A Virtual Think Tank (ViTTa®) Report

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Potential for a China-Russia and/or US-China-Russia Alliance

Deeper Analyses
Clarifying Insights
Better Decisions

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What is ViTTa?

NSI's Virtual Think Tank (ViTTa) provides rapid response to critical information needs by pulsing a global network of subject matter experts (SMEs) to generate a wide range of expert insight. For the Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) Future of Global Competition and Conflict project, ViTTa was used to address 12 key questions provided by the project's Joint Staff sponsors. The ViTTa team received written response submissions from 65 subject matter experts from academia, government, military, and industry. This report consists of:

1. A summary overview of the expert contributor response to the ViTTa question of focus.
2. The full corpus of expert contributor responses received for the ViTTa question of focus.
3. Biographies of expert contributors.

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Question of Focus

[Q9] Are there any commonly valued objectives that may enable an alliance between China and Russia against US interests, or among all three nations allowing a reduction of tensions?

Subject Matter Expert Contributors

Dr. Paul J. Bolt (US Air Force Academy), **Dr. David T. Burbach** (US Naval War College), **Dean Cheng** (Heritage Foundation), **Dr. John Delury** (Yonsei University), **David C. Gompert** (US Naval Academy), **Dr. Edward N. Luttwak** (CSIS), **Anthony Rinna** (Sino-NK), **Yun Sun** (Stimson Center), **Dr. Steve Tsang** (University of London), **Nicolas Véron** (Bruegel and Peterson Institute for International Economics), **Ali Wyne** (RAND Corporation), **Lieutenant Colonel Maciej Zaborowski** (US Central Command)

Summary Overview

This summary overview reflects on the insightful responses of eleven Future of Global Competition and Conflict Virtual Think Tank (ViTTa) expert contributors. While this summary presents an overview of the key expert contributor insights, the summary alone cannot fully convey the fine detail of the expert contributor responses provided, each of which is worth reading in its entirety. For this report, the expert contributors consider whether there are any commonly valued objectives that may enable an alliance between China and Russia against the US, or among all three nations allowing a reduction of tensions.

Potential for a China-Russia and/or US-China-Russia Alliance

The contributors suggest that, overall, there are few objectives shared by the US, China, and Russia. Furthermore, these objectives are mostly of secondary importance to China and Russia, as compared to their shared desire to reduce US global influence and establish a multipolar world.[1] Despite this commonly valued, overarching objective, contributors note that there are significant limitations and time constraints on Chinese-Russian cooperation as, absent their shared goal of reducing US influence, they have few strategic interests in common, and numerous sources of tension between them; rendering the establishment of a more formal, long-term alliance between the two unlikely.

China and Russia: Shared Interests

Reducing US Influence and Establishing a Multipolar World

The current strategic partnership between China and Russia is underpinned by both their perception that the US is a threat to their national security, and their belief that the US seeks to suppress their regional and global

[1] See contributions from Bolt, Luttwak, Rinna, Sun, and Tsang.

influence.[2] Chinese and Russian calls for a multipolar world system are, Dr. Paul Bolt of the US Air Force Academy suggests, linked to their desire to reduce these threats by reducing the influence of the US. Both China and Russia have engaged in a wide range of activities to push back against US influence. They have jointly blocked the US in the UN and supported the establishment of international institutions (both economic- and security-focused institutions) that exclude the US.[3] Dr. Edward Luttwak of CSIS emphasizes this point, asserting that "both China and Russia act against the US every day in any way they can, from propaganda to covert support" of anti-US actors.

Both China and Russia seek to establish their own spheres of influence, and nurture a sense of historical grievance at their lost status.[4] Reducing the influence of the US would leave room for both to reestablish dominance in regions they consider historically their own.[5] For Russia, this includes at least the successor states to the former Soviet Union, and also Europe more widely; for China, it includes primarily East Asia, Southeast Asia, and its surrounding seas.[6]

Regime Security and Internal Security

China and Russia similarly perceive US influence to be a threat to their regime security.[7] As Dr. Steve Tsang of the University of London details, China and Russia are bound together by the desire of their current leaders to remain in power and sustain the legitimacy of their regime. Moreover, as Dr. David Burbach of the US Naval War College explains, this desire to maintain their own regime security has expanded into a broader objective: "mak[ing] the world safe for authoritarian regimes." Humanitarian intervention and the "color revolutions" supported by the US and democratic West are seen as subversive initiatives in the eyes of China and Russia, who argue that they conflict with the sovereign right of states to do as they see fit within their borders.[8] Thus, while primarily motivated by personal and domestic considerations (crack downs on civil society in particular), Chinese and Russian leaders have positioned themselves as defenders of the international principle of sovereign rights.[9]

Internal security concerns, driven primarily by the threat of terrorism and extremism, have seen China and Russia engage in joint anti-terrorism exercises. Since 2012, they have also engaged in annual naval drills that have encompassed the Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, South China Sea, as well as the western Pacific.[10]

Trade

China and Russia also share economic interests, although Bolt argues this is the weakest element of their relationship. Russia is China's largest international source of oil and a reliable supplier of military equipment.[11] This exchange of money for energy gives both Russia and China what they need respectively. Moreover, as Lieutenant Colonel Maciej Zaborowski of US Central Command suggests, such an exchange may help decrease Russian

[2] See contributions from Luttwak and Sun.
[3] See contributions from Bolt, Luttwak, and Zaborowski.
[4] See contributions from Bolt and Cheng.
[5] See contributions from Bolt, Cheng, and Sun.
[6] See contributions from Bolt and Cheng.
[7] See contributions from Burbach, Luttwak, and Sun.
[8] See contributions from Bolt and Tsang.
[9] See contributions from Bolt and Burbach.
[10] See contribution from Bolt.
[11] See contributions from Bolt and Wyne.

resistance to China pushing its Belt and Road Initiative through states Russia considers to be in its sphere of influence.

China and Russia: Problems, and Prospects for Longer-Term Cooperation

The contributors generally agree that the prospects of China and Russia establishing a formal, long-term alliance are unlikely. As Ali Wyne of the RAND Corporation succinctly states, "Sino-Russian relations, after all, are still defined more by shared resentments than by common visions." If China and Russia achieve their shared goal of reducing US influence, there is little to keep them together, and much to push them into competition or conflict. As long as China and Russia's overarching objective of reducing US influence remains unrealized, there is motivation enough for each to support the other's strategic interests (e.g., Russia to support China diplomatically over the South China Sea, and China to ignore Russia's incursion into Ukraine).[12] However, as Anthony Rinna of Sino-NK details, "if or when the global order reaches a state that the Chinese and Russians consider to be suitably multipolar, undermining US interests will potentially not be a sufficient driver of continued Sino-Russian partnership," and there are plenty of potential sources of tension between the two states.

Incompatible Strategic Interests

Contributors highlight several potential sources of tension that challenge the prospects for long-term cooperation between China and Russia.

- **South China Sea:** Although Russia is currently supporting China's interests in the South China Sea, Moscow's relationship with Hanoi complicates this position.[13]
- **Central Asia:** Both China and Russia have interests in Central Asia, and while Russia's are primarily military and China's primarily economic, Russia regards the area as part of its sphere of influence and is likely to perceive increased Chinese influence in the region as a challenge to its own.[14]
- **Russia's Far East:** Detached from China in 1860, this region is identified by contributors as a point of future contention.[15] Russia mistrusts China's economic clout and long-term interests in the region, and, as Tsang explains, "with Russia in relative decline and China on the rise as measured by the Chinese concept of 'comprehensive national strength,' time appears to be on China's side. As this reassures Beijing, it causes discomfort in Moscow."

Ultimately, a history of conflict and mistrust combined with current tensions over strategic influence create suspicion between China and Russia, which is not helped by the significant cultural gaps that exist between the two states.[16]

[12] See contribution from Rinna.
[13] See contribution from Bolt.
[14] See contributions from Bolt, Rinna, and Tsang.
[15] See contributions from Bolt, Gompert, Luttwak, and Tsang in particular.
[16] See contributions from Bolt, Cheng, and Gompert.

Power Imbalance

The likely future of Russia's Far East reflects the underlying power imbalance between China and Russia, which contributors highlight as a growing concern for Moscow.[17] China's GDP is approximately eight times as large as Russia's, and growing roughly four times as fast.[18] Russia realizes that even if the US's dominance of world affairs is reduced or contained through cooperation with China, this will not secure Russia's position. Rather, it will then have to face the challenges a rising China (which does not consider Russia as equal player) presents.[19] Tsang suggests that, while "in the longer-term [China] expects to be second to none," it is not yet in a position to compete with or challenge the US on its own, and sees cooperation with Russia as a way to indirectly increase its relative power in the shorter-term. Russia, in turn, sees cooperation with China as a way to increase its ability to disrupt the existing international order more effectively than its limited economic leverage would otherwise allow.[20]

Implications

These sources of tension, combined with China's wariness of Russia's unpredictable foreign policy and Russia's dissatisfaction with the rate of increase in Chinese investment to compensate for Western sanctions, create significant potential for future competition or conflict between the two states, should their shared objective of reducing US influence be achieved.[21] As Zaborowski and Bolt both note, US policies (such as sanctions, economic conflicts, military presence) have in recent years served to increase the salience of China and Russia's shared interest in countering the US. Wyne more explicitly warns that a "US decision to treat China and Russia as a common strategic challenge would almost surely compel them to move more vigorously and intentionally to join forces to undercut US national interests."

Potential for US-China-Russia Cooperation

There is less consensus among the contributors regarding the potential for cooperation between the US, China, and Russia than there is regarding relations between China and Russia. Bolt identifies arms control and addressing human trafficking and piracy as shared objectives. Dean Cheng of the Heritage Foundation suggests the three states' interests overlap in the area of counter-terrorism. Although Bolt agrees, he notes that differences arise regarding the definitions of terrorism and appropriate counter measures that could complicate cooperation. Climate change is identified as a shared concern by Bolt and Nicolas Véron of Bruegel and Peterson Institute for International Economics; however, Cheng contends that this is not the case, particularly while China is still focused on expanding its economy. Finally, several contributors identify normalization of economic and political conditions in North Korea as a shared objective.[22] While Tsang suggests that this objective is motivated by a broader common interest in avoiding uncontrolled escalation, Dr. John Delury of Yonsei University notes that US "fixation" on CVID is at odds with China and Russia's focus on ending hostilities and opening relations as conditions for denuclearization.

[17] See contribution from Bolt in particular.
[18] See contribution from Wyne.
[19] See contribution from Tsang.
[20] See contribution from Wyne.
[21] See contribution from Bolt.
[22] See contributions from Bolt, Delury, and Tsang.

Conclusion

If, as the contributors compellingly argue, the foundation of China-Russia cooperation is the shared objective of regime survival and reduction of US influence, then the potential for cooperation with the US will necessarily remain restricted to issues of minimal strategic importance. Furthermore, actions by the US that increase competition or conflict between itself and either China or Russia are likely to trigger a cooperative response. This coordination, however, reflects more of an "enemy of my enemy" logic than it does a shared view of the future. Absent their shared desire to reduce US influence, there is more that divides China and Russia than holds them together.

Subject Matter Expert Contributions

Dr. Paul J. Bolt

Professor, Political Science (US Air Force Academy)
8 March 2019

China and Russia have a comprehensive strategic partnership in which they share numerous common objectives, some of which are in opposition to US interests, some of which are neutral, and a few of which may align with US interests.

One set of common objectives revolves around security. Russia and China cooperate on issues regarding both external and internal security. In 1969 Russia and China almost went to war, triggered by ideological and border disputes. Today the Russian-Chinese border is demarcated and demilitarized, allowing both states to focus elsewhere. Similarly, Moscow and Beijing see internal security and external security as linked, and the two sides engage in antiterrorism exercises. Russia is also an important arms supplier to China, most recently selling the PLA the SU-35 fighter plane and S-400 surface-to-air missile system. In addition, the two sides engage in joint military exercises, and since 2012 have engaged in one or more annual naval drills that have encompassed the Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, South China Sea, as well as the western Pacific.

A broader set of mutual objectives include changing the world order in ways Moscow and Beijing perceive as being in their governments' interests. China and Russia nurture a sense of historical grievances, and seek to establish spheres of influence to return to former status. For Russia, this sphere includes at least the successor states to the former Soviet Union. For China it primarily means Southeast Asia and the seas surrounding China. China has not objected to Russia's violations of Ukrainian sovereignty or Russian military action in Syria.

Both states openly call for a multipolar world, code for reducing the influence of the United States. China and Russia reject universal human rights, defending the sovereign right of states to do as they see fit within their borders. In line with this thinking, both states have cracked down on civil society, especially those organizations that have international connections. Beijing and Moscow seek to legitimize and preserve authoritarian forms of government too. They work to prevent new "color revolutions," particularly in Eurasia.

In a similar vein, China and Russia encourage the growth of international institutions that exclude the United States. Both states belong to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS. China is pushing an ill-defined program, the Belt and Road Initiative, to build infrastructure across Eurasia and Africa, although Russia has not been enthusiastic about the project. Russia and China seek to undermine American-led security institutions, mostly NATO in Europe and the hub and spokes system of US alliances in Asia. In the communication realm, both Beijing and Moscow advocate state "cyber sovereignty" that would undermine the American vision of an open, universal internet and instead give freedom to state actors to regulate the internet as they see fit.

Finally, China and Russia share economic interests. However, this is the weakest element of their relationship. Russia is China's largest international source of oil, and a gas pipeline connecting the two states is closer to completion. However, trade between Russia and China is much more significant for Russia than China. Moreover, a hoped-for surge in Chinese investment in Russia to compensate for Western sanctions has not materialized.

For a variety of reasons, Russia and China have not formed an alliance. Russian foreign policy actions have been unpredictable, and China does not want to be bound to protect a sometimes mercurial ally. There is still significant distrust between the two states based on history, which includes Russia taking Chinese lands in the 19th century and a Cold War rivalry that nearly led to war. Russia's Far East is particularly vulnerable to China. There are conflicting interests between the two sides in Central Asia, where China has made major advances in an area Russia considers to be its sphere of influence. Moreover, Moscow's relationship with Hanoi complicates its support for China in the South China Sea. Finally, there is a significant cultural gap between Russia and China, and Russians must be concerned with the growing power imbalance between the two states.

It is becoming more difficult to find areas where the United States, Russia, and China can engage in cooperation. In a world that is becoming increasingly realist, the United States is more concerned about relative gains than absolute gains, undermining some

commercial bases of cooperation. There are areas of common interest, but none of them involve complete overlap. For example, all three states share an interest in preventing human trafficking. Stopping piracy and terrorism is a common interest, although differing definitions of terrorism and disagreements about appropriate ways to combat terrorism (i.e., Chinese camps in Xinjiang) limit the extent of cooperation. Clearly peace on the Korean peninsula is also a common concern, although China and Russia express greater sympathy for the North Korean regime. Climate change could potentially reemerge as a common interest. Finally, although arms control does not have momentum, the increasing dangers due to nuclear and missile proliferation may lead to a situation where it is in the interests of all three states to engage on arms control.

In sum, ties between China and Russia have become increasingly close since 2014. However, the two states still have some differing interests. The United States should consciously consider how its foreign and military policies drive China and Russia closer together or achieve a more equitable balance in the strategic triangle.

Dr. David T. Burbach

Associate Professor, National Security Affairs (US Naval War College)
12 March 2019

Russian Challenges to U.S. Interests in Africa

Relative to a very low post-Cold War baseline, Russia has demonstrated renewed strategic interest in Africa. Russia has some ability to act as a diplomatic spoiler and to help autocratic African leaders resist Western pressure for political reform, but overall it will not threaten vital U.S. interests. The one area for significant concern would be the Mediterranean and Red Sea littoral states, where a greater Russian stake in the oil & gas sector would negatively harm the energy security of European NATO allies.

Russia's economic and military interests in Africa are, in general, minor. Russia does not depend on African resources nor is Africa a large destination for Russian exports or investment. Russia has nothing like the economic footprint of China or the EU, and will not even be as important as India or Persian Gulf states to African economies. In sub-Saharan Africa, Russia has little use for traditional military bases or naval port access, whether to protect local interests or to project power elsewhere. The Mediterranean and Red Sea littorals are an exception, discussed below.

Russia's actions in Africa will be opportunistic and in narrow sectors, though may still impinge on some U.S. policy goals. Russian arms sales to the region are growing. Russia increasingly pitches itself as a no-strings alternative to Western suppliers, and it points to Syria as evidence Russia is a more effective counter-jihadist partner than the U.S. Beyond Russian long-time customers, some traditional Western customers in Africa have been wooed – most notably Nigeria, frustrated by U.S. reluctance to sell helicopters and strike aircraft. A newer development is the operation of private military companies (eg Wagner), technically independent but with Kremlin blessing. Wagner's operations in Central African Republic have drawn attention, but Russian PMCs also serve as Presidential guards in Burundi, for example.

Russia lacks an ideology to export, but it does have a "brand": sovereignty. Russia has positioned itself against international criminal courts, as an opponent of humanitarian military intervention, and against using sanctions to pressure political and social change. With its Security Council veto, Moscow has meaningful influence on those questions. Championing sovereignty & stability is, understandably, attractive to incumbent regimes. Russia has not used the "defender of Christian values" narrative in Africa as it has in E. Europe, but conceivably might given growing schisms between African and Europe/N American churches over social issues like gay rights.

The net effect is a reduction in U.S. leverage on democratization, human rights, and anti-corruption, and to make multinational intervention in crises more difficult. The current Administration has downgraded the priority of those goals, so this may not be as great a loss to U.S. interests as other post-Cold War Administrations would have considered. American security will not face near-term, direct harm as a result, but there is a case that without deeper reforms and social welfare improvements, Africa faces more instability, conflict, and greater VEO activity in the long run. Russian weapons and mercenaries may help regimes put down immediate threats, but do not solve long-term problems.

It is worth noting how Chinese and Russian interests diverge on long-term stability. China may not value democracy, but does have such vast investments in Africa as to have a stake in future social and political stability. Weapons are only a small share of China's African trade. Russia, on the other hand, has little reason not to take a short-term perspective -- instability may even help their main lines of business in Africa.

The one area where Russia's interests, capabilities, and U.S./EU vulnerabilities come together significantly is North Africa. Proximity and the ocean connectivity give Russia more access than sub-Saharan Africa, and the Russian navy would benefit from greater access to friendly ports in NATO's "lake". Russian energy firms are well represented in North Africa and Russia is keen on increasing its ownership share at the expense of EU firms. This is especially so for gas, which is not as globally fungible as oil (gas moves through fixed undersea pipelines or long-term LNG contracts). Russian dominance of North African gas exports, added to direct Russian exports, would leave Europe even more vulnerable to price or supply manipulation.

Despite these areas of concern, the United States should not be overly alarmed by Russian activity in Africa. Just because Moscow finds an endeavor profitable does not mean that countering it would be worth the cost to the U.S. The U.S. has long seen little strategic interest in the Central African Republic, for example, and the presence of Russian mercenaries should not change that. Moscow has limited resources, few friends, and reduced trading opportunities due to sanctions. Russia's actions in sub-Saharan Africa are not welcome, but ultimately will make little difference to deterring Russian attacks on NATO or to the long-term prospects of the Russian economy. The U.S. should be not let a strategic directive to "re-focus on great power competition" become a reason for even *more* expenditure of resources on peripheral interests.

Dean Cheng

Senior Research Fellow, Asian Studies Center, Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy
(Heritage Foundation)
13 March 2019

China and Russia both agree that the United States has no real legitimate role in Eurasia—littoral Pacific to littoral Atlantic. The US is the lynchpin frustrating their respective dominance over their sphere of influence (Russia—Europe; China—East Asia).

Especially important is denying the US a foothold in Central Asia, where we are a threat to both states. However, there is also a great deal of suspicion between Beijing and Moscow of each other, and this will grow as China's influence over Central Asia (comprised of former Soviet republics) grows via the Belt and Road Initiative. Nor is China interested in allowing Russia (or the US) a say in its nuclear deterrent (as would occur if China were to join New START II).

Trilateral interests overlap in the counter-terrorism area.

There is NOT shared interest in global environmentalism, despite the pipe dreams of the previous Administration. China agreed to join COP21, but its coal burning and GHG emissions have not abated. Nor will they, so long as China is still focused on expanding its economy (which requires cheap, reliable energy).

Dr. John Delury

Associate Professor, Chinese Studies (Yonsei University)
21 March 2019

All three nations (China, Russia, and the US) share an interest in normalizing the political and economic conditions of North Korea and integrating it peaceably into the region. All three further share a hope that normalization and integration could entail complete

denuclearization and reinvigoration of the NPT regime with DPRK's return to it. The United States traditionally fixates on the preferred end-state of CVID, whereas China and Russia focus on the process of ending hostility and opening up relations, as conditions of possibility of complete denuclearization. North Korea places an exceptionally high value on autonomy, and therefore can be expected to maintain balanced relations with all three nations, in a way that all three can basically accept.

David C. Gompert

Distinguished Visiting Professor (US Naval Academy)
Adjunct Professor (Virginia Union University)
Senior Fellow (RAND Corporation)
15 February 2019

What are the chances of Sino-Russian alignment against the U.S.? Not very good, for several reasons: two-way racial dislike; festering disputes; Chinese economic clout in Russia's Far East; China's recognition that Russia has a badly imbalanced and isolated economy, vulnerability to continued low energy prices, and a weak strategic hand; China's dependence on a robust economic relationship with the U.S.; and, perhaps, Russian awareness that China is stronger.

Russia presents greater dangers to U.S. interests in the short term but, with a fundamentally poor economy, will find it difficult to support a belligerent external strategy, especially if and as the U.S. compels it to pay a high price for that strategy. China has a sustainable external strategy, which is focused mainly on recovering its losses and its preeminence in East Asia. Though its global aspirations are not necessarily problematic, the importance of the region make China the biggest great-power challenge over the next decade.

Dr. Edward N. Luttwak

Senior Associate (CSIS)
14 February 2019

Empires often enter into short-term tactical alliances, but never accept long-term alliances. The US , sometimes joined by some European voices, is now barking at both Russia and China (not Trump's idea –he wanted to do a Nixon in reverse, by embracing Russia to confront China).

That makes it easier for China and Russia to be good pals at the UN and such. That makes it easier for China and Russia to jointly bark at the US and try to thwart it wherever they can (as of this writing, in distant Venezuela)

But the Russians never forget that it is China that wants to swallow the good bits of Siberia, not Paraguay, or the US for that matter. (There are new, semi-official, Russian documents which explain that Chinese claims on Russian territory have never been vacated. They are "dormant", awaiting the right moment.

There are lots of US undertakings with Russia (even space launches) and even more with China, and all three share many undertakings every day. They have no bearing on "tensions", which are not that important anyway. What is important is that both China and Russia act against the US every day in any way they can, from propaganda to the covert support of every bad actor they think reliable in his badness.

But that Russia and China are not the real aggressors. The aggressor is the United States, a revolutionary country that radiates subversive impulses all over the world. The revolution that started in 1776 has never stopped, and threatens every monarchy, empire, dictatorship or even mildly authoritarian system long before the arrival of cheap printing, and then the cinema and radio.

Now with the internet there are no barriers to American subversion of every regime, and of every customary society in the world, undermining the rule of every dictator, and, lately, of every husband and father in his own home.

Anti-Americanism on the right coexists with the older anti-Americanism of the left, which once hated the very rich, but now hates American economic growth as such, because it keeps frustrating fervent hopes of long-awaited American decline.

It follows that China's and Russia's hostility to the US is over-determined: they must be anti-American for both internal *and* external reasons.

Anthony Rinna

Senior Editor (Sino-NK)
4 March 2019

Fundamental Sino-Russian policy alignment against the US (on a global scale) is the most likely outcome over the next few years if not decades, given the US's tensions with China and Russia respectively, as well as the strengthening of Sino-Russian ties under their so-called "strategic partnership" over the past 20 years. In the long-term, however, such a partnership will potentially be difficult to sustain. At present, Beijing and Moscow are mutually aligned in their bid to end American global unipolarity. Once that goal is realized, however, China and Russia's narrow national interests will possibly undermine their partnership.

China and Russia have recently shown varying degrees of alignment, from explicit policy coordination (as they have demonstrated regarding the Korean Peninsula) to tacit mutual support in geographically distant arenas (i.e. China's quiet support for Russia over Ukraine, and Russia bolstering Beijing in the South China Sea). Both China and Russia seek to create a "multipolar" world. Beijing and Moscow's aligning interests across a host of sub-regions and issues constitute steps in achieving this goal of multipolarity. However, if or when the global order reaches a state that the Chinese and Russians consider to be suitably multipolar, undermining US interests will potentially not be a sufficient driver of continued Sino-Russian partnership. In some cases, regions and issues that were once sources of Sino-Russian alignment may be later met with indifference by one party. For example, if Russia supports China diplomatically over the South China Sea to a point where the US's freedom of navigation is diminished, the only benefit to this for Moscow is the undermining of American influence. For Russia, a land-based power interested in using itself to connect East Asia to Europe economically via overland routes, the the South China Sea, beyond undermining US interests, is of relatively little value.

In fact, areas that have been causes for cooperation between Beijing and Moscow against US interests could eventually become sources of competition. Although removing US influence from Central Asia, for example, would benefit Beijing and Moscow, this sub-region would subsequently be ripe for sharper Sino-Russian competition. The Kremlin maintains an interest in keeping its military edge in Central Asia, while China is particularly keen to exert economic dominance (as opposed to flexing its military muscle). Even if Russia's military interests and Beijing's economic designs in Central Asia are separate, this still translates into the PRC and Moscow wrestling for influence. Indeed, some analysts argue that China and the US co-exist in Northeast Asia as that sub-region's predominant economic and military power, respectively. Yet even if China and the US occupy different spheres, the Sino-American relationship in Northeast Asia is still far from smooth. The same could apply in places like Central Asia.

The vitality of a Sino-Russian partnership against US interests will thus depend on two factors: how much cooperation between Beijing and Moscow in various sub-regions leads to an overall decline in US influence; and the extent to which China and Russia assess cooperation over disparate sub-regions to be in their respective national interests.

Yun Sun

Co-Director, East Asia Program (Stimson Center)
Director, China Program (Stimson Center)
11 March 2019

China and Russia:

- Both perceive a threat from the US to their national security;
- Both perceive a threat from the US to their regime security;
- Both perceive an active effort from the US to suppress their regional and global influence.

A common threat perception anchors the comprehensive strategic coordinative partnership between China and Russia.

However, the alignment between China and Russia is not the same as an "alliance" between China and Russia. Despite their coordination of positions on strategic and security matters, the two countries are not likely to have a treaty of mutual defense. The Russians have been more interested in portraying the existence of an alliance through joint military exercises with China. The Chinese have little interest in substantiating or supporting it.

Dr. Steve Tsang

Director, SOAS China Institute (University of London)
28 February 2019

China and Russia do have some common or at least shared objectives, though whether they are sufficient to enable them to forge a durable alliance in the conventional meaning of the word is debatable. The attraction of working together is constrained by Russia's inherent mistrust over China's long-term intention regarding the Russian Far East as well as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in central Asia. Both countries and the USA also share one thing in common, which is to avoid a direct military confrontation, which has a risk of unintended escalation to a nuclear holocaust.

The first shared objective between China and Russia is to balance against US dominance in global affairs. The two Powers have different motives in doing so.

The government of Xi Jinping is devoted 'to make China great again', encapsulated in the concepts of 'the China Dream' and national rejuvenation. Xi is prepared to engage the USA on the basis of a 'new kind of great power relationship'. Even though the Chinese Government before Xi had previously dismissed the idea of a 'G2' or group of two, Xi's 'new kind of great power relationship' implicitly puts China and the USA in a special category of great powers in global affairs. Others, including the remaining permanent members of the UN Security Council (UK, France and Russia) are not seen by Beijing as equal players in this 'new kind of great power relationship'. But Beijing remains conscious that it is not yet in a position to compete against, let alone challenge, effectively the USA on its own. It is therefore keen to cooperate with Russia as it does so. In the medium-term Beijing would like to be treated as an equal by Washington, but in the longer term it expects to be second to none, an objective Xi put forth during the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party (October 2017).

Russia under Vladimir Putin, in contrast, is focused on making Russia a key player in international affairs or at least making it a player that cannot be ignored. It cannot compete with the USA head to head but its objective is not to surpass the USA. It is focused on making Russia count in world affairs while Putin is in charge.

Thus, in the short to medium term China and Russia share a strategic goal in reducing or containing US dominance in world affairs. With Russia's economic strength in decline whereas China continues to rise, this shared goal may not be sustainable in the very long term, as Russia realises that it will eventually have to confront the challenges which a rising China presents.

The vast Russian Far East used to belong to the Qing (or Manchu) Empire and was detached from Qing China in 1860, after Czarist Russia played a mediating role to settle the 'Second Opium War'. Russia is aware that the Chinese Communist Party will want this enormous territory back eventually though it is in no rush. With Russia in relative decline and China on the rise as measured by the Chinese concept of 'comprehensive national strength' time appears to be on China's side. As this reassures Beijing it causes discomfort in Moscow.

The main land-based element of China's BRI encompasses Central Asian states which used to be republics of the Soviet Union. They are effectively in a region seen by Russia as its logical sphere of influence. This Chinese effort to expand its influence and perhaps control over Central Asia causes concern in Moscow, which keeps a watchful eye on developments there. Hence, while the two powers work together vis-a-vis the USA, Russia does not trust China in the longer term.

The other, and not less important, objective shared between China and Russia is to make the world safe for authoritarian states. There are differences in the political systems in the two countries which need to be recognized but they are superseded by a more powerful factor that binds them together – the desires of their current leaders.

Unlike the Soviet Union, Russia is not a Leninist party-state but its democratic institutions have essentially been hijacked and subordinated to the will of a ruthless strongman dedicated to stay in control of the country. Whether Putin will ever retire from politics in the conventional sense of the term remains to be seen but the state of Russia itself is not fundamentally anti-democratic in the way the People's Republic of China is. Electoral institutions remain in place in Russia and may survive Putin.

In contrast, China is a consultative Leninist system, which means it remains a Leninist party-state – a system that is fundamentally anti-democratic and sees any call for democratisation as a threat to its sustainability. The first priority of this system, whether in domestic or foreign policy, is state security or, to avoid any misunderstanding, regime survival. Thus, it is devoted to making the world safe for authoritarian states in order to reduce scope for any US-lead 'peaceful evolution' efforts directed against China.

In the foreseeable future their respective leaders, President Putin and President Xi are focused on staying in power and sustaining the legitimacy of their rule. They find humanitarian interventionism and 'colour revolutions' subversive. Making the world safe for authoritarian states is about ensuring regime security for themselves and therefore a shared value that tie them together against the USA and the democratic West. This does not remove the long-term geopolitical issues that divide the two countries but it is powerful enough to enable them work for the time being as strategic partners vis-a-vis the USA.

What all three powers, the USA, Russia and China, share in common is a desire to avoid a conflict that will escalate out of hand, risking a nuclear holocaust. While this remains a powerful constraining factor against war, the international architecture in place during the Cold War that prevented unintended escalation are not as fully entrenched in the present time.

The primary risk rests between China and the USA, as the rise of the former is increasingly seen by the latter as at its expense. More specifically, the trajectory of the rise of China requires adjustments in the international order in East Asia, which has been preserved largely by American efforts after the end of the Second World War. President Xi has indicated that he will not tolerate Taiwan continue to stay outside a formal one China framework beyond the time he is in power. Indeed, from Beijing's perspective a key landmark that China has been rejuvenated is a change of Taiwan's status to its satisfaction, a requirement which cannot be achieved without the use or a credible threat to use force to subdue Taiwan. With the USA adhering to a policy of 'strategic ambiguity' regarding its commitment to help Taiwan defend itself, the risk for miscalculation on Beijing's part is rising. The risk is that Beijing believes it has overwhelming capacity to force Taiwan to submit and to deter an American intervention. But Congressional sentiments may well trigger a robust response under the Taiwan Relations Act in the event that Beijing uses force to change the status of Taiwan. There is also no reliable mechanism in place for Washington to communicate with Beijing in the event of a crisis across the Taiwan Strait that can pre-empt escalation. The risk of an unintended conflict is significant.

To a lesser extent, the continued tension between the USA and China over the US insistence on freedom of navigation and China's territorial claim in the South China Sea also poses serious risks. The construction and militarisation of the artificial islands out of reefs and rocks by China under Xi Jinping is a response to the Obama Administration's assertion of freedom of navigation. It may not enjoy the high profile of the BRI but it remains a signature policy of Xi, thus one about which Beijing will hold a hard-line.

In 2010, the Chinese Government encouraged non-active service senior officers to suggest publicly that the South China Sea should be seen as a kind of proto-core national interest of China. The game plan was that if this should be acquiesced to by others in the international community Beijing would officially include them as a core national interest. This will slowly condition the rest of the world not to challenge China over South China Sea, as it is the case with Taiwan and Tibet. After multiple Chinese attempts the then US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton pushed back at the Hanoi ASEAN Regional Forum meeting that summer. Beijing backed off but looked for an alternative to stake its claims. This manifested under Xi in efforts to transform some of the reefs and rocks into artificial islands.

The key lesson here is that China under Xi has no intention to ease its assertion of sovereign rights over waters around the artificial islands and other disputed rocks and reefs in the South China Sea and can be expected to steadily escalate its responses as US ships asserting freedom of navigation there. The risk of an incident cannot be eliminated until a protocol is agreed and implemented on how to avoid such an eventuality.

In general terms, the risk of a conflict over Taiwan is significantly higher and more dangerous than one over South China Sea. In both cases, Russia is unlikely to play a key role, either in provoking one or in helping to deescalate.

Nicolas Véron

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11 March 2019

On the face of it, the Belt and Road Initiative represents a cooperative endeavor of China with other countries that include Russia. The extent to which this initiative is intrinsically inimical to US interests is debatable. A separate but related Chinese initiative also started in 2013, the creation of the Asian International Infrastructure Bank (AIIB), was misjudged by US authorities that adopted an overly hostile stance against it early on, which led to diverging choices between the United States and many of its allies around the world as to how to engage with the AIIB.

As for potential common objectives among all three nations, they may include projects of global relevance such as the fight against global warming, and the buttressing of existing common institutions such as the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, or World Bank among others.

Ali Wyne[23]

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8 March 2019

Sino-Russian Relations

As both a vocal critic and a principal beneficiary of the postwar order, China seems more interested in its gradual modification than in its wholesale dissolution. It is a resurgent power whose economic capacity enables it to pose a gradualist challenge to U.S. preeminence—a challenge rooted principally in economic expansion and technological innovation. Russia, by contrast, on account of a poor demographic outlook; declining and now mostly flat oil prices; and years of sanctions; has far less to offer in the way of trading and investment inducements. Its economic limitations, in turn, diminish its freedom of maneuver, for it is far less able than China to engage in transactional diplomacy that coopts countries who fear its strategic intentions; it wields considerably less energy leverage over Western Europe than it did a decade ago, and its relationship with China is becoming increasingly asymmetric in favor of the latter.

[23] The views expressed in this submission are solely those of Mr. Wyne; they do not reflect those of the RAND Corporation or any of its other employees.

Moscow appears to have concluded that it stands to accrue more influence by opportunistically disrupting the postwar order than by incrementally reintegrating into that system; witness its efforts to hive off territory along its western periphery, destabilize democracies through disinformation operations, and perpetuate Syria's devolution into carnage.

While China and Russia's relationship is indeed growing stronger across multiple dimensions, the economic imbalance between them is increasing apace at the same time: the former's gross domestic product (GDP) is roughly eight times[24] as large and growing roughly four times[25] as quickly. In addition, China has thus far exhibited little hesitation in encroaching upon Russia's traditional spheres of influence. Beijing has little reason to disrupt ties with Moscow, which is a reliable supplier of energy and military equipment. Moscow, meanwhile, appreciates that it can ill-afford a rupture in its relations with Beijing, which is increasingly the senior partner in their relationship.

While it is unlikely, then, that Washington will be able to drive a wedge between the two, it can at least avoid taking steps that could accelerate their alignment and deepen the substance of that rapprochement; Sino-Russian relations, after all, are still defined more by shared resentments than by common visions. A selective revisionist and an opportunistic spoiler, moreover, will likely have different strategies for undercutting U.S. national interests and different ambitions for their respective steady-state positions in world affairs. A U.S. decision to treat China and Russia as a common strategic challenge would almost surely compel them to move more vigorously and intentionally to join forces to undercut U.S. national interests.[26]

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11 March 2019

Submission One

Chinese ambitions of having a 'great power' status focus on surpassing the US and becoming the leading global power. China's 'Great Rejuvenation' is much more than just a plan to provide connectivity and improve the economy and wealth of the Chinese people. Rather, it should be considered as the largest ever, global, man-invented project which creates conditions to surpass potential adversaries in any possible domain, through mostly economic and political means (but who can guarantee that once having the economic dominance in place, future Chinese leadership would not consider use of military power to do thy bidding?). President Xi Jinping's ideas of restoration of Chinese greatness and re-making China into the 'Country of the Middle' should breed deep and multi-vector oriented thinking and concerns among the US and Western world.

In pursuit of global goals, China became one of the largest global investors (in some cases even the largest) and one of the largest importers of natural resources. What makes Chinese offers attractive, especially to smaller and weaker countries/economies, is the fact that China usually offers a lot, but asks for little in return initially.

While not preferring military confrontation and actually avoiding it at the moment, China chose diplomacy, economy and information as the main arenas of its actions. Chinese diplomatic successes could be highlighted by growing number of countries abandoning Chinese adversaries (i.e. diminished international support to Taiwan) and shifting to support Beijing's narratives. To secure its economic position and actions, China tries to create a new global financial system, as an alternative to the existing World Banking System. At the same time, China is more than eager to pursue with their debt trap scenarios, offering huge resources or investments to smaller and weaker states. The cost is a loss of sovereignty of territories important to Chinese global plans.

Unlike China, Russia has a different perception on what it means to be a great power. Russian ambitions do not aim at establishing a physical presence all around the globe. Instead, the Kremlin perceives its status of great power as a set of capacities/abilities to influence

[24] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=CN-RU
[25] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=CN-RU
[26] For further discussion of the differences between the Chinese and Russian challenges to U.S. national interests, please see James Dobbins, Howard J. Shatz, and Ali Wyne, *Russia Is a Rogue, Not a Peer; China Is a Peer, Not a Rogue* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019).

a situation, influence developments, or as an ability to make things happen or not happen, preferably wherever and whenever Moscow wills so. From this perspective, Russian hard power assets are meant to demonstrate overwhelming magnitude of military capabilities (regardless whether real or fake ones), establish A2AD and provide projection of power good enough to execute aggressive Russian actions.
Russia's policies and strategies are, therefore, focused on countering the US and NATO's presence and supremacy. Moscow's primary focus remains on Europe and Europe's neighborhood at the moment, and only to some extent in other places where Russian goals could be achieved with relatively little efforts and resources.

However, new, potentially threatening developments from a US perspective have occurred over the last several years. Russia and China, traditionally opposed to each other (rifts between the two countries peaked in 1969, during war in Ussuria, and never truly settled since then), have seemingly entered into a 'honeymoon' relationship, or so called 'marriage of convenience' recently. China, benefiting throughout the decades from the US support and sponsorship, has silently but persistently worked hard on establishing broad economic capabilities, finally announcing the will to surpass the US by 2049. Chinese investments have spread around the globe rapidly, with an intent to establish new 'Silk Roads' across the land and sea and re-make China into the Country of the Middle. On the other hand, Russian leadership needs money and offers an abundance of natural energy resources, which pre-sets the stage for Russia-China relations. In this duo, China may offer the money, which is much needed in Moscow, and at the same time Russia may in return allow some more bold Chinese actions pushing the Belt and Road Initiative through areas contested in the past. Russia might even consider joining some of these Chinese projects. This relationship seems to continue deepening as China and Russia are being cornered by U.S. policies (e.g., sanctions, economic conflicts, military presence, etc.) and, therefore, share a common adversary – the US. Consequences of a merge of Russian resources and Chinese emerging economy and technology should be very attentively monitored, analyzed and assessed. Furthermore, strategies to counter Chinese grand long-term strategies, as well as Russian 'fait accompli' strategies, need to be searched for immediately.

Submission Two

I would start with a brief highlight on the fact that Russia and China have shared a rather harsh, sometimes even aggressive, relationship over past decades, especially since Stalin's death in 1953. The tensions peaked in 1969, in a border clash over Zhenbao Island, which escalated in a conflict that almost started World War III. Up until 2017, narratives of hostility towards each other filled many columns of both Russian and Chinese magazines and newspapers ("China has a new weapon against Russia: young Chinese men to marry Russian women," "Russia losing World War III, this time to China"). However, less than two years ago the situation changed. Due to external conditions, mostly American actions, former adversaries: Russia and China, found themselves in the same corner – struggling against Western official criticism and sanctions. The perception of a common adversary – the U.S., pushed Russia and China to consider collaboration, starting some kind of 'marriage of convenience', if you will.

Despite their many differences, the Russian-Chinese tandem seems to be working. Russia remains the major security provider in Central Asia and seems to be more than willing to join efforts with other regional players, especially those who are not closely associated with the US. Hence, Russia needs money and entrusts its economy to energy exports, an issue that pre-sets the stage for Russia-China relations. At the same time, China is one of the largest global investors and one of the largest importers of natural resources. Therefore, the Russian-Chinese tandem seems to play a crucial role in shaping both the security and economy in Central Asia.

Russia does not aim to establish a physical presence around the globe to maintain its status. The Kremlin perceives the status of great power as a set of capacities / abilities to influence a situation, influence developments, the ability to make things happen or not happen, wherever and whenever Moscow wills so. Therefore, deepening collaboration with China over Central Asia would allow Russia more freedom to focus Moscow's policies and strategies on countering the US presence and supremacy, mostly in Europe and its neighborhood, and only to some extent in other places where Russian goals could be achieved with relatively little efforts or resources. China's ambitions of 'great power' status focus on surpassing the US. Therefore China's 'Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation' is much more than just a plan to improve the economy and wealth of the Chinese people. I would rather consider it as the largest ever man-invented project which creates conditions to surpass potential adversaries in any possible domain. Deeper collaboration with Russia over Central Asia, allows China to push forward with the Belt and Road Initiative, which is the vital part of Xi Jinping restoration of Chinese greatness and re-making China into the 'Empire of the Middle'.

From the U.S. perspective, though, such a scenario involving close and prolonged Russian-Chinese collaboration, risks a significant loss of influence in Central Asia**.**

Key takeaways:

- Russian-Chinese 'marriage of convenience' is very much condition-based and opportunistic. It helps both parties counter common adversary – the U.S and serves their particular interests. However, because of the nature of both Russia and China and their true goals, this collaboration is rather a short-term phenomenon.
- On one hand, Russian-Chinese collaboration provides limited opportunities to the CAS, as long as the latter will accept how the two big neighbors behave.
- On the other hand, the Russian-Chinese 'honeymoon' may result in a growing major threat to the U.S. interests. A scenario including Putin's bold plans and actions financed with Chinese money, accompanied with Moscow's 'permission' or turning a blind eye on predatory growth of China and spread of Chinese influence globally, should generate some serious concerns for America.
- Such pessimistic thinking may also lead to concerns about the risk of the Russian-Chinese 'marriage of convenience.' A combination of Russian natural resources and Chinese know-how, and economic and production capabilities could result in future regional or major conflict. And such thinking should not be limited only to considerations of new West versus East scenarios, but also potentially highly probable Russo-Chinese conflict in a long term perspective, since both Moscow and Beijing are driven by certain self-centric narratives and both are traditionally not willing to share power or build their might on trust and deep, long lasting alliances.

Subject Matter Expert Biographies

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Dr. Paul Bolt is a Professor of Political Science at the United States Air Force Academy, where he has taught since 1997. He received his B.A. from Hope College and his M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has taught at Zhejiang University and Baicheng Normal College in the People's Republic of China, as well as the University of Illinois. In 2009-2010 he served as a Fulbright scholar at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Dr. Bolt teaches courses in Asian politics, defense policy, American government, American grand strategy, and comparative politics. He is the author of numerous books, articles, and chapters relating to Asia and defense policy. Dr. Bolt has served twice as the Department of Political Science department head.

Dr. David T. Burbach

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Dr. David T. Burbach is an Associate Professor of National Security Affairs at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Dr. Burbach earned a doctorate in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and is a graduate of Pomona College. He has a background in international security and U.S. foreign policy. At the Naval War College, Dr. Burbach has focused on the teaching of national strategy and force planning, regional security in Africa and Europe, and issues with significant technical aspects such as space and cyber. He has published on the future of conflict in Africa as well as the domestic politics of U.S. foreign policy and civil-military relations. Prior to coming to the Naval War College, Dr. Burbach taught at the U.S. Army's School of Advanced Military Studies, and has also worked for the RAND Corporation and several technology start-ups.

Dean Cheng

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Dean Cheng brings detailed knowledge of China's military and space capabilities to bear as The Heritage Foundation's research fellow on Chinese political and security affairs. He specializes in China's military and foreign policy, in particular its relationship with the rest of Asia and with the United States. Cheng has written extensively on China's military doctrine, technological implications of its space program and "dual use" issues associated with the communist nation's industrial and scientific infrastructure. He previously worked for 13 years as a senior analyst, first with Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC), the Fortune 500 specialist in defense and homeland security, and then with the China Studies division of the Center for Naval Analyses, the federally funded research institute. Before entering the private sector, Cheng studied China's defense-industrial complex for a congressional agency, the Office of Technology Assessment, as an analyst in the International Security and Space Program. Cheng has appeared on public affairs shows such as *John McLaughlin's One on One* and programs on National Public Radio, CNN International, BBC World Service and International Television News (ITN). He has been interviewed by or provided commentary for publications such as *Time* magazine, *The Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, *Bloomberg News*, *Jane's Defense Weekly*, South Korea's *Chosun*

Ilbo and Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*. Cheng has spoken at the National Space Symposium, National Defense University, the Air Force Academy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Eisenhower Center for Space and Defense Studies. Cheng earned a bachelor's degree in politics from Princeton University in 1986 and studied for a doctorate at MIT.

Dr. John Delury

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Professor John Delury is a historian of modern China and expert on US-China relations and Korean Peninsula affairs. He is the author, with Orville Schell, of Wealth and Power: China's Long March to the Twenty-first Century, and his articles have appeared in the Journal of Asian Studies, Asian Perspective and Late Imperial China. He contributes regularly to Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Global Asia, and 38 North. He is a senior fellow of the Asia Society and Pacific Century Institute and member of the Council of Foreign Relations, National Committee on US-China Relations and National Committee on North Korea. Prior to joining the Yonsei faculty in 2010, Dr. Delury offered courses at Brown, Columbia, Yale and Peking University, and served as founding associate director of the Asia Society Center on US-China Relations in New York. He is currently writing a book about US-China relations during the Cold War, focusing on the case of imprisoned CIA officer Jack Downey. He is also working on a series of articles on China-North Korea relations and co-authored book project with Patrick McEachern on North Korean politics and history.

David C. Gompert

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The Honorable David C. Gompert is currently Distinguished Visiting Professor at the U.S. Naval Academy, Adjunct Professor at Virginia Union University, and Senior Fellow at RAND. Mr. Gompert was Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence from 2009 to 2010. During 2010, he served as Acting Director of National Intelligence, in which capacity he oversaw the U.S. Intelligence Community and acted as the President's chief intelligence advisor. Prior to his most recent government service, Mr. Gompert was a Senior Fellow at the RAND Corporation, from 2004 to 2009. Before that he was Distinguished Research Professor at the Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University. From 2003 to 2004, Mr. Gompert served as the Senior Advisor for National Security and Defense, Coalition Provisional Authority, Iraq. He has taught at RAND Graduate School, U.S. Naval Academy, the National Defense University, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia Union University. Mr. Gompert served as President of RAND Europe from 2000 to 2003, during which period he was on the RAND Europe Executive Board and Chairman of RAND Europe-UK. He was Vice President of RAND and Director of the National Defense Research Institute from 1993 to 2000. From 1990 to 1993, Mr. Gompert was Special Assistant to President George H. W. Bush and Senior Director for Europe on the National Security Council staff. He has held numerous positions at the State Department, including Deputy to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs (1982-83), Deputy Assistant Secretary for Europe (1981-82), Deputy Director of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (1977-81), and Special Assistant to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (1973-75). Mr. Gompert worked in the private sector from 1983-1990. At Unisys (1989-90), he was President of the Systems Management Group. At AT&T (1983-89), he was Vice President, Civil Sales and Programs, and Director of International Market Planning. Mr. Gompert has published on international affairs, national security and information technology. His books (authored or co-authored) include *War with China: Thinking through the Unthinkable, Blinders, Blunders, and Wars: What America and China Can Learn; Sea Power and American Interests in the Western Pacific; The Paradox of Power: Sino-American Strategic Restraint in an Age of Vulnerability; Underkill: Capabilities for Military Operations amid Populations; War by Other Means: Building Capabilities for Counterinsurgency; BattleWise: Achieving Time-Information Superiority in Networked Warfare; Nuclear*

Weapons and World Politics (ed.); America and Europe: A Partnership for a new Era (ed.); Right Makes Might: Freedom and Power in the Information Age; Mind the Gap: A Transatlantic Revolution in Military Affairs. Mr. Gompert is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Advisory Board of the Naval Academy Center for Cyber Security Studies and chairman of the board of Bobcats Sports League. He has served on numerous for-profit and not-for-profit boards. Mr. Gompert holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the U. S. Naval Academy and a Master of Public Affairs degree from the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University. He and his wife Cynthia live in Virginia and New Hampshire.

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Edward N. Luttwak is Senior Associate, Center for Strategic and International Studies of Washington DC., Chairman of AP Fleet, (aircraft leasing), Dublin, Ireland, and is active as a consultant to governments and international enterprises. He founded and heads a conservation ranch in the Amazon. Has served/serves as a consultant to the US National Security Council, the White House Chief of Staff, the US Department of Defense, US Department of State, US Army, US Air Force, and several allied governments. At present he is working as a contractor for the Office of the Secretary of Defense OSD/NA. Has taught at Johns Hopkins and Georgetown Has been an invited lecturer at universities and higher military schools in the US, UK, China, Israel, Japan the Russian Federation and other countries. His book *The Rise of China versus the Logic of Strategy* (Harvard University Press, 2012), reflects an engagement with Chinese affairs that dates back to an extensive visit in 1976. His previous books, which include *Strategy: the Logic of War and Peace* and *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* have also been published in 23 foreign languages, including Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew, Korean and Russian. C.V. Born in Arad, Transylvania in 1942, attended schools in Sicily and England, then the London School of Economics (B.Sc.Econ) and Johns Hopkins University (Ph..D). LLD Honoris Causa University of Bath (UK). Worked for some years in London and Jerusalem before moving to Washington DC. Speaks several languages.

Anthony Rinna

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Anthony V. Rinna is a Senior Editor at Sino-NK, a research organization dedicated to the study of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia. Rinna specializes in Russian foreign policy and Northeast Asian geopolitics. His expertise has been sought for research conducted by the Australian and Indian foreign ministries, as well as DoD. His views have been cited in the BBC, CNBC, Reuters and the Washington Post. Rinna, a US citizen, has a working knowledge of Korean, Russian and Spanish, and has lived in South Korea since 2014.

Yun Sun

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Yun Sun is co-Director of the East Asia Program and Director of the China Program at the Stimson Center. Her expertise is in Chinese foreign policy, U.S.-China relations and China's relations with neighboring countries and authoritarian regimes. From 2011 to early 2014, she was a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution, jointly appointed by the Foreign Policy Program and the Global Development Program, where she focused on Chinese national security decision-making processes and China-Africa relations. From 2008 to 2011, Yun was the China Analyst for the International Crisis Group based in Beijing, specializing on China's foreign policy towards conflict countries and the developing world. Prior to ICG, she worked on U.S.-Asia relations in Washington, DC for five years. Yun earned her master's degree in international policy and practice from George Washington University, as well as an MA in Asia Pacific studies and a BA in international relations from Foreign Affairs College in Beijing.

Dr. Steve Tsang

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Steve joined SOAS in 2016 as Director of SOAS China Institute. His research interests focus on Twentieth-century Chinese history; Chinese foreign policy; China's 'peaceful rise' strategy; China's rising military might; China's soft power; China-UK relations; China-EU relations; China-US relations; China-Taiwan relations; China-Asia relations; Chinese politics; nature of political system in China; the Chinese Communist Party and democracy; human rights in China; Taiwan politics; Taiwan's external relations; Taiwan's democratisation; Taiwan's security; US-Taiwan relations; Hong Kong politics; Hong Kong's relations with mainland China; colonial history of Hong Kong. Professor Tsang is a frequent commentator for the BBC, including for programmes like *Newsnight, BBC One News, BBC News Channel, Today*, BBC World Service's various programmes such as *Newshour* and *World Tonight*. He has also appeared on Sky News, Channel 4 News, Channel 5 News, Voice of America, France 24, Channel News Asia, CNBC, Al Jazeera and Russia Today.

Nicolas Véron

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Nicolas Véron cofounded Bruegel in Brussels in 2002-05, joined the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington DC in 2009, and is currently employed on equal terms by both organizations as a Senior Fellow. His research is primarily about financial systems and financial services policies. He frequently briefs senior economic policy officials in Europe, the United States and Asia, and has testified at parliamentary hearings in the US Senate, European Parliament, and in several European member states. A graduate of France's Ecole Polytechnique and Ecole des Mines, his earlier experience includes senior positions in the French government and private sector in the 1990s and early 2000s. He is also an independent board member of the global derivatives trade repository arm of DTCC, a financial infrastructure company that operates on a non-profit basis. In September 2012, Bloomberg Markets included Véron in its yearly global "50 Most Influential" list with reference to his early advocacy of European banking union, a topic on which he has worked and published near-continuously since 2007.

Ali Wyne

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Ali Wyne is a Washington, DC-based policy analyst at the RAND Corporation, a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, and a nonresident fellow at the Modern War Institute. He serves as rapporteur for a U.S. National Intelligence Council working group that analyzes trends in world order. Wyne served as a junior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace from 2008 to 2009 and as a research assistant at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs from 2009 to 2012. From January to July 2013 he worked on a team that prepared Samantha Power for her confirmation hearing to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. From 2014 to 2015 he served on RAND's adjunct staff, working with the late Richard Solomon on RAND's *Strategic Rethink* series. Wyne received dual degrees in management science and political science from MIT (2008) and earned his Masters in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School (2017). While at the Kennedy School he served on a Hillary for America working group on U.S. policy toward Asia. Wyne is a coauthor of *Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World* (2013) and a contributing author to *Power Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Mapping a Multipolar World?* (2017) and the *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (2008). Wyne is a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a David Rockefeller fellow with the Trilateral Commission, and a security fellow with the Truman National Security Project.

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Dr. Belinda Bragg is a Principal Research Scientist at NSI where she provides core support to the DoD's Strategic Multilayer Analysis (SMA) projects. Dr. Bragg's background is in reviewing and building social science models and frameworks, including being one of the two designers of our stability model (StaM) that has been successfully used for stability efforts in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, West Bank, and Dhaka Bangladesh. Dr. Bragg is also a visiting lecturer in International Relations at Texas A&M University. Dr. Bragg earned her Ph.D. in political science from Texas A&M University, and her BA from the University of Melbourne, Australia.