their positions were as follows. Till the end of hostilities China was constantly supporting the prerogatives of the UN Security Council, claiming that only UNSC, and not NATO has the legitimate right for regulating and using the military instruments in Kosovo crisis.29 Russia while supporting China’s activity in Security Council, eventually joined the NATO peacekeeping forces but on its own conditions.

To make it clear, the positions that Russia and China held during the crisis did not mean that Moscow as well as Beijing, were showing full support and understanding of the policy of the President of Yugoslavia Milosevic. Both Moscow and Beijing disagree with many of his actions, though they didn’t qualify them as the “ethnic cleansing”. Russia and China never doubted the legitimacy of Milosevic as the President of Yugoslavia and were against interference in internal affairs of this country (ITAR- TASS, May 2, 1999).

Moscow and Beijing’s approach to the conflict in Kosovo was motivated by the set of various circumstances.

First, not sharing completely the policy and actions of Milosevic, they considered methods of the USA and NATO for resolving this international crisis more dangerous to the maintenance of international peace.

Secondly, being multi-national states, and having ethnic problems, similar or resembling those of Yugoslavia, Russia and China were gravely concerned, that the precedent for “resolving” such a crisis, demonstrated by the actions of the USA and NATO, will pose it direct threat to their own sovereignty and security in future.

Thirdly, Russia and China had no other choice, but to insist on respect of a role and prerogatives of the United Nations. The opposite would mean moving of the international
relations to “superpower oligarchy”, but not to “multipolarity”. (SWB FE/3623 E/1, August 26, 1999).

As the result of the Kosovo crisis both China and Russia arrived to one more important conclusion. Their worst fears of the new role of the expanded NATO as the key element of the European security after the cold war have come true. During Kosovo events, the NATO acted not as the structure, that was synthesizing multipartite interests and oriented on evolutionary, political resolving of complex problems of Europe, sometimes deep rooted in history. NATO actually acted as the military machine, obviously dominated by the interests and perceptions of the US, and thus trying to resolve this European problems mainly in a unilateral and biased manner (ITAR-TASS May, 5, 1999).

It’s pretty clear, that besides the obvious humanitarian motives for the USA and NATO actions in Kosovo, the pragmatic and power interests of the NATO allies in this operation was very visible. With all the possible criticism of the Yugoslavian leader’s actions, Yugoslavia is the sovereign state and Milosevic is the legitimate president of this state. In contemporary Europe, to the west of borders of the former USSR, Yugoslavia remains the only state that is not oriented on the NATO – centered structure of military security of the continent. All other NATO non-members, either, being neutral, actually are still oriented and protected by the NATO security “umbrella” (Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland), or aspiring to enter this block -Bulgaria, Romania, Baltic states (ITAR-TASS and FBIS-SOV-2001-0527).

Speaking about the “policy message” which Russia and China has received as the result of the Kosovo crisis, let us quote how President Clinton himself formulated this message in one of his interviews in June 1999:

"We can't stop every fight like the fight between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the struggles in Chechnya. But where we can, at an acceptable cost; that is without risking nuclear war or some other terrible thing, we ought to prevent the slaughter of innocent civilians and the wholesale uprooting of them because of their race, their ethnic background or the way they worship God". (Clinton on ABC Network, June 12, 1999).
What message Moscow or Beijing could get from this? Speaking logically, the implications of such a formula for them could be pretty obvious: since these two countries cannot be guaranteed, that one of its internal ethnical “problem zones”, either Chechnya or Tibet or Xinjiang, could at one point, using the very biased, politicized criteria and the double standards approach, be qualified as the "humanitarian disaster", the only way to avoid the humiliation for Moscow and Beijing is to increase the price tag for NATO to do that.

The obvious reaction of the Russians and the Chinese on that was the visible intensification of effort in defense, creation of the new systems of weapons, including "smart weapons", which has played a special role during the bombing of Yugoslavia. This is the effort, that is being undertaken individually by each country as well as within the framework of military-technical cooperation between them.

As to the individual effort, Russia in a course of the Kosovo conflict has announced putting into operation of the new missile system “Topol-M”. Its successful tests were conducted earlier of this year. In June - September, 1999 a series of sessions of the Security Council of the Russian Federation were held. The sessions that were presided by the President Yeltsin were focused on the broad range of questions relating the reform of armed forces, revision of the concept of national security of Russia in the aftermath of the Yugoslavian crisis, additional financial allocations to the defense ministry for the state funded contracts on new military procurement. The Council made the decision to raise defense expenditures in the budget of 2000 by substantial margin (the specific figure to be fixed in accordance with government financial situation). These last decision is unanimously supported by all factions of the State Duma, despite of serious differences among them practically on all other parameters of the budget of Russia (ITAR-TASS and FBIS-SOV-2001-0328, May 27,2001).

Speaking about China, Beijing in July 1999 has announced that China has the "know-how" of a neutron bomb and miniaturization of nuclear explosives. It for the first time was stated by the Director of Information Department of the State Council Zhao Qizheng.
This Chinese official resolutely denied allegations of China's stealing of nuclear secrets from the USA. (ITAR-TASS, July 15, 1999).

In the short aftermath of the events in Kosovo, the Russian and Chinese representatives has repeatedly stated their inclination to progress to the new, more advanced stage "of strategic partnership" between the two countries. This advance should take place both in political, and military-technical sphere. The Russian foreign minister I. Ivanov, while communicating with his Chinese counterpart Tan Jiaqiu (they met thrice within June and August 1999), has stated, that the importance of interaction of Russia and China in Asia Pacific" is growing in the wake of potential danger of downgrading of regional stability ". According to I.Ivanov, "the further extending of military-technical cooperation and gradually increasing coordination in the field of conversion of the enterprises of a defense industry is the vivid sign of confidentiality of the relations of the strategic partnership" (ITAR-TASS, July 26, 1999).

From his side, the vice-premier of China's State Council Qian Qichen while characterizing the state of bilateral relations in the period after Kosovo has stated, that now they experience "the best times in a history ".

Discussing the consequences of the Kosovo events, it is necessary to stress, that internal political climate and the correlation of forces in discussion about "pluses" and "minuses" of bilateral strategic partnership has changed strikingly in both countries. If earlier, foreign policy elites in both Russia and China had serious reservations to the thesis «of strategic partnership» and different understanding of this partnership, now, the necessity to develop such partnership for countering "hegemonism" and "military dictate" of NATO outweighs all other arguments. To illustrate this the recent decision of the State Duma to ratify the CBM-2 Agreement between Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and China should be mentioned. The results of the ballot are indicative: "yes" - 321 vote. "no" - 1, abstained - "1". As we mentioned earlier in this report, the assessment of this agreement was far more critical, especially, among the right-wing oriented politicians shortly after the signing of this agreement in April 1997. Now, notwithstanding its party or faction affiliations, the members of Duma unanimously
supported the document, that is strengthening the level of military trust with China. The Chinese side Parliament has ratified this agreement earlier (ITAR-TASS, June 26, 1999).

As the obvious consequence of the Kosovo events one should consider China’s evidently growing anxiety over the potential advance of the NATO to Chinese borders in Central Asian direction.

It is known, that majority of the Central Asian countries (those being the former republics USSR) are the participants of the NATO’s Partnership For Peace program (PFP), and some of them, Azerbaijan in particular, have already shown its strong desire to become the full member of the block. China is seriously concerned over the possibility, in addition to deteriorating military relations with the USA, eventually, to deal with the element of the military mechanism of NATO in close proximity to its western borders.

To counteract such tendency, China recently demonstrated its stressed interest to developing relations with the members of the so called “Shanghai five states” - participants of the CBM agreements of 1996 and 1997, the first of which was signed in Shanghai. Three Central Asian members of this group - Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan – by virtue of their individual political circumstances do not gravitate to the NATO and keep close comprehensive ties with Russia.

In August, 1999 in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) the summit of the leaders of the «Shanghai five», was held, with both Russian and Chinese Presidents taking part in it. Both of them stressed their presence at this meeting. In the process of the meeting, Russia showed it’s inclination to institutionalize the interaction of these five countries. The Russian president has offered to conduct regular separate meetings of ministers of foreign affairs and ministers of defense, to create working groups of experts, and by 2000 to conduct the meeting of the Premiers of the “Shanghai five” countries. (Garnett, 2001:324-345).

During bilateral meeting of Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin the Chinese President was briefed on the recent Russian-American consultations on START and ABM Treaty. " We consider the ABM Agreement to be the basis of strategic stability and we have complete
mutual understanding with our Chinese counterparts on this issue" – the Russians has stated.

During their private meeting Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin highly evaluated the negotiation on military-technical cooperation between Russia and China, which were in parallel conducted in Beijing. The head of the Russian delegation at this negotiation, vice-premier I.Klebanov confirmed Russia’s intention to sell the Su-30 fighters to China. (ITAR-TASS, Oct. 25th May, 1999).

It is necessary to note that the events in Kosovo, took place on the background of gradually deteriorating of the Chinese-American bilateral ties in the first half of 1999. Such deterioration was related to the charges of espionage in the field of military technology, put forward against China, failure of negotiation on the China’s admission to WTO during the visit of the Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji in the USA in April, 1999. The culmination of this negative development was the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, which despite of explanations of the American side, was qualified in Beijing as the deliberately planned “action of intimidation”. Responding to it, China took several countermeasures concerning the USA and countries of NATO. The American-Chinese consultations on human rights and nonproliferation of military technologies were suspended. The visit of American military ships to Hongkong was cancelled. The visits of the US Minister of Defense to Beijing and the Commander of China’s Navy to London were postponed. (ITAR-TASS Oct. 22, 1999).

In July, 1999 the President of Taiwan Lee Deng-hui has stated that the relations between Taiwan and China should be treated as “the special relations between two peoples”. This statement of the Taiwan leader was qualified in Beijing as the deviation from the principle “of one China” and the policy aimed at stimulation of separatism and tension. The relations between China and Taiwan were deteriorated seriously.

It looks like the timing of this Taiwan President’s statement was not occasional. President Lee most obviously take an opportunity of the present international situation. Due to events of Kosovo and other reasons - the relations of Beijing with the USA and NATO
were at the lowest point for the last few years. Thus, for China the Kosovo events and
deterioration of the situation in the Taiwan Strait was obviously linked to each other.

The deterioration of the situation in the Taiwan Strait indirectly increases the importance
of Beijing's ties with Moscow. During the whole history of its ties with China, Moscow
consistently kept loyal to the principle of "one China" and never hesitated in its support
of China's sovereignty over Taiwan. Under current circumstances, in conditions of the
strained relations with the US, such support is extremely valuable in Beijing's eyes. Its
value has both diplomatic and military-strategic dimension. The latter is based on the
Russia's ability to render reliable military and strategic "rear" in the north of China in
case of an unpredictable aggravation of a situation in the Taiwan Strait and possible
military conflict.

In August 1999, reacting to the new stage of tension in the Taiwan Strait, Russian foreign
minister once again confirmed Russian firm standing on this issue.

The crisis in Kosovo stimulated the new round of Moscow's effort to initiate the
coordination of foreign policy actions and joint counteraction to "hegemonism" on the
part of three large states - Russia, China and India. This idea for the first time was stated
in January 1999 by E.Primakov during his visit to India. That time it had not received the
active response on the part of the Chinese and Indian colleagues. This theme was raised
again, now on the military level, after events in Yugoslavia. In June 1999 in Vladivostok
the working meeting of the military delegations of China and Russia was held. The
delegations were leaded by Russian deputy minister of defense N.Mikhailov and deputy
chairman of the Central military council of China Zhang Wangyan. At this meeting the
Russian counterpart has stated, that "the strategic cooperation of Russia with China and
India in a near future will ascend on a qualitatively new level". It is also notable, that the
idea, that in the aftermath of Kosovo, China have to reconsider its criticism of India's and
Pakistan's acquisition of the nuclear weapon, is being actively discussed in China's
The current state of relations between Russia and China reflects their basic foreign policy interests and perceptions, with the shared distrust of NATO strategy, especially after Kosovo, being the vital part of these perceptions. Therefore no big negative changes in the Russian-Chinese bilateral ties are likely in the nearest future. The opposite trend is possible in case of drastic internal shifts in the elites of the both countries, leading to the cardinal reassessments of the basic orientations of foreign and domestic politics. The probability of such internal changes is very low in the short-term future.

Both sides have achieved quite a stable level of security in relations with each other. That is extremely vital for Russia with her situation of protracted socio-economic crises, deficit of financial resources for the defense needs and the deterioration of its strategic posture on the western borders after the expansion of NATO. It is also beneficial for China given her priority of active economic growth and considerably vulnerable situation at the East, South-East and South geopolitical directions (US-Japanese axis, Taiwan, Korea, South China Sea).

Military détente between Russia and China, settling the territory disputes and the demilitarization of the border were achieved without any serious jeopardizing of interests of any one of the parties. The compromises are quite reasonable and stable. All these interim results of the progress of bilateral relations of the recent years are obviously valuable to both Moscow and Beijing and none of them would put at risk this status-quo.

The same tendency to preserve status-quo would be most probably manifested by both capitals in economic sphere and trade. During last years both partners occupied the natural niches in each other's necessities and capabilities. Both sides are interested to keep these niches for the future.

It's difficult to foresee in details how the military co-operation and arms sales between Russia and China will develop in the coming years. Though stimuli of the international origin – like Kosovo syndrome – will continue to have effect on the flow of weapons through the Russian-Chinese border, the volume of the arms trade will depend more on the financial limitations of the buyer and security considerations of the seller.
The most reasonable forecast will be that the volumes of arms trade will grow, but not very substantial. The nomenclature of arms export will not change substantially and not many new sophisticated types of weapon will be sold. It looks like Russia and China has neared the rational threshold in arms trade. Russia has no reason to sell to China new types of weapons that would substantially expand the range of Beijing’s military capabilities, and it will not be reasonable for the Chinese to purchase the types of weapon that would not increase greatly that range of capabilities.

From the point of view of Russia’s internal political scene it’s hard to foresee any drastic shifts that could destabilize the current flow of Russian-Chinese relations. During the coming presidential election in Russia, Moscow’s China policy will hardly be the object of discussion and dispute. It would be risky and unreasonable for any presidential candidate, notwithstanding his political affiliation, to put into question the key milestones of Russia’s China policy, including the CBM agreements, border treaties and bilateral cooperation vis-a-vis the US and NATO.

The arms sales and military co-operation issues could be, within certain limits, variable of the outcome of the Presidential election. The left-oriented candidate, being ideologically more sympathetic to China, will probably be more inclined to closer military ties with China. More active military ties, however, could be seriously inhibited by the left-wing candidate’s special sensivity to the electorate in Siberia and Russia’s Far East with strong anti-China sentiments. In general, notwithstanding his possible sympathies to China’s ideology, the left-wing candidate, if being elected, will hardly exceed the limits of rationality and wise sufficiency in military ties with China.

The other sound factor in Russia’s future China policy is the growing interest of the Russian business community, especially the energy companies (like “Gasprom” or “Yukos”) to the long-term projects with China. The ability of these companies to lobby successfully the necessary decisions of Russia’s China policy, including the basic geopolitical orientations of their partnership vis-a-vis the West, will be visible in the nearest future.
The Russian and Chinese Presidents met in Bishkek in August 1999 at the fourth meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization. President Yeltsin told the reporters at the airport that he was ready for a battle "especially with the westerners". Bishkek Summit declaration underscored the commonality of Russian and Chinese opposition to NMD and TMD projects and their insistence that 1972 ABM Treaty must be respected as the basis for maintaining strategic stability in the world. (Wishnick, 201, pp. 146-156).

Both Russia-China condemned strongly the NATO's bombing on Chinese embassy building in Yugoslavia. Moscow and Beijing demonstratively came together and registered strong protest against unilateralism of USA. Both countries also issued joint statement that "plans by some countries to build power bloc against others" should not be accepted. Jiang Zemin repeatedly declared that "hegemonism and power politics" are the main source of threat to world peace and stability" and as well as China's interests. (SWB. Aug. 26, 1999, p. 21).

Both Russia and China are also opposed to USA's National Missile Defence Programme and fear that it will disturb the balance of power and hence start a new arms race. It is also proposed that US will transfer Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) system to countries like Japan and Taiwan which would greatly undermine the peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. The US withdrawal from ABM Treaty of 1972 added more suspicion among the strategists of Russia and China about the real intension of USA. (Pillsbur, 2000, pp. 10-15).

Both Russia and China agree on the proposal of restructuring of UNO. Both call for strict adherence to UN rules and regulations especially in the context of developments in Yugoslavia 2nd Iraq crisis in which NATO and US forces greatly undermined the UN authority. Both countries want greater representation from developing world but they differ on the issue of members of their choice.

In Central Asia Russo-Chinese interests converge on the issues such as Islamic extremism, drug trafficking, arms smuggling etc. It is in the larger interest of the two countries to maintain stability in the region which is prone to Islamic extremism due to its
relative backwardness. Being, the region’s largest neighbours and trading partners, the
two countries have huge stake in the region. Also by promoting economic cooperation
together, Russia and China could partially alleviate the fear psychosis among the Central
Asian states that one or other will dominate the region. (Bilal and Olarreaga, 1998. pp.
153-166).

In post-September 11, world scenario both Beijing and Moscow view with considerable
concern and consternation the presence of US troops in the Central Asian Republics,
which is strategically situated very close to their borders. US military bases in Uzbekistan
and Kyrgyzstan have provided the former an opportunity to monitor some of the sensitive
strategic facilities that Soviet Union had on the territories of these countries. The
presence of US troops at Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan, just 200 km. from the Chinese
border have provided USA unique opportunity to keep on the eye on the Chinese territory
from there. (Ruisheng, 2002, pp. 331-335).

2.2 Russia-China and the Multipolar World Order

Since the late 1990s, the concept of multipolarity has gained prominence around the
globe. Russia and China, in particular, have repeatedly agreed on this ill-defined term and
subsequently have included it or alluded to it in nearly all of their joint declarations,
statements, and treaties dating from the mid-1990s to the present. At a time when
American hegemony is declining and speculation abounds as to which among the
world’s burgeoning nations will rise to power, it is important to examine the renewed
Sino-Russian relationship and one of its foundational pillars—the promotion of
multipolarity. This article deconstructs the definition of multipolarity as it applies
uniquely to Russia and China in an effort to determine the depth of the two countries’
agreement. Though the two may agree upon the same “solution” to the next world order.
China and Russia employ very different strategies to achieve it.

Nearly two decades ago, Charles Krauthammer prophesized that “multipolarity will come
in time . . . in perhaps another generation or so there will be great powers coequal with
the United States, and the world will, in structure, resemble the pre-World War I era”
Since the beginning of the 21st century, and especially within the past couple years, the seeming actualization of Krauthammer's prediction has caused many to believe that the world now stands on the precipice of a multipolar order. China and Russia have long been in the forefront of nations advocating for this order and have included multipolarity as a joint cause in many of their statements, declarations, and treaties. Despite their frequent use of the term, however, China and Russia have failed to elaborate upon how they believe multipolarity is best achieved. (Hass; 208, p. 46).

Considering the power of these two countries and their tumultuous pasts (vis-à-vis one another and the rest of the world), it is crucial to examine the depth of their supposed agreements. As such, this article examines Russia and China's joint campaign for a multipolar world order in the 21st century and the dangerous potential for similar rhetoric to disguise dissimilar methods and objectives. The first part will examine the joint statements, declarations, and treaties of China and Russia advocating multipolarity, the second will analyze their separate discourse on the subject, and the third part will study their separate foreign policies and actions in order to illustrate the different means each country has chosen to achieve the same end multipolarity.

a) A Shared Perspective

Due to China's and the Soviet Union's prominent roles in the bipolar world order, the end of the cold war and the exclusion of both countries in the subsequent unipolar world left leaders in both countries feeling disillusioned. China, in particular, experienced what Dong Yuan describes as an "identity crisis", because it no longer had leverage in the "superpower balancing game". (Yuan, 1998: 56).

Instead, China, like the rest of the world, was subject to one "policing" superpower—one with the self-proclaimed authority to encroach upon the domestic affairs of other states. China first experienced the ramifications of this in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre, when the U.S. Congress suspended arms sales to China and attempted to make China's most favored nation (MFN) status contingent upon the improvement of its human rights record. Although China's MFN status was renewed, Bush incorporated
Congress's concerns in his “constructive engagement” policy toward China in 1991. China's foreign minister, Qian Qichen, declared the following year that “The USA's hegemonic stance and its attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of other states pose the greatest danger to socialist China,” and suggested that in order to “weaken pressure from Washington, China must broaden relations with Japan, Russia, South Korea, and other neighboring countries.” Two years later, China turned to Russia—a country with its own qualms with U.S. ascendance. (Levin, 2008, p. 98).

Compared to China, Russia's “identity crisis” in the post-cold war era was more severe and took the form of an acute (and prolonged) case of schizophrenia, with its foreign policy oscillating between allying with the West and allying with the East. Russia's first inclination after the cold war was to reconcile its relations with the United States and join it in world dominance. Unfortunately for Russia, however, the U.S. government did not share this ideal, but seemed to undermine Russian power by providing fewer post-war funds than Russia wanted and by keeping the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intact despite Russian objections. Primakov also believed that the United States was directly responsible for the International Monetary Fund's stringency in extending loans to Russia for bridge construction. These events caused many of Russia's political elite to agree with the conclusion of the Izvestiya Politklub that Russia was “too big and too Russian for the West”. (Levin, 2008: 98-100).

It was in the context of their “identity crisis” that China and Russia established a “constructive partnership” in September 1994. In 1996, the word “strategic” replaced “constructive” in defining the two countries' partnership and Evgeny Primakov replaced the pro-Western Andrei Kozyrev as the new foreign minister of Russia. These two exchanges indicated not only the advancement of Sino-Russian relations in general, but also the direction their relationship was heading—away from the West. (Noorling, 2007, pp. 33-36) Thereafter, the official rhetoric of the two countries oscillated between promoting a multipolar world order and denouncing the current unipolar system. An example of the latter appeared in a 1996 statement by Primakov to the Kremlin News Broadcast:
Russia in her transition from the bipolar world to the multipolar one should play the role of a counterweight to the negative trends that are appearing in international affairs. In the course of this transition not all power centers, determining this multipolarity, have yet formed. And somebody wants to dominate in this situation. (Ambrosio, 2005, p. 86).

The 1997 "Joint Russian-Chinese Declaration about a Multipolar World and the Formation of a New World Order" reiterated Primakov's sentiment (albeit more diplomatically), and was first among a string of statements emphasizing multipolarity and denouncing U.S. hegemony. The negative trends alluded to in Primakov's statement in 1996 and in the first 1997 declaration materialized in 1999 in the U.S. invasion of Kosovo and the "accidental" bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. In response, China and Russia issued another joint statement on December 10, 1999 outlining their continued joint commitment to combat the "negative momentum" that had been developing in the international arena over the past year, particularly the intrusive U.S. actions in Kosovo, its consideration of a National Missile Defense (NMD) system, and its refusal to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. (Xinhua, Dec. 10, 1999)

In 2001, China and Russia formalized their relationship by cosigning the Sino-Russian Treaty on Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation, a twenty-year renewable treaty outlining their joint resolve to promote "a just and fair new world order."

Although the treaty does not elaborate upon the necessary conditions of a "fair and just" society, the Joint Statement signed the following July clarifies that both governments believe that such a society can only be the consequence of a multipolar world order.

The call for multipolarity was silenced a few months later with the terrorist attacks against America on September 11, 2001, which brought international terrorism to the forefront of the international agenda and was followed by the multilateral backing of the U.S. war in Afghanistan in March 2001. This international solidarity was shaken, however, in 2002 when the United States petitioned the United Nations to invade Iraq and was shattered in 2003 when it did so without UN sanction. To many, the Iraq war
demonstrated the peril of an unchecked superpower—a peril that China and Russia had continuously tried to highlight in their promotion of multipolarity.

China’s and Russia’s cooperation over the past decade and their joint opposition to U.S. unipolarity has caused some westerners to predict an impending clash between a Sino-Russian alliance and the United States. Others, however, discern several discrepancies between Chinese and Russian motives in the propagation of multipolarity, and thus question the durability of such an “alliance”. (Wishnick, 2001, p. 797). The next section of my analysis addresses this question more deeply by delving into the separate rhetoric of China and Russia’s vis-à-vis multipolarity in order to identify if, in fact, the two countries have the same or separate agendas for constructing a new multipolar world order.

Perusing the plethora of summits, statements, declarations, and exchanges that have occurred between China and Russia over the past decade, it seems the two countries have established a successful and solid friendship founded on a shared world perspective. Analyzing the sub-text, however, tells a very different story. First, one must not forget the context in which China and Russia first turned toward one another—the end of the cold war. As mentioned, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia had initially wanted to cooperate with the United States. Only after Russia’s stint of attempting to court the West did Russia turn its aspirations eastward. Seven summits were held with China between 1992 and 1999, during which the Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation was signed in 2001. (Noling, 2007, p. 35)

Russia again tried to join forces with the United States immediately after September 11 (this time against international terrorism), but to little avail. So fervent was Moscow in its attempt to gain Washington’s favor that the Russian Foreign Policy Council actually advised Putin to drop the “multipolarity emphasis” in foreign policy altogether and acquiesce to the U.S. position on missile defense. Balancing American power, the council concluded, would be “too costly and unpragmatic” for Russia. Latent in Russia’s switch in position was the hope that a U.S.-Russia alliance, or at least Russia’s inclusion in a broader coalition against international terrorism, might allow for alleviation of some of its Soviet-era debts and provide it with the necessary leverage to join NATO, which the
council believed would then “grow into a universal organization of European and international security and shed its destabilizing features.”

Despite Russia’s internal debate, China maintained its position on the benefits of multipolarity in ensuring world peace and stability and promoted multilateralism as the primary means for fighting terrorism. In 2002, Russia reverted back to its previous position and once again jumped on the multipolarity bandwagon, with President Putin claiming that “Russia and China have always stood for the establishment of a multi-polar world and the strengthening of the role of the UN.” (Xinhua, Nov. 25, 2001).

Putin exemplified his renewed dedication to multipolarity with his vehement opposition to the U.S. invasion of Iraq the following year. To China and Russia (and much of the international community), the invasion of Iraq was nearly paralleled to its actions in Kosovo. To this end, Russian rhetoric did not extend any leniency to the United States. At a trilateral summit of Russia, Germany, and France in April 2003, for example, when Putin was asked at a Russian press conference about the possibility of relinquishing Russian servicemen to fight in Iraq, he retorted: “Find idiots elsewhere”. (ITAR-TASS, Nov. 10, 2003).

Fortunately for the United States, there were “idiots” aplenty willing to join forces, including the new members of NATO— Estonia, Latvia, and Slovenia—and several of Russia’s newly democratic neighbors. As the United States continued to occupy Iraq well after 2003, the military and political support of these and other countries significantly waned. While the UnitedStates justified its presence by reiterating the importance and difficulty in establishing a democratic government in the Middle East, Russia increasingly questioned U.S. motives and called for a withdrawal date.

Even in the midst of such tensions, however, the rhetoric of the United States and Russia remained tame. That is, until February 2007, when President Putin spoke at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy. At the start, Putin promised to avoid “excessive politeness.” A few minutes later, he explained the danger he believed was latent in the current unipolar world system and lambasted the United States explicitly for defying
international law and “overstep[ing] its national borders in every way”. Additionally, Putin emphasized that a world ruled by one power is definitively undemocratic—regardless of rhetoric to the contrary. Just as he promised, he avoided diplomatic necessities.

b) Chinese Perspective

China responded to Putin’s impassioned comments with calculated equanimity, making sure to reiterate the importance of peace and prosperity for all. This common refrain has caused several American analysts to suspect that beneath China’s rhetoric of a “harmonious world” and its “peaceful rise” lies a hegemonic agenda. (Ikenberry, 2008, p. 30). Is there a foundation for such speculation? Rhetoric alone indicates not.

Unlike Russia, China had great success in establishing a rapport with America after the cold war. As such, China has justifiably exerted extreme caution in propagating the cause of multipolarity and directly criticizing U.S. hegemony. Furthermore (and also in contrast to Russia), China has exemplified a general regression of its overall use of anti-hegemony and unipolarity rhetoric. Although Deng Xiaoping was the first to formally express China’s view on multipolarity, his successor, Jiang Zemin, officially incorporated the concept of duoji shijie (multipolar world) into Chinese foreign policy in 1992 at the 14th Party Congress. During Jiang’s presidency, China’s foreign ministry asserted its strongest position on the issue of multipolarity and the dangers of unipolarity, stating:

[Multipolarity] helps weaken and curb hegemonism and power politics, serves to bring about a just and equitable order and contributes to world peace and development. . . . At present, by virtue of its economic, technological and military advantages, an individual country is pursuing a new “gunboat policy” in contravention of the United Nations Charter and the universally acknowledged principles governing international relations in an attempt to establish a unipolar world under its guidance. (Britingham, 2007, p. 99)
After 2003, and with the appointment of Hu Jintao, China’s multipolar position subtly changed to include the disclaimer that it was not “targeted at any particular country, nor ... aimed at re-staging the old play of contention for hegemony in history,” but should be viewed as a means to ensure “world peace, stability, and development.”

These positions were later clarified in an article by a leading policy adviser, Zheng Bijian. Writing in Foreign Affairs, he emphasized China’s conciliatory emergence onto the world stage as a prominent economic and political power (and served as a formal rebuttal to foreign allegations of a “China threat”). Zheng explained that unlike Nazi Germany or Imperial Japan, China does not harbor an ideological agenda or vie for global dominance, but instead seeks “a new international political and economic order ... achieved through incremental reforms and the democratization of international relations.” (Bijian, 2005 18-24). Within the year, China’s “peaceful rise” became a part of its official political discourse, with Hu and other senior officials incorporating the phrase into their domestic and international dialogues.(Men, 2007, p. 47).

Even buffered by disclaimers, however, the term “rise” made many Americans uneasy, especially as it supplemented China’s growing strategic partnerships around the globe. In response, China soon substituted “peaceful development” for “peaceful rise” so as to less blatantly assert China’s ascendance as a future pole of power. Today, with China’s GDP projected to surpass that of the United States, and with its dramatic increases in military expenditures, Beijing has even more reason to retain its cautious rhetoric. It has also shifted from solely promoting multipolarity to actively defending itself against those who might claim that it’s strengthening political, economic, and military circumstances are indicative of hegemonic interests.

Although-Russia and China both seemingly share the critique of hegemony and agree on the justice, peace, and stability inherent in a multipolar world order, the individual tone of each country’s leaders in doing so indicates a discrepancy in the means by which they might want to achieve this order. As exemplified in the previous analysis, linguistic oscillation persists between advocating multipolarity and denouncing unipolarity and hegemonism. Still, neither China nor Russia is quick to define these terms strategically.
Instead, the pursuit of a multi-polar world order (without mention as to how to achieve it) has become a ready-referenced point of agreement between the two countries in joint statements, treaties, and declarations. Another indicator of a discrepancy in China and Russia’s perception of multipolarity is the actions each country has taken since first adopting the term. In the next section, I will explore their actions in three areas: arms acquisitions and sales, regional alliances, and the U.S. invasion of Iraq. I will also explore the implications of Russia’s recent invasion of Georgia and China’s response, as this event illustrates a dramatic rift in the two countries’ positions on sovereignty—a formerly agreed upon principle incorporated into their mutual definition of multipolarity.

c) Arms Factor

Although the 2001 Sino-Russo Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation did not establish a formal alliance between China and Russia, it did include rhetoric indicating the anticipated military cooperation of the two countries. Article 7 of the treaty states that each signatory should look after its nation’s security by “maintaining reasonable and adequate weapons and armed forces.” Additionally, both countries should “consolidate each other’s security” by pursuing “confidence building measures in the military field.” The last clause of that article attempts to assuage any suspicion of ill intent, explaining that neither of these two objectives is aimed at a third party. This disclaimer, however, did not ease the anxiety of the United States, which classified both China and Russia as “global peer competitors” in the Pentagon’s 2001 defense report (US Dept. of Defence, 2001 at www.srwolf.com/reports/qdr2001.).

Not long after the ink dried on the Sino-Russian Friendship Treaty in August 2001, China procured forty Su-30MKK jetfighters from Russia’s primary arms export company, Rosoboronexport. Also within the year, China imported 168 Russian missiles and missile launchers, including $400 million in S-300PMU-2s (missile systems with long-range anti-aircraft capabilities). The following year, China purchased two Project 956EM destroyers and eight Project 636 vessels. In 2003, China procured twenty-four additional Su-30MKKs. Overall, according to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, Russian exports to China between 2001 and 2007 totaled 3,857 missiles and missile launchers,
nine warships, and 120 aircraft. (UN Office of Disarmament Affairs-
www.disarmament.un.org/UN_Register.ns)

Although many question such liberal arms exports to China, President Putin has repeatedly emphasized the importance of China’s defense capabilities in establishing a multipolar world order. China has also defended its military modernization, saying it is only attempting to “catch up” to the “international military evolution,” and that despite its increased expenditures, China’s military arsenal pales in comparison with that of other major countries.

Perusing comparative data on military expenditures and capabilities, one finds that China’s claim is correct, especially when one compares China to the United States. According to a 2005 study conducted by the RAND Corporation, the maximum amount China will be able to spend on researching, developing, and procuring weaponry between 2003 and 2025 is $490 billion dollars. This amount, while substantial, is only half of what it would take for China to develop or acquire weaponry as sophisticated as the current arsenal of the United States. (Crane, Cliff and Overholt, 2005:235-236).

This particular approximation also assumes China’s continued economic growth, which is no longer a safe assumption due to the dramatic effect of the American financial crisis on Chinese exports. Additionally, due to China’s over-employment in the military sector and the lack of financial incentives it offers for military innovation, its military development relies predominantly on Russian intelligence and technology rather than on indigenous production. Any serious prediction of China’s “catching up” to developed nations, or any serious claim of a Chinese military threat, must thus include an explanation of how China will overcome its weapons dependence and how it will substantially increase its military budget. Russia has a considerable head start on China in military modernization due to the prominent role of the Soviet Union in World War II, its “Chief Designer” program in the 1960s, and its arms race with the United States during the cold war. Russia’s consequent acquisition of human and material resources propelled it to the fore of the arms industry, and today, although Russia’s own (aging) military is not seen as a direct threat to the United States, its role as the world’s primary arms dealer...
allows it a leading role in building up militarized powers that can collectively rival the United States. It also allows Russia the authority to say which among those powers gets what. Russia’s weapons allocation is telling. Though China and Russia may be “friends” in the strategic sense, and Russia sells most of its arms to China, its most advanced weapons actually go to India, China’s global competitor, exemplifying Russia’s own “check” on Chinese power. (Buszynski, 2004, pp. 158-167).

2.3 Alliance Politics-Sanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO)

Prior to their agreement to a strategic partnership in 2001, China and Russia were already cooperating in the context of the “Shanghai Five,” a group comprised of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan that focused on regional security and border disarmament. The grouping also stood against the international “tendency” to unipolarity and subsequently to balancing the U.S. presence in Central Asia. With the expansion of NATO and the U.S.-led invasion of Serbia in 1999, the group signed the Bishkek Declaration, emphasizing a regional commitment to continued political and military cooperation in the context of a “general trend” of the world toward multipolarity. Although the declaration included diplomatic rhetoric, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who was less keen on euphemistic language, stated bluntly that he was “ready to fight, especially with the Westerners.” Yeltsin employed milder rhetoric in his joint statement with Jiang subsequent to the summit, stating: “The two sides agree to work together with the rest of the world to oppose the tendencies currently preventing the establishment of a just multipolar structure for international relations.”

On June 7, 2001, Uzbekistan became the sixth member of the Shanghai Five, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was established. The SCO posited its objectives against the backdrop of multipolarization, but it remained ambiguous as to the full extent of the military cooperation and economic cooperation the members thought necessary to achieve multipolarity. The organization’s charter, signed in 2002, was similarly vague, stating in its preface that the SCO’s purpose was “to jointly contribute to the strengthening of peace and ensuring of security and stability in the region in the
environment of developing political multi-polarity and economic and information globalization.”

Agreeing to “develop multipolarity” leaves much up for debate—including how a multipolar world order would best be achieved. Perhaps beneath the diplomatic rhetoric lies a fuller explanation as to each country’s definition of multipolarity—and thus, whether or not there should be concern about the undefined. The SCO exemplifies China’s and Russia’s commitment to the concept, as well as their first joint-effort to breach the rhetorical; but agreeing on a vehicle to balance unipolarity is still not synonymous with defining the means by which to do so. And even if the SCO’s charter and declaration seemingly outline the agreed-upon means, evidence indicates that the prioritization of these means very much differs as between China and Russia.

Mark Katz has identified the discrepancy between the Chinese and Russian perspectives on SCO by saying: “Instead of seeing the SCO as developing into a politico-military alliance [as does Moscow], Beijing views it more as an economic cooperation zone.” (Katz, 2007 p. 15). The chasm Katz highlights in the Sino-Russian perspective is exemplified by distinctive Chinese and Russian rhetoric regarding the SCO and also in the separate regional “alliances” they have chosen to participate in over the past decade.

Of course the term “alliance” in and of itself is a much contested term in the international community, especially when it suggests a counter to the West’s NATO. This is also the reasoning behind Beijing’s and Moscow’s continual protestations that the SCO is not an exclusive military bloc. The Russian presidential envoy for SCO affairs, Vitaly Vorobyov, emphasized this point in 2006, stating: “All the SCO’s founding documents are open. I do not think you can find any signs of a military-political bloc in them, even with a microscope.” (Interfax, June, 2006) Still, despite the professed openness (or ambiguity) of the SCO’s founding documents. Vorobyov admitted that its activities have a prominent “political component” that “logically” leads to “cooperation between the member-states’ defense and other security agencies . . .” (Ibid). Examples of such military cooperation include the China- Kyrgyzstan antiterrorist exercises in October 2002, the five-state exercises in August 2003, and the comprehensive military exercise
dubbed “Peace Mission 2007” in July 2007. This last exercise was the most organized SCO operation to date; not surprisingly, Russia and China took the lead.

“Peace Mission 2007” was also the largest of the joint-military operations conducted by the SCO. It involved over 4,000 soldiers from all six member-states, including 2,000 from Russia and 1,600 from China. Along with infantry, much of China’s Russian-procured arms accompanied China back into Russia for the operation. Despite the size of the affair, China was quick to assert that there was no intention of forming an alliance. An article written shortly after the exercise in Jiefang junbao, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army newspaper, explained: “China has conducted more than 17 joint military exercises with ten-plus countries. Does it mean to say that China is entering into military alliance with any of these countries? The answer is certainly negative.” (PLA Daily, July 20, 2007). China similarly dismissed the notion that the SCO would ally or collaborate with other regional security mechanisms in the affair, and rejected the proposal of General Yuriy Baluyevskiy for the involvement of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The CSTO emerged out of the Commonwealth of Independent States’ (CIS) Collective Security Treaty in 1992; it includes Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The organization’s intent, as posited by the then-CIS duma committee chairman, is to become “a functioning security organization with its own secretariat and rapid deployment force.” The role of this force is, in part, to quell international terrorism. Russia’s role in particular, as the largest and militarily strongest signatory, is to protect the other CSTO member states—and thus counteract the continued military presence of the United States in Central Asia. At its embryonic stage, the CSTO’s rapid deployment force consisted of a Russian military base in Kant, equipped with 15 SU-25s and SU-27s and 500 soldiers supplementing the Tajikistan force. In 2003, the CSTO requested to join forces with NATO, the justification being that while “NATO and the CSTO might be in different weight categories . . . in essence they are similar organizations because they include military components, political components, and components that deal with today’s challenges.” Despite the supposed benefits of NATO-CSTO cooperation, however, NATO remained reluctant to cooperate with the CSTO. (Bhadراكumar, Asia
Times March 6, 2006). The CSTO continued on without NATO’s endorsement, determined to become its own regional alliance. General Baluyevsky further explained that the CSTO was in response to “NATO’s attempts to involve CIS states in the bloc’s activity and to weaken their relations with Russia.”

In 2006, Russia announced that it planned to double both its infantry and military arsenal at Tajikistan. In July 2006, Russia and Tajikistan held a joint military exercise on the coast of the Caspian Sea, followed by a similar Russo-Kyrgyzstan exercise in October. In 2007, “Peaceful Mission Rubezh-2007” was held, in which Russia test-launched several of its missiles and the organization declared its intent to develop a more extensive military force—including four or five of the CSTO states. In 2008, Russo-Armenian forces participated in “Rubezh-2008” command war games, and Russia proposed that Article Four of the Cooperation Security Treaty be revised to encompass nuclear weapons, so as to further protect CIS states. (Ria Novosti, Dec. 3, 2007).

While the SCO and CSTO might seem to have similar aims, and did sign an agreement of mutual cooperation at the CIS summit in 2007, the discrepancies between the two are telling, and reflect differences between Chinese and Russian strategy when it comes to multipolarity and security. First, the intended scope of the CSTO is much broader than that of the SCO, as exemplified by its ambitions to mimic NATO. Second, the CSTO was established as more of a military alliance than the SCO, whose charter only gives cursory mention of the military implications of the organization. What one might argue is that despite these differences, Russia and China share the view that multipolarity means respect for a state’s sovereignty. After all, both the SCO and the CSTO emerged, in part, as a response to perceived U.S. encroachment on Central Asian territory. But do they truly hold the same view of sovereignty?

The internal rhetoric of Russia and China surrounding the SCO’s military operations seems to indicate that the two countries might attach different meanings to sovereignty. As Michael Levin notes: “While some PRC commentators went as far as to suggest that the terrain of the exercise areas was similar to Taiwan’s coast, the Russian media toyed with the idea of a joint occupation of North Korea, if necessary.” (Levin, 2008: 101). In
contrast to the China-Taiwan situation, North Korea is well outside the territorial jurisdiction of the Russian Federation. Thus, Russia’s allusion to the occupation of another country shifts the definition of sovereignty away from the territorial (and objective) into the realm of the moral (and subjective). But is this application universal? To answer this, I next examine China’s and Russia’s conceptions of sovereignty in the context of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Russia’s relations with post-Soviet states, and China’s relations with Taiwan.

In September 2002, the United States proposed a resolution in the UN Security Council (UNSC) accusing Iraq of illegally concealing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and threatening military action if the weapons were not surrendered. Russia, France, and China agreed that this was a rash decision and proposed that the United States await the conclusions of UN weapons inspectors in Iraq. Consequently, an amended resolution was proposed and passed the UNSC in November 2002. When the United States continued to press the necessity of invasion even after the Security Council’s chief weapons inspector issued his report questioning the U.S. claims, both China and Russia expressed concern. Russia went so far as to join Germany and France in issuing a joint statement and later a memorandum to the UNSC requiring that the United States give the UN more time to assess the situation.

Despite Russian, French, and German opposition, Britain and Spain joined the United States in invading Iraq on March 16, 2003. China adhered to its position on the importance of multi-polarity and the danger inherent in unilateral action, but did not choose to align itself with either the Germany-Russia-France or the U.S.-Britain-Spain coalitions. Kishore Mahbubani explains China’s silence in relation to its broader understanding of the United States: “[China] bent over backward to accommodate U.S. hegemony, bearing in mind the wisdom of an ancient Chinese proverb, in moments of weakness, swallow your bitter humiliation, and focus on growing stronger.” (Men, 2007: 52) While China was biting its tongue, Russia was less reserved: “[if] we allow international law to be replaced by might of the fist, according to which the stronger side is always right,” stated Putin, “then a key principle of international law, that of the sanctity of sovereignty of all states, comes into question.” (Ambrosio, 2005: 52)
The sincerity of Putin’s words is suspect considering Russia’s invasion of Georgia on August 10, 2008. Perhaps it is this action of the Russian Federation that best exemplifies Russia’s inconsistent rhetoric and the significant rift between the Chinese and Russian views vis-à-vis multipolarity. Immediately after Russia’s invasion, President George W. Bush warned that “only Russia can decide whether it will now put itself back on the path of responsible nations, or continue to pursue a policy that promises only confrontation and isolation.” The President’s statement indicates that Russia had to choose between two paths. But, did the Russian decision to invade Georgia represent a country blazing a new path, or was it only a stark example of a path already chosen? As mentioned, Russia has not taken well to the democratic revolutions of the former Soviet states or their incorporation into NATO—and Georgia is no exception. Since the Rose Revolution of 2003 and the election of President Mikhail Saakashvili, Georgia has positioned NATO membership among its top foreign-policy priorities. Furthermore, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the international community formally recognized the contested areas of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as part of Georgian territory. According to Putin (now prime minister), Russia had every “moral right” to acquire these territories after Kosovo independence, but instead agreed to a 1994 UN peacekeeping mandate to protect the citizens of these breakaway areas (most of whom were Russian). Consequently, Putin justified his 2008 attack against Georgia as a response to the Georgian government’s acts of genocide—against Georgian and Russian citizens.

Critical analysis, however, indicates that Russia’s actions were premeditated and were the culmination of a series of provocative Russian actions against the Georgian government dating back to 2006. A recent study of the conflict published by the Central-Asia Caucus Institute concludes that contrary to Putin’s claims, Russia’s invasion of Georgia was not a response to human-rights abuses in South Ossetia, but was a calculated Russian decision to punish Georgia for seeking collaboration with the West and to demonstrate to the West Russia’s renewed primacy over the post-Soviet space.

The West, in concert, disapproved of Russia’s action. Still, on August 10, 2008, Russia declared the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, in opposition to the opinion of the other states in the G-8 economic group. Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia and South
Ossetia also contravened the SCO’s commitment to respect sovereignty and territorial integrity as outlined in Article Five of its founding charter. Moreover, it violated Article One of the organization’s 2001 document, the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism, which prohibits member-states from instigating or abetting separatism. Consequently, although Russia wanted the SCO to issue a communique endorsing its actions, the other members refused to do so. Instead, they issued the Dushanbe Declaration, which diplomatically reiterates the SCO’s commitment to thwarting separatism and adhering to international law and asks in Article Three that the parties involved in the South Ossetian issue reconcile their differences through peaceful dialogue.

Among the SCO member-states, China in particular was placed in an extremely difficult position. Although China had established a rapport with Russia promoting a multipolar world, it could not openly endorse Russia’s invasion of Georgia and its acknowledgment of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Nor could China agree to Russia’s later request for a Sino-Russian “joint action on security and prevention issues” without simultaneously appearing to encourage separatism in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Taiwan (Ching-wei, Sept. 11, 2008).

The tension between China and Russia in this regard demonstrates a significant rift between the Chinese and Russian perspectives on state sovereignty. Although China and Russia may seem similarly situated as aspiring regional hegemons in a multipolar world order, China’s means of aggrandizing power is by promoting the unification of its country and defending its sovereignty against foreign and separatist threats, foregoing peace if necessary. Russia, on the other hand, with its recent invasion of Georgia, exemplifies a willingness to forego peace in order to violate a state’s sovereignty and demonstrate its military prowess to surrounding states and the world. As such, China’s position (and even its military preparation for a conflict with Taiwan) is more clearly in line with Article Four of the Sino-Russian Friendship Treaty, in which both sides agree to support each other in “defending the national unity and territorial integrity.” and Article Five, which explicitly mentions both countries’ commitment to defending Taiwan. Russia’s recent actions, in addition to contravening the SCO charter, also violate Article
Twenty of the Sino-Russian Friendship Treaty, expressing their joint commitment to “cracking down on . . . splittists.”

China’s 11th Five Year Plan states: “The trend toward multi-polarity in international politics is developing amid twists and turns, and voices for multilateralism are growing in the international community, imposing effective constraints on hegemonism and power politics and making it possible for China to manage big power relations, oppose foreign interference, and defend the national interests.” (People’s Daily, Jan 19, 2006). Undoubtedly, many twists and turns have occurred over the past decade, to which China’s promotion of multipolarity has remained a consistent subplot. Russia, in contrast, with its bellicose demeanor and dramatic policy shifts, has emerged a quite different champion of multipolarity—one content with directly challenging the hegemony of the United States and perhaps even making it possible for China to ascend peacefully.

As the second half of this article illustrates, China and Russia do not merely have differences of tone when addressing multipolarity. They also appear to differ fundamentally in their approach to it. Elizabeth Wishnick initially explained the Sino-Russian partnership by saying that “Russia, a declining great power, aims to recover its lost status, while China, a rising power, resists efforts to constrain its emerging global role.” Wishnick acknowledged that China and Russia had different motives in regard to their partnership. Time has eroded these ambitions. Now, the same motives that propelled Russia and China toward partnership and agreement on multipolarity have since driven them toward different means to reach these ends and caused them to employ a different definition of multipolarity altogether. Considering the lessons learned in regard to the recent past and the unexpected Sino-Soviet split, we might not want to overlook the danger in the undefined.

Decades old border dispute was another area which the two states have successfully tackled though some misunderstandings and suspicion among the populations of the both sides persists. Under the agreement on the eastern border signed in 1991 an area of 15 km in Russia's Primorski Karai (Maritime Province) including some small piece of islands in the Amur and Ussuri rivers and small piece of land along the Tumen River was to be
transferred to China. However, some local officials in Primorski Karai denounced the agreement alleging that land to be handed over would include two strategic section of Tumen river that would provide direct access to the sea of Japan and that Chinese were expected to build a seaport in the area that could compete with existing Russian Far East ports. (Ruisheng, 2002, pp-331-335). Now the border dispute has been resolved with the help of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Nevertheless, some Russians still fear that China will claim territory from Russia in the future.

2.4 Problem Areas Between Russia and China

A Russo-China border issues of considerable sensitivity concerns the extensive Chinese migration much of it illegal in to Russian territory. The demographic imbalance along the border with 150 million Chinese crowded in the North Eastern part of China and only 7 million Russians in the vast bordering territories of Siberia and the Far East has been a source of concern for Soviet and Russian citizens, officials and journalists for many years. As the border tensions eased at the beginnings of the 1990s, the scale of illegal immigration increased rising three fold between 1992 and 1993. This prompted Russia to conclude an agreement with Beijing in 1994 to establishing formal border crossing posts and tighten visa restrictions. The immediate impact was the sharp reduction in Sino-Russian trade much of which "concentrated across the border by Chinese traders. The Russian press continued to provide sensational accounts of illegal immigration (termed in one account as an "invasion of Huns"), prompting to an advisor to Yeltsin, Emil Plain, to write an article in the government's newspaper stating that "claims about dangerous level of Chinese immigration and related real threat to national sovereignty in Russian Far East are not supported by the actual facts." By his calculation the "Chinese Diaspora" in Russian Far East accounted for less than 3% of the region's population - about half as many as resided there after World War II. Pain pointed out that trade with China is a "life preserver" for the Far East and he blamed local authorities for whipping up anti-Chinese fears. (Donaldson & Nogee 1998, pp. 233-245).

The reduction in shuttle trade used the level of Sino-Russian trade, which had reached $7.8 billion in 1993 (second only to the level of Russia's trade with Germany), to fall to $

a) The Issues of Chinese Emigration to the Russian Far East

The emigration of Chinese into Russia has never been a primary issue in the meetings and discussions between Chinese and Russian government officials. The in/outflow of Chinese has been documented, effectively obviating the need to discuss Chinese emigration at the official level. The issue that the Russian government seems to be reluctant to speak about is what the Russian media bring up repeatedly. Although more than ten years have passed since the disintegration of the USSR, along with the communist system, the Russian people seem to think that Russia may once more fall under communism, this time under China. The Russian mass media, especially in the Russian Far East, have reported widely exaggerated numbers of Chinese in Russia. They seem to think that the emigration from China has been arranged and is being conducted by the Chinese government, which supposedly wants to obtain that which cannot be obtained with force — the expansion of territory. That Russia will change and become Chinese and that Russia will become a province of China (Zhinzni, 2002: 10) are two of the major themes the Russian media are propagating among the Russian people. It should be pointed out that there are more objective viewpoints based on investigation and research conducted by Russian scholars. However, these viewpoints do not appear to be widely supported by the public because only a small number of scholars hold those viewpoints.

It may be obvious that the Chinese government has never in the past planned and is not currently planning emigration to any specific country in the world. On the contrary, the Chinese government has gradually strengthened its control of illegal emigration from China. In fact, there are no massive migrations from China to Russia. Therefore, there can be no massive illegal migrations either. But the negative propaganda in Russia continues to have a very damaging effect on bilateral trade and people exchanges between China and Russia.
Prior to the 1980s, China’s national policy on the exit and entry of its citizens and foreign citizens was very strict. Since then China has reformed its policy towards a more open stance. Accordingly, the number of Chinese citizens traveling out of the country and the number of foreign citizens coming to China has increased rapidly. In response China’s legislature has had to gradually strengthen the laws in this area.

In November 1985, the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress approved the Law on the Entry and Exit of Foreign Citizens and the Law on the Entry and Exit of Chinese Citizens. In July 1995, China’s State Council approved the Act on Frontier Checking of the Entry and Exit and promulgated the act in September of the same year. The act contained regulations about the entry, exit, transit, length of stay, and travel of foreign citizens in China. It also contained regulations regarding the entry, exit, private travel, and punishment of violations for Chinese citizens. At present, the main purposes of foreign travel that are considered appropriate for Chinese citizens are to visit relatives and friends, to take care of settlements in foreign countries, to study in foreign countries, and to maintain professional duties. After receiving a passport, Chinese citizens are allowed to go to foreign embassies and consulates and apply for a visa. They may then travel abroad with their valid passport and visa.

In March of 1994, the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress approved the Additional Stipulations on Chastising Crime of Illegally Organizing and Transporting Persons across the National Frontier. These articles were added to the Criminal Law of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which had been revised in March of 1997. Clearly, strong authority from the legislature has supported the efforts against illegal emigration from China.

In May 2000, China’s Ministry of Public Security issued the Act of Frontier Management on Ships along the Coasts. This act was dutifully incorporated into the provinces and autonomous regions of coastal China, effectively ending the previous system of different rules for different provinces. This act has also played an extremely important role in protecting China from the illegal entry of foreign citizens and controlling illegal emigration of Chinese citizens.
Without a doubt, China has accomplished much in the last 20 years, especially in the areas of legislative and federal power. China’s political situation has stabilized, the protection for the public has improved, and the living standards of the population, especially in several regions, have risen considerably. Yet China’s economic development lags behind developed countries, and this results in illegal immigration of foreign nationals and illegal emigration of Chinese citizens. The majority of illegal emigrants are peasants from the coastal regions of China. International criminal groups collude to offer illegal travel to Chinese peasants who are eager to go abroad in search of a better life. Because peasants often have little knowledge of the national laws regarding exiting China, criminal organizations have no trouble tempting them away from China. However, illegal emigration from China exceeds the norms only in a few regions and is very small in absolute terms or as a proportion of the total number of illegal migrants in the world.

Illegal Chinese emigration has been located to certain processes. First, an individual may choose a country from which it is relatively easy to obtain a visa, travel to that country with a valid visa, and then slip through to a Western European or North American country. Second, Chinese citizens may travel abroad with false documents. The Chinese in this group will alter their passport by putting in a different identification photo or otherwise altering the passport. Third, some individuals hide in shipping containers or in other places on ships to escape from the routine customs and border inspections. Fourth and finally, Chinese citizens slip through weak points in the federally enforced check points either on land or on the seas. In response to the knowledge that Chinese citizens have been misusing their passports, the Chinese government has strengthened the operation of its passport offices. The government has increased its vigilance at every stage of passport procedures, including application, approval, frontier check points, and patrols along the coasts.

The judicial department of China has taken a strong stance against illegal emigration, especially against the illegal organization and transportation of Chinese citizens across Chinese boundaries and forgery, alteration, and sale of immigration documents. In June 2000, the twelfth edition of the Chinese passport was issued. This edition was produced...
with a high level of technical expertise, which should make it more difficult to forge or alter passports. In addition, the regional departments of China have been using television monitori systems in governmental offices on land and on the ships which began patrolling the Chinese seas in 1998. All of these measures have enhanced the Chinese government’s ability to control illegal emigration and immigration.

While the judicial branch has been strengthening its enforcement of laws and punishments, the Chinese government has also been increasing its cooperation with the countries that share its borders in order to improve the exchange of information and technology against illegal immigration. Illegal Chinese emigrants in foreign countries have been repatriated in shiploads when their Chinese citizenship has been confirmed. International cooperation in repatriation has played an important and active role in the effort against illegal emigration.

According to China’s Ministry of Public Security, Chinese governmental offices along the nation’s border handled 315 cases of illegal emigration between 1999 and 2001. These offices reported seizing 2,057 illegal emigrants passing to and from China in the frontier areas. In 2001, Chinese authorities on the seas dealt with 540 cases of illegal emigrants and apprehended 2,480 illegal emigrants. In 2002, the numbers decreased by 22 percent and 54 percent, respectively. These figures demonstrate that illegal emigration of Chinese citizens by sea has been dealt with effectively. In addition, Chinese officials arrested 2,715 organizers and transporters of illegal emigrants, 511 of them being convicted as felons. (China’s Ministry of Public Security, 2002).

In summary, the various efforts of the Chinese government over the course of the past decade in the customs offices, over land, and on the sea have reduced the scale of illegal emigration of Chinese citizens.

In the early 1990s, the flow of Chinese nationals across the Chinese-Russian border increased due to the expansion of trade between the two countries, especially between the Chinese and Russian frontiers. In 1982 the two governments signed an agreement to restore the validity of a 1958 trade agreement. The earlier agreement put a stop to the
flow of Chinese and Russians over the Chinese-Russian border in the 1960s and 1970s. At that time, travel cooperation was worked out between Heihe City, China and Blagoveshchensk, USSR whereby each side limited the number of tourists traveling to the other side to a maximum of 100 per day. Because of Soviet regulations, the “tourists” were not allowed to sell the goods that they might have brought with them. They were allowed to buy only a few local goods and bring them back to their country. On the eve of the disintegration of the USSR, trade between the border provinces of China and Russia stood at one hundred million Swiss francs, and there were more than 10,000 Chinese citizens in the Russian Far East working under labor contracts under a bilateral agreement (Guozeng, 2000: 708).

On December 27, 1991, the Chinese government recognized the independence of the Russian Federation and the two countries agreed that the diplomatic relationship that had existed between China and the USSR would continue. New bilateral trade links were established quickly. In early March 1992, the two sides concluded the Agreement on Trade Relations between China and Russia. The agreement provided for the building of zones for cooperative development on the Russian side of the Sino-Russian border. In May of the same year, the construction of a zone for mutual trade between Manchuria City, China and Zabaykalsk City, Russia began. In August 1992, Deputy Prime Minister Tian Jiyun’s visit to Moscow resulted in the signing of the Agreement on Principles of Sending and Accepting Chinese Citizens in Russian Enterprises, Joint Companies, and Departments. These agreements promoted the frontier trade and mutual visits of citizens of the two countries, and Chinese citizens going to the Russian Far East increased rapidly. During the first visit of President Boris Yeltsin to China in December 1992, the leaders of the two countries signed a joint statement, which pointed out, “Both sides should create beneficial conditions for the trade links within the framework of the agreements and protocols between the countries, including the trade links between the regions along the frontier and on the basis of direct contacts between enterprises, organizations, and entrepreneurs”. (People’s Daily, Dec. 19, 1992).

It should be noted that a bilateral agreement from the Soviet era stipulated that Chinese and Soviet visas must be remitted for the citizens from either country who carried
diplomatic, public, and ordinary passports. For the first two years after the disintegration of the USSR, this requirement was still valid and provided the convenience for mutual visits of the citizens of China and Russia.

On December 9, 1993, at the request of Russia, the Chinese and Russian governments signed the new Agreement on the Remittance of Visas for Persons with Diplomatic and Public Passports and the Agreement on the Visas for the Citizens Coming and Going. The two agreements became effective on January 28, 1994, just 30 days after signing. The first agreement stipulated that the regulation of visa remittance was changed to the regulation of visa requirement for all Chinese citizens with either an ordinary public passport or a diplomatic passport. The new visa regulations did not play a positive role in bilateral trade. On the contrary, these measures drastically reduced the number of Chinese citizens going to Russia, especially in the frontier regions of Russia and, consequently, cut the volume of trade and other forms of economic cooperation in the frontier regions (Chinese Diplomatic Year Book, 1999: 254)

Meanwhile, the Chinese government has taken steps to simplify the procedures for the entry of Russian citizens into China to promote exchange between the two countries. In February 1998, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs a note concerning the Agreement for Building Sino-Russian Mutual Trade Zones and Simplifying Visa Procedures for the Entry of Russian Citizens. The note stated, “in order to further consolidate Sino-Russian trade relations and promote economic prosperity in the frontier areas, China and Russia agreed to simplify the procedures for the entry of Russian citizens into the trade complexes in Manchuria City, Heihe City, and Suifenhe City, China in the frontier areas. Russian citizens with a valid passport are allowed into the above trade complexes under the visa remittance after checking with the departments of customs and frontier defense, but they are forbidden in other areas than the trade complexes.” (Li & Takalev, 2001: 50).

Early in the new century, at the suggestion of the Russian government, China and Russia continued to strengthen the management of their respective citizens’ travel between the two countries. On February 29, 2000, the two sides concluded the Agreement on Citizens
Coming and Going. The new agreement became effective on May 25, 2001 and invalidated the previous agreements (the Agreement on the Remittance of Visas for Persons with Diplomatic and Public Passports and the Agreement on the Visas for the Citizens Coming and Going). The new agreement stipulated that after May 25, 2001, citizens of each country, except diplomats and employees in land, sea, and air transportation, were required to obtain a valid visa to visit the other country. On November 1, 2002, the Russian government published the Law on the Status of Foreigners in the Russian Federation, which provided that all foreign residents, regardless of nationality and occupation, must obtain a migrant card.

In order to prove their status and occupation, all foreign residents were asked to show to the local police their migrant card together with their passport, visa, and a document that shows they were permitted to reside in the Russian Federation. According to the regulations of the Migration Department of the Russian Federation, the deadline for obtaining the migrant card was February 15, 2003. However, as of early February, only a small number of foreign migrants had obtained a migrant card. For example, in Moscow alone, only 30,000 out the estimated 800,000 foreign residents or more in the city had obtained their migrant card. At present, Chinese citizens in Russia are mainly permanent personnel working in official agencies, students, businesspersons, and laborers in Russian companies. Among these groups, the businesspersons and laborers have the greatest difficulty in obtaining the required migrant card. (Chinese Diplomatic Year Book, 2003: 272)

Since 2002, the Russian government has continually published several laws and decrees. Based on the new regulations, Russian companies are required to provide documentation on their tax situation and financial standing to the relevant governmental department as a precondition for receiving a permit to employ foreign workers. Because of this paperwork, many companies have lost and will continue to lose their eligibility to invite foreign workers. A great many Chinese laborers and businesspersons are anxious that they may have to return to China on account of expired documents.
These Russian restrictions began early in the new century. For the last two years, Chinese citizens with a valid visa issued by the Russian embassy often failed to go through customs at Moscow airports. Most of the Chinese citizens that were denied exit or entry in Moscow were laborers and businesspersons who were unfamiliar with Russian laws and language. After paying many fines, they typically had to return to China. Russian customs officials explained that the Russian companies that had invited these Chinese citizens to work for them had lost their standing with respect to foreign employment.

Under these circumstances, many Chinese citizens face difficulties in entering and exiting Russia. The application process for Russian work permits has been suspended since August of 2002 and this has forced some Chinese citizens to return to China, while others have been waiting a very long time for approval of the applications they had already submitted. The Russian media reported that the number of Chinese citizens who work as laborers or businesspersons in Russia would decrease by roughly 50 percent by 2003. (Songline, 2003: 42)

In summary, the number of Chinese citizens in Russia has been drastically reduced due to the Russian regulations. As a result, Sino-Russian trade has not increased as fast or as much as it could have during this period. For example, due to the new visa regulation that became effective in early 1994, the overall volume of foreign trade in the Russian Far East decreased by 30 percent from the previous year and trade between Russia and China specifically dropped by 79 percent. In Khabarovsky Krai, trade decreased by 83 percent; in Amur Oblast, by 80 percent; and in Chita Oblast, by 83 percent during the same period. In addition, the share of Sino-Russian trade in China’s total trade fell from 2 percent in the second half of the 1990s to less than 2 percent in 2002.

The Controversy over the Number of Chinese Migrants in the Russian Far East since the 1990s, Chinese government agencies and academic institutions have not conducted any systematic investigations or surveys about Chinese migrants in Russia, including the Russian Far East. In the strict sense of the word, “migrant” means the populations who migrate across a border with the aim of long-term or permanent settlement in the destination country. Therefore, it is doubtful that the information that Russian scholars
have obtained through local surveys reflects accurate information on Chinese “migrants” in Russia. The real number of Chinese migrants in Russia is very small. As for the Chinese government and academic institutions, they have not recognized that there has ever been a massive wave of Chinese migrants to Russia. It follows logically that, in their view, neither could there be a massive wave of Chinese migrants to the Russian Far East.

It is quite possible that when conducting the surveys, Russian scholars thought that “Chinese migrants” meant those Chinese who permanently live and/or routinely conduct business in Russia. Under this definition, Westerners, Japanese, or Koreans who do business in Russia should also be seen as migrants. In the opinion of one Russian scholar, however, Westerners, Japanese, and Koreans are not considered “migrants” because they “leave the country when their contracts expire.” According to the scholar’s own logic, Chinese citizens who periodically travel between China and Russia should be seen as a case similar to a Westerner, Japanese, or Korean who does the same. As this demonstrates, there are inconsistencies in the popular beliefs of the Russian people, which are also apparent at the scientific level. The crux of the issue is that if these Chinese who often leave and return to Russia are not seen as migrants, then it would make no sense to discuss “massive waves” of Chinese migrants in the Russian Far East.

**Table 2.1 The Length of Chinese Respondents’ Stay in Russia**

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<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 years</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 4 years</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, according to Dr. Larin, “not more than 30,000 Chinese were simultaneously in the Russian Far East” in 1999, and the number was not significantly different in 2002. (Gelbrass, 2003: 197). If the Chinese who live in the Russian Far East for more than four years are seen as migrants, their share of the total number in 2002, shown in the above table, was roughly 10 percent, so they should have been about 3,000 in number. The Chinese prefer to live in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok because of the areas’ climate and location, so the Chinese migrants in the rest of the Russian Far East should be lower than 10 percent of the total number, that is, far less than 3,000 persons.

Since 1992, there have been a great many articles and reports in the Russian media that seem to believe that the Chinese government has organized and encouraged emigration of Chinese citizens to Russia, especially the Russian Far East. As with most reports on the number of Chinese citizens in Russia or the Russian Far East, this viewpoint is utterly groundless. President Jiang Zemin addressed this belief in September of 1994 and stated,

In recent years, because of the situation of rapid expansion of bilateral exchanges, there has emerged some out-of-order phenomena in the fields of frontier trade and people coming-and-going. I want to point out that the disorder has occurred because of the actions of individuals, not because of any policy of the two governments. (People’s Daily, Sept. 4, 1994)

In fact, even in 1992 and 1993, when the visa was remitted to Chinese citizens with ordinary public passports, the number of Chinese who went to the Russian Far East was limited, especially when compared with the vast population of China. According to Russian scholars, “the number of Chinese in the Far East in 1992-1993 did not exceed 50,000 to 80,000, including some 10,000 to 15,000 legal contract workers and 10,000 to 12,000 students.” The head of the Primorye passport and visa service stated, “there were only 37 permanent Chinese residents registered in the Krai in 1999.” (Larin & Rubtsova, 2001: 233). It needs to be stressed that the Chinese shuttle trader, who often leaves and returns to Russia for individual business and always brings money obtained in Russia back to China, does not intend to live in Russia for a long period of time.
An article published in Moscow in August of 2003 also discussed this problem and stated that "the surveys revealed an interesting trend. Chinese migrants in most countries want to leave the homeland permanently, but Russia generally cannot retain them. The majority of Chinese come here to do business only for one or two months, or, if they are contract workers, 10 months. Therefore, it may be only an illusion that Chinese laborers can reconstruct the Far East. Moreover, the survey shows us that our neighbors are so scared of the Russian departments at various levels that they need to offer bribery to all Russian personnel, including the staff in the frontier stations and in customs. All people recognize that Russian policemen can be avaricious and they are anxious that the 'bare-headed gang' is lawless". (Saronkov, The Times, Aug 3, 2003).

The popular and much discussed topic of the Russian media is that China aims to take back the territory it lost to Russia in earlier history. Even after the Sino-Russian Treaty of Good Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation was signed in July 2001, Russia's viewpoint was that "the treaty of 2001 states PRC's official abandonment of any territorial claims against Russia. The fact is that the treaty is in force only for twenty years on behalf of the government, but the ordinary Chinese who arrive in Russia have their own understanding of who is the real owner of the land they want to settle. Often they directly say that the territory will be returned to China soon." (Gelbras, 2003: 134) This Russian contradicts himself when he points out in the same article that "one of the most important conclusions from the research was that the largest concentration of Chinese migrants in Russia are found not in the Russian Far East, but in European Russia." According to this logic, the Chinese go to European Russia because they think they are the real owner of territory there, including Moscow and Saint Petersburg, and that those two cities will be returned to China. Could that viewpoint be right?

In conclusion, international research about the issue of in/outflow of Chinese nationals in Northeast Asia has not only academic significance, but also real-world significance that can be used for clarifying the relevant problems in the mutual policies and mutual relations among the countries of the region. The Russian academic institutions conducting local surveys and opinion polls should be urged to provide only the facts, so that objective researchers can deduce logical conclusions about the issues from the data.
obtained. Those logical conclusions can be beneficial to the Chinese and Russian governments as they work to develop relevant policies for a practical solution.

In fact, this insecurity regarding illegal migration are not the result of Chinese actions and policies but a reflection of internal Russian problems. Russian concern that Chinese could become the lingua-franca of the Russian Far Eastern Region are directed at the failure of the Russian authorities Central and local - to regenerate the region. Possible remedies, such as incentives to encourage migration from European Russia and from ethnic Russians in the Baltic States and Central Asia have not been seriously attempted. In the meantime, local inhabitants are leaving in droves in response to living miserable conditions even by Russian standards. Unfortunately, in the absence of any early prospects of improvement (let alone a lasting solution) the Chinese serve as convenient scapegoat and bogeyman. (Dmtri, 1989, p. 9).

Apart from migration problem, there is some concern that Russia could lose control of its most advanced military technology. The Russo-China trade relationship is a prime example of one in which armaments constitutes the single most important export accounting to at least one third of the $7 billion at the beginning of 1997. Combat aircrafts have been the chief components of Russian deliveries; China has purchased at least six dozen transcontinental SU27 fighters, which are capable of making Beijing-to-Moscow trip in two and half-hours with one mid air refueling. Other categories of purchases which have been concluded or which are being discussed include naval vessels (Soveremanyi-class destroyers equipped with Supersonic missiles, two Kilo636 diesel-powered submarines and less advanced Varshu-Vianka Submarines), S-300 surface-to-air missile sets, T-72 Tanks, Smerch multiple rocket launchers, and the technology for advanced gas centrifuges used in uranium enrichment and for MIRV missiles. (Dmitri, 1999, pp. 9-11).

According to the Russian air force Chief of Staff, China concluded the largest military contract in Russia's history in 1995. The deal amounted to more than $ 2 billion for the technology and licenses to manufacture the SU-27 at a factory in Shenyang province. Production began in 1999. Russian press reported concern that China would thereby free
itself of the need to purchase aircraft from Moscow in future, and that if China made
minor modification to the plane's design, it might even become competitor in the export

Another area of major concern between Russia and China is that by no means all the
payment comes in the form of cash and defense factories often ended up relying on
bartered products in order to realize their value. There has been such extreme cases as the
case of the Chinese pigs which were traded for an arms shipment that was banned in
Russia by the veterinary inspector, who suspected that they might spread hog plague in
the country.

In another instance, the Chinese barged 15000 low-quality radio-cassette players for three
Mi-60 helicopters. However, whereas the barter method initially constituted about three
fourth of Chinese payments, China's growing dollar trade surplus have enabled Russian
negotiations to arrange for hard currency payment in recent year contracts.

A far more significant issue is whether Russia is endangering its own long-term security
by selling to its giant neighbour its most advanced weapons and the know-how to
produce them. Russian military sources have expressed envy that Beijing is receiving
more modern equipments than their own units possess.

China is said to be a 'sleeping giant' who is fully devoted to its economic development
today and does not want to be involved in any conflict to divert its attention from
development. But one can not be sure whether its present state of mind will remain same
in the future. Today, Russia is desperately selling its advanced weapon to earn foreign
currency which its Soviet era defence industry badly requires for its survival. In the long
run once the Chinese get to acquire the technological know how this could be dangerous
for Russia's own security. The AK-47 is the best example. The Chinese acquired its
technological knowhow and subsequently produced AK-S6 with slight modification and
now Russia has lost the control over AK-47 completely world over.
On their part, Russian dealers are outraged over blatant Chinese imitations of their weaponry, built from designs supplied on an explicit understanding that the weapons were to be purchased.

The overdue aircraft are from a deal signed in 2005, in which China agreed to buy 30 IL-76 transport aircraft and eight IL-78 aerial refuelling tankers from Russia. But the Tashkent Aircraft Plant, based in Uzbekistan’s capital, declared soon after the signing that it was unable to build the planes independently owing to financial and technical problems.

To resolve the problem, Russia gave three alternative proposals to the Chinese. The first was to co-produce the plane's parts in Tashkent, as well as at the Ulianovsk and/or Voronezh aviation factories in Russia, and assemble the aircraft in Voronezh. The second was to completely manufacture the aircraft in Russia. And, the third was to assemble the planes in Tashkent, with parts produced in Russia. But this meant Russia would have to add new equipment to the Ulianovsk and Voronezh aviation factories, so Rosoboronexport asked the Chinese to accept a higher price for the aircraft.

China's response was swift and savage. It twice postponed an annual high-level conference on cooperation in defence technology. Beijing says that to restart the talks, Russia has to fulfil the aircraft contract. Russia counters that the present problem requires new discussions, without any conditions. US and Japanese negotiators know from beforehand the Chinese tendency to set stringent pre-conditions for political talks and other negotiations. Now, the Russians are feeling the heat.

b) China’s Complaint Regarding Quality of Goods from Russia

To press home its advantage, China also criticised the quality of its Russian weapons, especially about the short service-life of optical and electronic detection devices (IRST) fitted on the SU-27SK fighter. Russia says the problems are caused by improper use, and shows photos of the IRST being used for the Chinese air force's Su-27SK without protective coverings, even in bad weather.
To compound the problem, the Chinese air force (PLAAF) is one of Russia's biggest customers. It has bought 100 advanced Su-30MKK multipurpose fighters and 48 Su-27SK fighters. It also obtained license production rights for 200 Su-27SKs and started making them in 1996, but suspended production after 95 Chinese-made J11As were completed last year. Russia also backed out of the deal owing to technical reservations.

The Chinese navy has bought 12 kilo class 877/636 diesel submarines and four 956E/EM missile destroyers, new warships, as well as eight battalions each of S-300PMU/PMU-1 and S-300PMU-2 long range surface-to-air missiles, apart from other naval subsystems for Chinese carriers.

c) Russia Calls China as 'King of Cloning'

Moscow is unhappy with China's massive production of copycat versions of Russian weapons. Russian arms manufacturers have been taken by surprise with the sheer speed and scale of China's copycat capabilities.

Often, Chinese dealers say they want to buy Russian arms, begin negotiations, and ask as many technical questions as possible. They then take photos and videos of the weapons, request all available documents, and repeatedly come back to the table to discuss technical issues.

After major document exchanges and extensive technical negotiations, the dealers disappear. Two or three years later, a Chinese copy of the weapon that was under discussion appears on the market.

The Chinese A100 multiple launch rocket system (MLRS), for example, is almost identical to the Russian SMERCH MLRS. Even the shape is the same! The Chinese PLZ05 155-mm self-propelled gun (SPG) howitzer system (like the Bofors gun) is a copy of the Russian 2S19M1 SPG.

In the mid-90s, China asked the Russian Phazotron Radar Design Bureau to help the PLAAF to upgrade the Chinese F8II fighters. China purchased two ZHUK-8II airborne
radars from Phazotron, ostensibly to test their capabilities. The PLA AF gained access to many technical documents, as it had promised to buy at least 100 radars. But, the Chinese never came back. Two years ago, the new Chinese F81IM fighter was launched, with new "indigenous" multi-function radar.

When the Chinese navy bought the Russian 956E/EM missile destroyer from Russia, it came with a number of subsystems including the Fregat M2EM 3D radar and the MR-90 tracking radar and sonar. China's domestic Type 054A missile frigate (FFG) now has an identical radar system. Russian designers from the Salyut factory that developed the radars say the speed at which they have been cloned is "unbelievable".

But Italy and France had almost identical experiences during their military hardware honeymoon with China in the "80s. China bought two sets of Sea Tiger onboard ship radars, two sets of Crotale air defense missiles, and two sets of Tavitac naval command and control systems from France. It also picked up a few sets of sonar and EW systems from Italy. Chinese versions of the above systems are now standard issue on Chinese navy warships.

In the year 2000 there were rumors that Putin had signed a secret decree suspending of transfer of sensitive arms technology and know how to China. Moscow was concerned that China was buying Russian military technology and know-how while avoiding the purchase of large ready-made stock of military hardware. (Times of India, March 13, 2000). In other words China was more keen for technology transfer. This would obviously help it to develop its own defence production capability while lessening its dependence on Moscow. (Sakwa, 203, p. 186).

Most Russian analysts appear to believe that China's short term foreign policy ambitions are directed towards Taiwan and the South-China Sea, and that her interest in stability in Central Asia parallels those of Russia. Russian made equipments may indeed enable Beijing to obtain a regional advantage in force projection capability in future Taiwan crisis; the Sovereignnyi destroyers cruise missiles have a combat range of three hundred miles, are reportedly resistant to US air defence system, and will allow China to test the
naval superiority of US in the East China Sea. But expressing Russian government's view point, former defense minister Pevel Grachev declared in 1995 that "China posses no threat to Russian security now and will not in the near future" and he asserted that if Russia did not sell arms to China, some other country would (The Economist, April 26, 1997, p. 19).

Another trouble spot in China's Xinjiang province, whose population is ethnically kin to that of the neighbouring post-Soviet states, is troubled by sporadic anti-Beijing rebellious that could potentially spark a cross-border "liberation war". From that perspective even with respect to the near future by closely associating with China and by selling it arms, Russia risks upsetting the delicate military balance in Asia and even being drawn in to China's territorial disputes with Taiwan, Vietnam, Japan, and ultimately the U.S. (Moltz, 1995, p. 1995).

At a more generalized level, there exists a cultural divide that frequently obscures and undermines commonalities of interests. Many Russians who even advocate strategic partnerships, subscribe to the image of Russia as a "civilizational barrier" against the barbarian, 'East'. Although these days the principle danger is seen as Islamic radicalism emanating from the South, the very concept of Russian as a guardian of 'western' values inhibits rapprochement with China. It foster a superiority complex that many Chinese find unwarranted in a state they view as economically backward, militantly crippled and of diminishing international influence. (Menon & Ziegler, 2002, pp. 38-39).

The combination of historical fears and political / civilizational stereotyping has reinforced to some extent West-centrism in both Russia and China. As a consequence, the strategic partnership carries the whiff of second class treatment, actual priorities being elsewhere. This is especially true in Moscow, where relations with America, Western Europe and former republics of the Soviet Union absorb considerable more attention and resources. Such relativism detracts from the bilateral relationship in two ways. In the first place, it sometimes translates into a careless attitude towards the strategic concerns of the other. For example, Putin administration made significant commitments in its external relations - notably endorsement of American military presence in Central Asia post 9/11
and strategic arms agreements with Washington after only minimal consultation with Beijing. Second China and Russia have to some extent become competitors for Western favours, whether in the form of foreign investment, political approbation or advantageous security arrangement (Menon & Ziegler 2002 pp. 38-39).

Over the next decade, radical changes in the thinking of both countries are unlikely. The ambiguities with strategic partnership will remain. On the plus side, a confluence of views on many international issues, common threat perceptions, expanding economic ties can be detected. In the minus column the burden of historical and civilizational prejudices, an increasingly dominant West-centrism in Moscow and Beijing and the Russian anxieties regarding China's rise as the next superpower continue. Within this overall dynamic, three issue areas will bear particular attention i.e., (i) development over the Angarsk-Nakhodka oil pipeline; (ii) security management on the Korean peninsula; and (iii) strategic projections in former Soviet central Asia. (Lo, 2004. pp. 295-309).

Few issues highlight the dual nature of the Russian-Chinese dynamics so vividly as the pipeline debate. On the one hand collaboration on this project reflects the determination of both countries to take their relationship up to the next level. However, this symbolism is double-edged and has raised stakes all round, for ill as well as for good. Large scale energy and infrastructural projects represents the 'future' and most promising avenue for diversifying and enriching the bilateral relationship, yet they also enhance the potential for serious disagreements. In the event that Putin opts for Nakhodka route, as many believe he will, there will be political as well as economic ramifications. Beijing will not take only grave offence at the cancellation of prior intergovernmental undertakings but might also interpret the decision as signaling a fundamental reorientation in Putin's foreign policy away from geographical 'balance of multivectoralism' towards a clear strategic commitment to the West (Lo, 2004, pp. 295-309).

Moscow is also tying to restrain China discreetly from occupying too dominant a position in north-east Asian affairs, in the first instance on the Korean peninsula. To some extent Russia sees China regionally as the analogue of the US globally i.e. as a country with an overtly hegemonic agenda. Paradoxically, Russia's position as the least influential of all
the parties involved in the Korean question is to it; advantage, since its weakness enables it, more or less plausibly to put itself forward as the disinterested facilitator of the peace process.

In Central Asia, Moscow is engaged in much more activist project i.e., reestablishing itself in the traditional sphere of influence. Here Russia sees itself as a regional hegemon, a position it is reluctant to cede. However, China's geographical proximity to Central Asia and considerable security and economic interests there mean that it will not simply 'go away'. For the moment this is not an issue, given Beijing's willingness to accept a secondary role and the existence of a Russian-Chinese security consensus against the threat of Islamic racialism. But there is no guarantee that this commonality of interest will remain the dominant reality. As Russia seeks to reassert its presence and influence in the region, and China attempts to maximize its economic stake Central Asia looms as perhaps the most likely theatre for renewed bilateral tensions. (Shaumina, 2003, pp. 361-363)

In early June 1999, a joint statement by the foreign ministers of Russia and China insisted that neither of them intended to form a 'political-military alliance directed against any country or group of countries'. From 10 to 11 December 1999 President Yeltsin visited Moscow and issued a joint statement with Jiang Zemin on world affairs. They unilaterally opposed NATO action in Yugoslavia, the US targeting of Chinese embassy in Belgrade, and Western 'hysteria' against Russia's military action in Chechnya. Russian analysts linked the declaration closely to Yeltsin's blunt reminder to President Clinton not to forget "for a moment that Russia holds a full arsenal of nuclear weapons" and "would not allow the USA dictate to the entire world" (Black, 2004, pp. 297-305).

At present both Russia and China is using each other to counter balance Japanese or US regional dominance. Yet the emergence of China as a global super power may conflict with Russia's strategic interest, particularly if it succeeds in becoming an active and
important partner with Asia-Pacific countries, which is also China's ultimate regional goal.

Russian and Chinese relations have collapsed and been restored many a time, and have also been interpreted differently in both countries. Each of the two states has complex relations with outside world. Both states were subject to aggression on the part of third countries and helped one another to struggle against foreign aggression. Taking an overview to the history of Russo-Chinese relations it is possible to make some generalizations.

1. Russia and China have always had controversies in their relations but generally managed to keep the peace, not entirely large scale military hostilities towards each other and never proclaiming war against each other;

2. Russia and China have always been exploring some form of alliance with each other;

3. Russia and China have several times tried to conclude treaties of friendship and union, but these treaties have been broken several times. (Voksresenski, 2003, pp-207-208).

As Putin assumed office on December 31, 1999, he was determined to reassert control over the state apparatus (primarily in the energy sector), Russia's periphery such as in the Far East, and its "near abroad" in Central Asia and the Caucasus. (Wishnick, Moreover, the strong China-Russia relations developed under Yeltsin changed as a result of Putin's initially pro-Western policies. Russia's involvement in the war on terror together with Russia's agreement to a US military presence in Central Asia in 2001 did not go down well in Beijing either. Putin's domestic constituency, including the elite and the general population, found his reengagement with Washington equally awkward.

Convinced that things could not get much worse, Putin's acceptance of NATO's expansion into the Baltics, permission given to the US' withdrawal from the ABM-treaty, and quiet consent of American forces' presence in Georgia raised additional fears in the
Duma, within Russian public opinion, and to some extent among the Chinese. These fears from the Chinese side were somewhat put to rest as Chinese president Jiang Zemin and Vladimir Putin signed the Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation on July 16, 2001. (China Report, 2001: 25).

The 20-year strategic and economic cooperation treaty was to be the most far-reaching one ever entered into since the time of Mao and Stalin. Yet only two days after, on July 18, Russian President Vladimir Putin seemed to demonstrate little intention of limiting himself to the sole China option. At a press-conference on the ABM-treaty he proposed that NATO should either be disbanded or that Russia should join it, and seemed to place little emphasis on the significance and the implications that this would have for Russia’s China engagement. Especially since the Treaty signed with China two days earlier specified that: “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.” Considering Putin’s statements, China cannot have put much trust in the value of this agreement. The Chinese, however, continue to say that Sino-Russian ties are budding. This was not least seen with the publication of an article in the CCP’s mouthpiece People’s Daily in late November 2002 titled “China-Russia Relations Remain Better than Russian-US Ties.” (Legando, 2001, 10).

d) The Siberian Pipeline Struggle:

Besides seeking to engage with both the east and west, Vladimir Putin was also able to strengthen his control and presidential powers in the domains of foreign and security policy at the expense of the federal Duma (the parliament). This was particularly seen in Putin’s foreign policy towards Japan and China, and especially with his decision to favor Japan in the Siberian pipeline project, something which was opposed by most Russian decision-makers at the time. This was in contradiction with the agreement signed in July 2001 specifying that the Siberian pipeline would be built from Nakhodka in Russia to the Chinese town of Daqing. The 2,400-kilometer pipeline was planned to carry up to 20 million tons of oil representing 12 percent of China’s total oil consumption. In late May
2003, the deal was finally settled as the head of Yukos, Mikhail Khodorkovskii, reached an agreement with Chinese state-owned oil company Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC). An agreement was also inked on expansion of oil exports in general where Yukos pledged to boost oil deliveries to 20 million tons annually from 2006-2010 to be increased to 30 million tons over the period 2011-2030. The deal was supported by most concerned domestic actors in Russia ranging from the Energy Ministry, to PM Mikhail Kasyanov, as well as the pro-China group within the Russian Foreign Ministry. (Buszynski, 2006: 288)

Yet Putin opposed reducing the pipeline to the sole Chinese option and started advocating the stretch to Japan instead. To be fair, this was not solely for the reason of short-cutting China but also because of a generous Japanese counter-offer. This coincided with a crack-down on the oligarchs and private interests in the Russian energy industry, and, as is well known, the Yukos CEO Khodorkovskii was arrested, Yukos assets were seized, and the pipeline to China was paused. In September 2004, in an effort to rescue the vital agreement signed with Yukos, Chinese PM Wen Jiabao paid an official visit to Moscow. He was unable to secure the construction of the pipeline but he managed to get the Russians to agree on an increase of oil exports. To ensure an uninterrupted supply of Russian oil, Chinese banks also provided Russia with a $6 billion loan for them to acquire Yukos' assets in exchange for energy contracts. Finally, in October the same year, Putin eventually decided for the route to Japan but with a branch line extended to China. (Buszynski, 2006: 289-290). Since then Putin has shifted back to the Chinese option, yet refraining from giving any details whatsoever when the project could be realized. Although China has tended to smooth over this disappointment with diplomatic rhetoric there should not be any doubt that this has had a negative effect on bilateral relations.

Even though this indecisiveness from Moscow clearly worked against Chinese interests, Russian foreign policy started to change towards a less Western-oriented and more China-focused foreign policy overall around 2003–2004. Instead of band wagoning with the US the Kremlin chose to shift its attention to a Russo-Chinese balance. This coincided with the US launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom and intense opposition from China and Russia to this breach of Iraq's sovereignty. One of the manifestations of these
deepening Sino-Russian ties was the further institutionalization of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan).

Besides the Iraq war, the primary factor accounting for this sudden strategic shift of Moscow’s is most likely found in the simple fact that Russia perceived no tangible benefits from the deepened engagement with Washington that it had initiated after September 11, yet was forced to make numerous unbearable concessions. This relate perhaps primarily to the allowance of a US presence in Russia’s vicinity. This ignored the benefits accruing to Russia from the US role in stabilizing Afghanistan, but nevertheless remains the perception in Moscow. This was highly unpopular among public opinion, the Duma, the Defense Ministry and other ministries where the Soviet nostalgia still lives. The pressure exerted from these groups was one of the reasons Putin started to explore overlapping interests with China. The strengthening of the Russian Federation through increased oil and gas exports combined with a relatively high price-level may also have contributed to this.

Despite this strengthening of the Russian energy-incomes Russia has been forced to attract foreign investors into its energy industry. This was primarily seen in 2004 when Chinese banks financed Rosneft’s acquisition of the former Yukos asset Yuganskneftegaz with a $6 billion loan. Another similar deal was concluded between Chinese state oil-company Sinopec and its purchase of TNK-BP’s 96.9 percent $3 billion share of Russian Udmurtneft in 2006. The precondition was that it would sell 51 percent of the shares to Rosneft once the deal was finalized. Although Beijing got 49 percent of the shares in the latter deal, and the deal represents the first time a Chinese company get direct access to Russian assets, the significance of this should not be overestimated. Both, because Russia is forced to give something to keep the strategic partnership from reversing, but also because Russia is in dire need of foreign investments to maintain energy infrastructure and explore new energy discoveries. As revealed in Russia’s Energy Strategy 2001–2020, there is a need for around 450–600 billion euros to be invested in an ageing capital stock in this period, and in order to realize the projected growth of 4 to 5 percent.26 As such,
Chinese hard currency is today very much needed in the Russian energy sector. (Blank, 2005: 107).

Taken in aggregate, there should be no doubt that bilateral relations have strengthened during the 2000s. China and Russia have settled most of their outstanding border disputes, are enjoying a booming bilateral trade, and held a large-scale military exercise, Peace Mission 2005. In 2005, the two countries also signed a China-Russia Joint Statement on 21st Century World Order stressing their mutual commonalities, interests, and benign intentions. Bilateral trade in the same year topped $30 billion, an increase of 37 percent over the previous year (Pan, 2006: 28). A high-level mechanism devoted to bilateral security talks between Russia's Security Council and the Chinese Communist Party's Politburo has also been formed. In March 2006, China and Russia also adopted a declaration titled “Russia, China support energy diversification” specifying increased strategic cooperation in this sphere. Finally, as recent as in November, Sinopec and Rosneft signed the shareholder agreement of Udmurtneft marking one step forward in Sino-Russian energy relations. The significance of this should not be overstated, however, considering the fact that Moscow still retains the controlling share.

2.5 Overlapping Interests, Tensions and Limitations Between Russia and China

Sino-Russian relations today should be seen in this particular historical context and uncertainty surrounding the Western engagements of both. Today, their respective interests have tended to converge more and more as evident from the development in the last 2–3 years. This is due to several reasons. First and foremost, both want internal stability and self-development. Neither of these interests is possible to realize without a healthy relationship with each other. China needs energy, arms, and raw materials in the pursuit of its modernization-program while Russia needs assistance in keeping its former satellite states within its orbit and away from Western influence. This is to retain access to energy and bases, achieve economic benefits, and use these states as buffers. Both also have a vested interest in containing Islamic groups: China in Xinjiang, Russia in the North Caucasus as well as jointly in Central Asia through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. All these interests intersect in the Central Asia and Caspian region, and it is
also here that the policies will clash with the West. The US and Europe have been active in developing alternative energy corridors skirting Russian territory, especially with the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. The Western powers are now launching additional efforts to connect the BTC pipeline with a trans-Caspian pipeline connecting with Kazakhstan at Atyrau. If successful, this will prove to have significant implications for the balance of power in the region, and, as such, will be met with fierce resistance from both China and Russia and drive them closer together. Although China is an emerging competitor for influence in the Caspian and Central Asia as well, it is perceived by Russia as far less a threat than the United States.

But even though there has been a major reengagement between China and Russia since Putin’s initial embrace of the West, this should not be interpreted as an alliance is imminent. Not least considering Putin’s statements that it would give China up in a heartbeat for NATO membership. Rhetoric aside, significant internal competition and tensions continue to afflict Sino-Russian relations negatively and vivid statements on the flourishing partnership are often more declaratory than substantive. Both know that they can raise their bargaining power vis-à-vis the US and the post-Soviet successor states (and Taiwan) by speaking in concert. Both also know that they can do this until a certain threshold level. But this is often as far as it goes as deep distrust and fierce bargaining is a bitter reality in the bilateral relationship. Because of this, it is highly questionable if Sino-Russian relations could endure a major setback should this occur.

Both China and Russia know that either would betray one another for a healthy relationship with the United States (and the West) should such a window open — this has been a consistent feature under Putin, Yeltsin as well as Jiang and Hu. This is not least due to the economic issues involved. In 2005, bilateral trade between China and the US topped $285.3 billion, while China’s trade with Russia, although rapidly increasing stood at $29.1 billion. Russia’s total trade volume with the US was approximately $18.3 billion the same year, while the European Union’s share makes up around 50 percent of Russia’s total foreign trade. Considering the dependence of Russia and China on the EU and the US respectively, it is hard to see anything that could make them sacrifice this. In terms of their own bilateral trade both China and Russia are essentially also
dissatisfied with the current state of engagement. Russia is dissatisfied with the type of commodities traded: it would rather see itself as an exporter of technology, and machinery than just raw materials and energy. The latter comprised almost 90 percent of Russia’s total exports to China in 2005 (Blank, 206: p. 57)

Moreover, from the Chinese perspective there is clear frustration with Moscow’s hesitance in letting Beijing explore gas and oil deals fully as well as the tendency of settled agreements to be of a “framework nature” that rarely are put to practice. This was also revealed by the vice-director of China’s National Development and Reform Commission, Zhang Guobao, in a recent interview with Interfax where he stated that Russia had complied with commitments on oil exports by rail to China, but as for cooperation in other areas, there had been a lot of contact and communication, but “little actual progress.” Russia also seeks to diversify its exports in energy and consumer goods to the wider Asia-Pacific, especially Japan which will impact its willingness and potential to export to China. (Lo, 2005: 25).

This also partly explains Russia’s indecisiveness on the Siberian pipeline and its further stretch to either Japan or China. The significance and potentials of bilateral trade between the two are also often overestimated. Due to low purchasing power parity in the two countries it will take a long time to develop sufficient demand and transnational companies that could match the demand and market-conditions available in OECD countries. The purchasing power parity of Russia per capita is only 30 percent of the OECD average while China stands at no more than 17 percent (figures from 2003) (Kerr, 2005: 417).

The large immigration of Chinese into the Russian Far-East is also a source of tension, although this was more of a concern during Yeltsin period than Putin’s. With a flow of immigrants pouring across the border, Russia, and primarily local authorities, have shown great concern over the “Sinocization” of the area and, by extension, the potential of Chinese tanks rolling up to Siberia to reclaim these territories that it lost in the 19th century. In the words of Alexander Shaikin, head of the border control at the Federal Border Guard Service, the “Chinese are now invading Russia with suitcases”.

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Considering the historical and current role of nationalism within the two countries, this uncontrolled migration may very well turn radical putting severe strains on bilateral relations. This is paradoxical considering the urgent need for a working-age population that the depopulated Russian Far-East needs (Aleksev & Hafstetter, 2006: 120).

Moreover, although China and Russia have achieved a notable degree of cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) the achievements have so far been modest. This was made abundantly clear with their acceptance of the US as the sole security provider in the region following September 11. To be fair, SCO is a young organization with only 10 years in existence (if counting the Shanghai 5), and it is unreasonable to demand that SCO alone could eliminate the massive threats of drug trafficking and terrorism facing the region. But it is also about working constructively. To date, the SCO has functioned as a vehicle for China to pressure the Central Asian states to extradite its Uyghur populations who unconvincingly are accused of separatism in China’s far-western Xinjiang region. Evidently, suppression of minorities is not a pragmatic and long-term method to fight terrorism. It should be acknowledged however that the SCO (and the Shanghai 5) played an important role in solving the border disputes in the late 1990s.

With the SCO’s recent engagement in the trade sector it will also face obstacles considering the disagreements between Russia and China here. Tensions are also frequent within related areas of potential cooperation. With regards to infrastructure there are few projects that China and Russia would agree to concert their efforts in. Both are competing for their share of overland continental trade from East Asia to Europe, either via the Trans-Siberian railway or on the second Euro-Asia landbridge running via Xinjiang and Central Asia — the former heavily promoted by Russia the latter by China. Russia and China view this more or less in terms of a zero sum game where any infrastructure investment in a competing corridor will equal a corresponding loss in transit on its own promoted corridor. Energy is also a sector where cooperation will be hard to achieve. Even though Russia has been arguing its wish to set up an SCO energy club coordinating the energy policies of the SCO vociferously, China has equally vociferously opposed any
effort to let its energy security be subject to multilateralism, and prefer to discuss these issues bilaterally. (Blank, 2006: 57).

The power imbalance between China and Russia is also growing rapidly, both economically and in military terms. As described in the previous section, Russia’s economic plummet coincided with Chinese double-digit GDP increases in the first half of the 1990s. Seen in a larger perspective, the economic size ratio between Soviet Union and China has reversed from being 4 to 1 in favor of Soviet to a Chinese advantage of 4 to 1 over Russia from the late 1970s to 2001. If China continues its rapid growth its economy will equal that of the US in 2015 while Russia, on the other hand, is losing more and more of its share of the world economy (Weele, 2003: 355). The growing trade relationship between China-Central Asia and China-Europe combined with a US entry into the markets of Central Asia and the Caucasus also puts Russia into a position of inferiority and strategic encirclement in its former sphere of influence.

Not to mention that it has been feeding the Chinese army with arms and arms technology to an extent clearly contradicting Russia’s strategic interests. For example, in 2000 China made up 70 percent of Russia’s arms exports. This is a dependence which is extremely awkward and that has been forced rather than intended as a Russo-Chinese balance against the United States. As the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia was in dire need of hard currency to keep the military-industrial complex floating in face of a declining domestic demand. China was a vital potential customer and the choice was between feeding a growing China with weapons or face social instability and financial free-fall in an already plummeting economy. Besides, the arms industry is one of the few Russian industries where it remains internationally competitive. Puzzling is however that Russia for some reason seems to have ventured on a different strategic course with regards to energy. Despite being in need of hard currency to maintain pipelines and explore new oil/gas fields it has been reluctant in letting Beijing near such cooperation, especially in controlling the means of delivery (e.g. through pipelines and other infrastructure) and ownership of fields.
Besides these sources of tension, the deterioration of relations between Russia and the EU that has occurred lately, together with Dick Cheney’s blunt statement on Russia in Vilnius has to some extent isolated the Kremlin. The EU’s willingness to tap energy directly from the Central Asian states rather than via Russia may also in the long-run be a loss of a linchpin in the Russian export market. With a deteriorating energy infrastructure, inadequate finances to fund such projects as Shtokman in the Barents Sea, together with a bracketing of foreign investors willing to cover this, Russia risks eventually shortchanging its economic potential. In a bigger strategic perspective, including South Asia and the Middle East, Beijing’s increased engagement with New Delhi and Tehran directly challenges two of Russia’s traditional spheres of influence. Besides, the Russo-Iranian alliance is almost completely confined to trade and armament cooperation and disagreements over the sectoral division of the Caspian Sea continue to haunt further cooperation.

As such, Russia is the one power who finds the current situation most awkward. It is forced to play second fiddle to China and feed China’s growing economy and military with arms and, to a lesser extent energy, to maintain an adequate Russian state income. To put it bluntly, Russia needs China more than China needs Russia and Russia’s main problem in maneuvering the relation is its weakness not China’s strength. (Kerr, 2005: 416). The only lever that Russia possesses over China is energy but it is reluctant in playing this card prematurely. This is why Russia delays pipelines, does not fulfill reached agreements, and is obstructive in its energy engagements with China. On the other hand, China has to abide with a lot as well, especially in the energy sector where it has to succumb to whatever terms Russia sets. This is most evident in the fate of the Siberian pipeline and Russia’s dismantling of Yukos, the only company that has given some glimpse of hope in Beijing. Even worse, China had to finance Rosneft’s expropriation of Yukos’ flagship Yuganskneftegaz with a $6 billion loan as described above without getting anything more than long-term supply contracts in return. Interests in the Middle East are also vitally different: while Russia cashes in considerably on tensions in the Middle East due to rising oil prices, China finds the same situation to be a direct threat to its national security as 58 percent of its oil imports originate from the
region (Beng & Li, 2005: 19). This also leads to China seeking energy diversification where Russia is the most attractive option thereby raising the lever and bargaining position of Moscow over Beijing.

This changing configuration of power is crucial in understanding the forthcoming formation of alliances and balances. The key question becomes how the discrepancies in growth, power asymmetries, and energy access between these two will affect the bilateral relationship? Despite the significant rapprochement that has occurred in recent years between the two, the fact remains that the rise and decline of nations are the main explanatory variable for states resorting to arms. (Weede, 2003: 355).

Rhetoric aside, China and Russia are currently a textbook case in such rapid shifts of power. While neither China, and especially nor Russia, will be able to challenge US power superiority in the short to middle term — this is not the case between China and Russia. The relations between these two have swung considerably in the last 50 years and will likely continue to do so. Russia is in dire need of strengthening its economy and retaining access over as much energy resources as it possibly can while China’s urgent energy needs forces it to the same wells. To say that a conflict is imminent may be premature but growing tensions is something to be expected if Russia continues on the current set course.

The likelihood that geo-politics and the Russian strategy of short-cutting China’s energy needs will continue to gain the upper hand is great. As Putin leaves office in the presidential elections of 2008, he is likely to hand-pick persons perpetuating the Kremlin’s policy of retaining access to energy resources. Two such potential candidates are the Chairman of Gazprom, Dmitry Medvedev, as well as Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov. In addition, the Russian Duma has vehemently expressed discontent with the energy concessions given to China, sometimes in contradiction with Putin’s pursued policy. The position of the Duma with regard to a centralization of energy policy is unlikely to change as well. This was most clearly seen with the anticipated sale of Slavneft to CNPC in 2002; a deal Putin largely agreed to but was forced to reconsider because of parliamentary opposition. A further sign that the bilateral energy relationship
is troubling Sino-Russian relations was seen as late as September 2006. That month, Beijing hosted a visit of Dmitry Medvedev but this was hardly noticed in either the Chinese or the Russian press. Such a visit may have passed unnoticed if it was just any official, but the fact that Medvedev is a top candidate to be the successor as Putin steps down in 2008 does not make him into any official, but the likely next President of Russia. This should have stirred more attention than it did should relations be thriving.

In the military sector, the issues to watch will be the joint military exercises between China and Russia slated for 2007, whether the base race in Central Asia will intensify, as well as how the relations in arms capabilities will change. Both in conventional arms, but also in nuclear weapons where China is catching up on Russia’s nuclear arsenal. The pattern of troop deployment and organization is also likely to indicate propensity for conflict, and the value that both assign to energy resources. For example, in the past few years there have been signs pointing to a reorganization of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) where it has been set to acquire a capability of projecting force deep into an enemy’s territory (Andrew, 2006: 28). PLA has also redoubled military equipment deployed in Xinjiang and modernized it substantially. These factors have led some to argue that it indicates a Chinese preparedness to resort to force to protect its energy assets in Central Asia should it be required (Ibid: 28-29) Such a turn of events do however seem very distant at present, although China may use such contingents as peacekeeping forces in times of acute instability or to protect its oil-fields in Xinjiang’s Tarim Basin. The China-Russia military exercises should also be taken in terms of what they mean today: they raise China’s and Russia’s bargaining power vis-à-vis Taiwan, Georgia, Ukraine and other states/territories that are at the mercy of China and Russia; let alone the leverage it may have on the United States. Although China and Russia may use this as a bargaining chip the step from exercises to a bona fide alliance is long, and it is unlikely that Sino-Russian joint military forces will be used for other purposes than intimidation and/or arms demonstrations.

Russia will also continue to favor a Chinese engagement in Central Asia before a US presence as the former do not put any demands on democratization and do not pose an immediate threat to the remaining Kremlin-friendly regimes. To put it in simple terms,
although Russia is challenging China in Central Asia and the other way around both prefer this state of relations to a US presence. Perhaps by learning from Sino-Russian engagement in the arms industry, China also seems to have realized that the only way to access Russia's strategic interests is to offer substantial cash incentives. In a similar way as Russia gave up its long-term national interest for short-term economic incentives by opening up its arms industry, Chinese loans are today needed in the Russian energy sector. To keep energy assets within Russian control while simultaneously maintaining a relationship on relatively good footing with China, the Russians have started to pursue a two-pronged strategy when needed: let Beijing provide the hard-currency while Moscow maintains the controlling share. This was the case with Sinopec and Rosneft's agreement to purchase Udmurtneft, and it seems as if this could be a viable short-term compromise. Sooner or later, Beijing will want to have a controlling equity share in the Russian energy industry however and the Kremlin may be forced to give in eventually.

With regard to trade a key determinant will be how Russia will react to act as a resource base to China and if China is willing to import other commodities than raw materials. As Russia's bid to join the WTO now is close this will impact both Sino-Russian relations and Russia's trade relations with the US and the EU, and entail a further boost in Russia's bilateral trade relations with all three actors, including China. Yet a fundamental interest for both China and Russia is to maintain relatively healthy economic relations with the West (the US and Europe) where both have their vital economic interdependence and export markets. Conceived as such, the West is not so much a threat as an essential lifeline for their national security. This also impacts Russia's and China's strategy vis-à-vis each other. Both Russia and China pursue a foreign policy aiming at avoiding a trade-off between the US and their bilateral relationship rather than aiming for a counterbalance per se.

As Sino-Russian relations were at their top in the early 1950s a rising Soviet Union assisted a weakened China to gain its support in the Cold War. As relations between Russia and China have reached new heights today, power-relations are reversed with China being the dominant power. Considering that the Sino-Soviet split and Nixon's détente were vital for US victory in the Cold War, similar diplomacy might be employed
by the US again if Sino-Russian relations strengthen and turn hostile. The likelihood of
this is currently limited, and the West’s leverage over both Russia and China is also
something which works in favor of their ability to navigate between them, especially
through China’s heavy dependence on western markets. There is no trade-off here, Russia
and China can maintain healthy economic ties with both each other and the West.
However, Russia’s tendency to horse-trade away China given sufficient incentives is
something which reduces trust in Kremlin’s intensions. Furthermore, considering China’s
and Russia’s troubled history and use of rhetoric to smoothen this over, bilateral relations
should be assessed not in terms of what they say but what they do. This relates primarily
to the energy sector where a certain frustration among the Chinese can be discerned. The
rapid shifts of power between Russia and China and the current inferiority-complex
towards the Chinese that could be identified among Moscow’s policy makers also serve
to weaken the foundation of this strategic partnership. Considering the historical swings,
excessive use of rhetoric, and reactive nature of this partnership, there are few reasons to
believe this to be everlasting even though few would doubt that Sino-Russian relations
have strengthened significantly in recent years.

To conclude, in this chapter a detailed study of the developing relation between Russia
and China was undertaken. The de-ideologisation of foreign policy had specific impact
on their relations and has by and large nudged them to come closer. In the present day
world, however, economic might appears to be taking precedence over the
Morgenthauvian concept of power politics of 20th century. All countries are, therefore,
keen to achieve economic, development, prosperity and security. At the same time due to
pressures exerted by globalization no economy of any country can flourish in isolation.
Globalization is characterized by independence and interconnectedness where established
border of nation-state is diminishing. More and more regional economic grouping like
EU, NAFTA, ASEAN, SAFTA etc are coming up to face the fierce competition from
other regional economic blocks. Being aware of the present world realities both Russia
and China are taking various kinds of steps to deepen their economic ties which has been
systematically discussed in the next chapter.