

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES  
**POLICY DEPARTMENT**



**The positions of Russia  
and China at the UN  
Security Council in the  
light of recent crises**

SEDE



## **DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES OF THE UNION**

### **DIRECTORATE B**

#### **POLICY DEPARTMENT**

#### **BRIEFING PAPER**

## **THE POSITIONS OF RUSSIA AND CHINA AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT CRISES**

### **Abstract**

In 2011/12 China and Russia cast three vetoes in the Security Council against UN intervention in Syria to prevent government forces suppressing less well-armed oppositionists. This seemed to run counter to the willingness of these states to accept UN intervention in Libya at the beginning of 2011. How should this be explained? It also raised questions about the likely Russian and Chinese response to a possible worsening of the confrontation between the Security Council and Iran over its presumed nuclear programme.

The answers derive from the posture of these two states towards the role of the UN in global governance generally, as well as their particular strategic concerns in the UNSC. There are apparent contradictions between the policies of the two states, as well as common threads.

Russo-Chinese relations in the UNSC are also structured by the wider context of relations in the General Assembly, and by the efforts by both governments to promote a thickening as well as a harmonisation of foreign policies. But there are significant limitations on the likely extent of that harmonisation.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The triple vetoes of Russia and China on draft UNSC resolutions aimed at the Assad regime in Syria in 2011/12 contrast strikingly with their agreement in 2010 to impose sanctions on Iran over their suspected nuclear programme and their acquiescence in UN intervention in Libya in 2011 with an initial no-fly zone that marked the beginning of the end for the Gaddafi regime. The differences can partly be explained in terms of personal choices made by individual leaders – in this case President Medvedev, who accepted the no-fly zone. However, subsequent events in Libya have persuaded decision-makers in both Moscow and Beijing to reject any similar proposal concerning another Middle Eastern state. Objectives of seeking regime change in general through the UN are judged to bring even greater risks of suffering to the local population, whatever Western governments and humanitarian INGOs may claim.

Those events have revived a wariness in Russia and China about compromising on the fundamental priorities of national sovereignty and ensuring that UN peacekeeping operations are only imposed with the consent of the host government. Nevertheless vetoes in the Security Council remain rare events. Whilst the threat of them often prolongs the negotiation phase, they also encourage potential veto-holders to keep trying to find an acceptable compromise. Neither Russia nor China have shown themselves to be implacable defenders of the principle of national sovereignty at all costs. They have accepted and even occasionally voted in favour of SC resolutions that imposed sanctions on friendly governments. One key factor is maintaining the reputation of the UN and its agencies for impartial assessment of controversial evidence.

Although Russia and China do instinctively look to each other for mutual support so as to avoid isolation in the SC, they do not see issues through identical eyes. There are a whole range of underlying tensions in the bilateral relationship that impact the decision-making process and will continue to do so. Russia tends to take the lead in determining a diplomatic line, but this presents opportunities for other states to press their own views upon either Russia or China and try to win them over. In general Russia's diplomatic preferences are more akin to those of European states, whilst China is more amenable to arguments from the US, provided they appear to stem from core American interests. But differences between the three Western P5 states can also provide opportunities for reverse influence from Russia and China if the two of them hold to coordinated positions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Take into account Russian and Chinese interests at the UN Security Council

- Diplomacy towards Russia and China needs to start by recognising the fundamental importance that both states attach to the principle of the UN as the core of global governance in matters to do with security; however different their perspectives on possible solutions to particular crises, their underlying concern is to avoid doing anything which in their eyes is likely to undermine the prestige and effectiveness of the SC; in fact they want to see a stronger UN;
- Diplomacy there also needs to recognise the importance that both states attach to their status as P5 members of the SC;
- The European members of the UNSC should seek to engage proactively with Russia and China and ensure that both countries are fully involved in negotiations to resolve international crises; similar efforts should be made by the EU in the framework of bilateral relations with Russia and China.

### 2. Influence Russian and Chinese positions

- Sometimes Russia and China can be sufficiently placated about a proposal which they would be inclined to oppose if it is adapted to minimise the possible costs to them;
- When considering the reliability of information that is presented as a prelude to international decision-making, especially where sanctions are concerned, Russia and China attach greater weight to the impartiality of UN sources than to those of individual member governments. In the case of the Iran nuclear programme this could be crucial. When trying to influence Russian and China the EU should therefore refer as much as possible to UN sources and data. Sometimes it is this respect for the status of UN institutions that can facilitate joint decisions;
- It is important to avoid the impression of proposing policies of intervention that smack of regime change, because after Libya Russia and China are extremely suspicious.

### 3. Russia as a key interlocutor for the EU

- Since Russia has taken the lead in proposing policies and responses to crises that China has followed, the European members of the SC may find it easier than the US to negotiate mutually acceptable outcomes with Moscow on matters concerning the Middle East, provided the UK and France can maintain a common front. Such discussions could take place, for example, in the framework of French-Russia-bilateral relations, or at EU-Russia summits;
- However, China may be more receptive to arguments from the US, provided it seems that they reflect core interests of the US and come from the highest levels of government; the EU and the US should therefore liaise closely and report mutually on their efforts to negotiate mutually acceptable outcomes with Moscow and Beijing;
- Chinese support for a UN policy may help to persuade other states from the developing world to accept it.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Briefing Paper is to explore the foreign policy positions of Russia and China and the thinking behind them, as they relate to their behaviour in the UN Security Council (UNSC), particularly in recent years. The main objective is to illuminate their positions on the role and functions of the SC in international crises, particularly those over Libya, Syria, as well as the recurring diplomatic disputes over the alleged Iranian nuclear weapons programme.

The main methodology has been to consult the existing literature on the foreign policy behaviour of China (modest at best) and Russia (even smaller) in the UNSC. But this has also been supplemented by quantitative longitudinal evidence on the voting behaviour of the P5 states in the UNSC and also the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to identify more general patterns of interactions between these five states at the two levels.<sup>1</sup> It has also consulted the much larger and swelling literature on Chinese foreign policy in general, as well as the quite significant literature on Russian foreign policy, so as to locate the UN policies of these states within the wider perspectives on the trends of overall foreign policy goals. And it has consulted the literature devoted specifically to Sino-Russian relations to estimate the degree of closeness of the relationship between these two states, the extent to which it is likely to persist, and its ability to withstand strain.

## 2. RECENT POSITIONS OF RUSSIA AND CHINA IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

In 2011 and 2012 China and Russia altogether vetoed three resolutions in the UNSC that called upon the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad to desist from military actions against its own people and, later, for President Assad to step down in favour of his deputy.

The impact of these three joint vetoes was striking. As Table 1 in the Appendix shows, it has been very rare for Permanent Members (P5) of the UNSC to veto any resolution since the end of the Cold War. What made it even more striking was the fact that on 17 March 2011 Russia and China had abstained in the early stages of the uprising in Libya when the SC voted in favour of restrictions on the imports of military equipment by the Gaddafi regime and the imposition of a no-fly zone over the conflict areas enforced by NATO aircraft to prevent the much better equipped Libyan army suppressing the uprising through firepower. The refusal of Russia and China to attempt to enforce similar restraint upon the Syrian regime later in the year suggested **an important shift in the foreign policy thinking of Russia and China**. The fact that this was repeated twice the following year, even though the humanitarian consequences for the Syrian people became ever more dreadful, also suggested a callousness towards suffering reminiscent of the Cold War and an imperviousness towards the evidence of obvious regime brutality. In addition the tide of refugees into neighbouring countries also provided graphic evidence of an international threat to peace and security, just as it had in earlier cases such as Kosovo, Rwanda, the Congo, etc., which had led to UN peace-keeping interventions. But instead of accepting the need for action if a government failed to observe the principle of its 'responsibility to protect' its own people, Russia and China called upon all parties in the conflict to observe restraint. In practice that seemed to turn a blind eye to the brutality of the much better armed agents of the government in suppressing opposition, whilst restricting the ability of the opposition to defend themselves. According to the Russian ambassador to the UN, there were two crucial differences between their support for the resolution on Libya and those on Syria. The first was that the vote over Libya was held against a background of President Gaddafi publicly inciting a bloodbath against opponents in Benghazi.

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<sup>1</sup> I am extremely grateful to Christina Ferdinand, Michael Tourville and Krzysztof Siczek for assistance in compiling the data.

Secondly, there was an apparent attitude 'where Security Council resolutions are simply regarded by some countries as a trigger' for external intervention.<sup>2</sup> In other words, Russia and China believe they now have more reason to be suspicious again of attempts by other governments to exploit the situation to promote regime change.

In fact, **these joint vetoes by Russia and China, whilst rare, were not unique.** In 2007 they lodged a veto against an SC resolution that called for sanctions against Myanmar because of its continued repression of democracy activists, its failure to combat AIDS/HIV, its tolerance of drug-trafficking and its policy of driving opponents abroad as refugees. In his address to the SC US Ambassador Bolton specifically mentioned parallels with the circumstances surrounding SC Resolution 688 on the exodus of Kurds as refugees after the Iraq war as a precedent for SC action, though the last straw was the government's decision to extend the house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi by another year. And then in 2008 Russia and China vetoed a resolution on Zimbabwe that sought to restrain supporters of Robert Mugabe from attacking opponents and inflicting economic chaos on the country, again causing widespread flight – reportedly by 2007 over a quarter of the Zimbabwean population were refugees in South Africa. In both cases the fact of large-scale refugee migration certainly could be seen as a challenge to international peace and security. Humanitarian INGOs had been vociferous in their demands for UN action against both regimes for years. Yet both resolutions were vetoed.

Yet **it is not the case that Russia and China routinely veto UN intervention in such cases.** Whilst they do not vote in favour, they often abstain. So for example, they accepted UN military intervention in Cote d'Ivoire in 2011 after a small UN peace-keeping force there had been attacked by the troops of President Gbagbo. And whilst they had been strongly opposed to the US/UK invasion of Iraq in 2003, they did not prevent the deployment of a UN mission afterwards to try to manage the peace.

And even in the cases of states that are clients of either Russia or China, they may occasionally acquiesce in public criticism of them, especially when it comes from the UN or one of its agencies, not least because for example, according to Kasting and Fite: 'The Russo-Iranian relationship is built upon mutual opportunism.'<sup>3</sup> So Russia did cancel the Iranian order for S-300 missile air-defence system in 2010 in the face of diplomatic pressure from the West and Israel. China, for example, has voted in favour of accepting IAEA reports that are critical of North Korea's nuclear programme. China and Russia have sometimes voted in favour of UN sanctions aimed at halting Iran's nuclear programme. They also appear to have reduced their arms shipments to Iran recently.<sup>4</sup> So **their actions depend on an estimation of relative costs and benefits.** On the one hand, according to Mankoff, Russia shares the US aversion to a nuclear-armed Iran.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Russia also needs to cooperate with Iran on a whole range of regional issues.<sup>6</sup> Both **Russia and China will continue to have to work with Iran on regional security issues in Central Asia, including Afghanistan,** as well as on increasing trade. They,

<sup>2</sup> 'Russia's UN Ambassador sums up the country's positions' ([http://rbth.ru/articles/2011/12/08/russias\\_un\\_ambassador\\_sums\\_up\\_the\\_countrys\\_positions\\_13923.html](http://rbth.ru/articles/2011/12/08/russias_un_ambassador_sums_up_the_countrys_positions_13923.html)) See Table 2 for a list of recent UNSC meetings on Iran, Libya and Syria.

<sup>3</sup> Kasting, N. and Fite, B., *US and Iranian Strategic Competition: The Impact of China and Russia*, CSIS, Washington, DC., p.48

<sup>4</sup> Cordesman, A. et al, *US and Iranian Strategic Competition: Sanctions, Energy, Arms Control, and Regime Change*, CSIS, Washington, DC, 2013 ([https://csis.org/files/publication/130122\\_IranVSanctions\\_Final\\_AHC\\_1\\_22\\_13.pdf](https://csis.org/files/publication/130122_IranVSanctions_Final_AHC_1_22_13.pdf)) (accessed 15 February 2013). This report contains an up-to-date and detailed account of sanctions against Iran and their implementation.

<sup>5</sup> Mankoff, J., *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 2009, p.121; Tsygankov, A.P., *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2010, p.184.

<sup>6</sup> Kozhanov, R., *Russia's Relations with Iran: Dialogue Without Commitments*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, DC., 2012



unlike the US, cannot afford to isolate Iran. And many Russian officials doubt that economic sanctions will prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons anyway.<sup>7</sup>

Wuthnow, who has considered China's behaviour in the UNSC predominantly in terms of how it relates to the US, has analysed the events leading up to the decision in the UNSC on 9 June 2010 to approve Resolution 1929. This imposed another round of sanctions on Iran to pressure it into suspending its uranium enrichment work and comply with IAEA inspection guidelines. In this case Russia had been the first to indicate its exasperation with the procrastination in Teheran, which left China exposed as potentially the only veto-power unwilling to go along. In the end (and the process took 9 months, nor was it the first example of delay) the P5 were able to agree on a programme of sanctions against Iran. His conclusion was that though the process was very convoluted, a number of elements contributed to the Chinese decision. Obviously the fact that Russia had indicated its willingness to accept proposals made Chinese diplomats more isolated, but it was high level contacts from Washington, allied to support from states in the region, and the sense that there was no alternative policy that might bring results, that seem to have swung the Chinese decision. In general, again according to Wuthnow: 'The PRC has recognised that the instability generated by states like North Korea and Sudan can negatively affect its own interests, and has acquiesced to various forms of external intervention in response. The problem is that the West typically defaults on the application of multilateral pressure as a preferred strategy, while the PRC tends to place more emphasis on bilateral contacts and non-coercive mediation.'<sup>8</sup>

So whilst it was the vetoes over Syria that attracted attention in 2011-12 and caused concern, what also needs explanation is the relatively rapid agreement of Russia and China to the introduction of a no-fly zone in Libya, which dramatically turned the tide of the conflict there in 2011, culminating in the downfall of President Gaddafi. Here Russian commentators have suggested that this was very much the personal decision of President Medvedev. Reportedly the whole Russian foreign policy establishment had been opposed to their government's decision, including the Russian foreign minister. According to the editor of the journal *Russia in Global Politics*, Fyodor Lukyanov, the following conclusion was drawn: 'What Libya did was compel a group of people in Russia – the elites and the general public – to say "never again". "Never again."<sup>9</sup> And in turn China, which had followed Russia's lead, found itself exposed to considerable danger for its citizens working in Libya and financial losses from all the economic chaos. Reportedly Chinese construction companies lost \$16.6 billion, as well as a further \$3-4 billion on lost exports of equipment, etc., whilst China had hastily to evacuate 35,000 of its citizens.<sup>10</sup> So China too is now again much more wary of approving UN intervention, especially where its own citizens and investments may become caught up.

So how do Russia and China frame their positions at the UN?

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<sup>7</sup> Shleifer, A., and Treisman, D., 'Why Moscow Says No: A Question of Interests, Not Psychology', *Foreign Affairs*, Jan-Feb. 2011, p.135.

<sup>8</sup> Wuthnow, J., *Beyond the Veto: Chinese Diplomacy in the United Nations Security Council*, Columbia University PhD., 2011, pp.219-220, 85.

<sup>9</sup> 'Talking point: the logic of Russian foreign policy', *Russia in Global Affairs*, December 2012, (<http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/print/event/Talking-point-the-logic-of-Russian-foreign-policy-Marie-Mendras-and-Fyodor-Lukyanov-join-oDRussia-ed>) (accessed 4 February 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Kashin, V.B., 'Vyiti iz teni: Kitai v poiskakh vneshnei politiki', *Rossia v global'noi politike*, May 2012.

### 3. STRATEGIC INTERESTS OF RUSSIA AND CHINA AT THE UN

For both Russia and China **the UN represents a key element in their desired system of global governance**. In 1997 they issued a joint statement on a strengthened role for the UN in a new world order and in 2005 they updated this document, characterising the role and function of the UN as 'irreplaceable', calling for its leading role to be strengthened. They appealed for the UN to set up a global system to deal with new threats and challenges such as international terrorism on the basis of the UN Charter and international law.<sup>11</sup> In 2011 the BRICS states issued their Sanya Declaration, reiterating their 'strong commitment to multilateral diplomacy with the United Nations playing the central role in dealing with global challenges and threats.'<sup>12</sup> Thus Russia and China have committed themselves to a more prominent place for the UN and at the same time they try to ensure that they play a more important role in it. Thus one of the considerations that underlies all of their positions and actions is to maintain and enhance their own leadership roles in general and in the UN in particular. As Odgaard puts it for China: **'The UN [...] serves as the central platform from which China seeks to project itself as a responsible power** that fulfils its obligations toward the international community by respecting universal rules of international conduct.'<sup>13</sup>

This general inclination has been strengthened in recent years. A key reason is the sense amongst foreign policy elites in Russia and China, but also more widely too, that **the global order is mutating quite rapidly away from the unipolar moment** of the 1990s and the beginning of the last decade.<sup>14</sup> According to Russian foreign minister Lavrov: 'We really live in a world of profound changes. [...] In this connection, I would like to cite the conclusions of Academician Sergei Kapitsa, who in his last years spent much time addressing historical issues. He convincingly demonstrated that the historical process is continuously accelerating, and that each new stage of history is twice shorter than the previous one.[...] No-one can yet say what contours the 21<sup>st</sup> century world order will take and how stable and efficient it will be. One of the main goals of Russia foreign policy is making the international system fair, democratic and, ideally, self-regulating.'<sup>15</sup> But at the moment, according to Lukyanov, '[Putin] believes the world today is absolutely unpredictable, ungovernable, risky and dangerous.'<sup>16</sup> In these circumstances, the UN can serve as an institutional pole of attraction that facilitates international collaboration in tackling global challenges. Putin himself emphasised in his Munich speech of 2007: 'The use of force can only be considered legitimate if the decision is sanctioned by the UN [i.e. not the EU or NATO]. When the UN will truly unite the forces of the international community and can really react to events in various countries, when we will leave behind this disdain for international law, then the situation will be able to change. Otherwise the situation will simply result in a dead end, and the number of serious mistakes will be multiplied.'<sup>17</sup> This limitation on the legitimacy of other actors to sanction military action apart from the UN is still contested in the US. The President of the Council on

<sup>11</sup> People's Daily Online (2005), "China, Russia issue joint statement on world order" ([http://english.people.com.cn/200507/01/eng20050701\\_193636.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200507/01/eng20050701_193636.html)) (consulted 10 February 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Indian High Commission (2011), "Sanya Declaration" (<http://www.hcindia-au.org/pdf/Sanya%20Declaration.pdf>) (consulted 10 February 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Odgaard, L., *China and Coexistence: Beijing's National Security Strategy for the Twenty-First Century*, Woodrow Wilson Pr. and Johns Hopkins UP, Washington, DC and Baltimore, 2012, p.132.

<sup>14</sup> See for example, Dynkin, A.A. and Ivanova, N.I. (eds), *Rossia v politsetrichnom mire*, Ves' Mir, Moscow, 2011; National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, Washington, DC, 2012; EUISS, *Global Governance, 2025*, Paris, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Lavrov, S., 'Russia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century World of Power', *Russia in Global Affairs*, December 2012.

<sup>16</sup> 'Talking point', op.cit.

<sup>17</sup> 'Speech at Munich conference on Security Policy', (<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2007/02/362269.html>) (accessed 4 February 2013).

Foreign Relations and former head of the planning staff in the US State Department, Richard Haas, for instance, reacted to the third joint Sino-Russian veto with the comment that 'the United States and other like-minded governments should not equate the United Nations with multilateralism, nor should they see the UN as having a monopoly on legitimacy.'<sup>18</sup>

In terms of foreign policy at the global level, **both Russia and China see collaboration with each other as a counterweight to US hegemony**. They no longer wish fundamental revision of the existing international order, but they do want substantial change. They believe in the goal of a multipolar rather than a unipolar world and wish to promote it. Already in 1997 they issued a joint declaration on a new, more just world order which claimed: 'Diversity in the political, cultural and economic development of all countries is becoming the norm... A growing number of countries are beginning to recognise the need for mutual respect, equality and mutual advantage – but not for hegemony and power politics – and for dialogue and cooperation – but not for confrontation and conflict.' They also called for a reformed United Nations to become a much more important element in international governance.<sup>19</sup> They renewed this call in 2005 and stressed the need for developing countries to play a bigger role in international governance.<sup>20</sup> So for Russia and China the UN is important not merely in itself and as a vehicle for promoting their own interests, **it is also inseparable from the broader objective of promoting a multipolar world**. That shared fundamental objective underpins their foreign policy in general and keeps them pointing in the same general direction.

But although they have both been members of the SC for over 40 years, **the record of their involvement in it has somewhat diverged**. The explanations for this relate partly to specific issues that come before the SC and partly to broader variations in analytical focus on the main trends and motivations of the overall foreign policies of the two states.

Some analysts for instance have focused upon realist interpretations for both Russia<sup>21</sup> and China<sup>22</sup> where the objectives of national defence and ultimately national survival are paramount for foreign policy. Others have highlighted constructivist issues that place much greater emphasis upon the construction of national identity as the prime objective of foreign policy for both Russia<sup>23</sup> and China.<sup>24</sup> Even though the collapse of the USSR gave rise to widespread debates about the nature of Russian identity and the natural place of Russia in the world, and though in recent years the Russian government has tried to enhance Russia's international 'soft power', through initiatives such as the Russkiy Mir Foundation, in general it seems fair to say that **realist issues and concerns have been more salient in subsequent Russian foreign policy** – indeed one Russian commentator has suggested that current Russian foreign policy most closely reflects the interests of the country's defence-industrial complex which wants the freedom to sell to any possible customer.<sup>25</sup> By contrast **constructivist concerns have been more salient in China's foreign policy**, at least since economic reforms began at the end of 1978. It is Johnston's contention that since China abandoned the international isolation of the Maoist era, it has practised three linked strategies of mimicking, persuasion

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<sup>18</sup> 'Syria: Beyond the UN Veto', (<http://www.cfr.org/syria/syria-beyond-un-veto/p28732>) (accessed 4 February 2013).

<sup>19</sup> 'China-Russia: Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World and the Establishment of a New International Order', *International Legal Materials* 36(4), 1997, p.987.

<sup>20</sup> For the full text, see <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1436001/posts> (accessed 3 May 2012).

<sup>21</sup> Mankoff, op.cit.

<sup>22</sup> Mearsheimer, J.J., 'The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia', *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, vol.3, 2010, pp.381-96 (<http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0056.pdf>) (accessed 5 February 2013); Friedberg, A., *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia*, W.W.Norton, NY, 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Tsygankov, A.P., op.cit.

<sup>24</sup> Zhang, W., *The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational State*, Hackensack, NJ, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Kashin, V.V., 'Bez al'iansov I ideologii', *Rossii v Global'noi Politike*, July 2012

and social influence to learn how to operate effectively within international society,<sup>26</sup> because China has wanted to promote the reputation of being a responsible and constructive partner. Nevertheless a new generation of military specialists and commentators are emerging who advocate much more openly a muscular Chinese foreign policy.<sup>27</sup> According to Shambaugh: 'China since 2009 is an increasingly realist, narrowly self-interested nation, seeking to maximise its own comprehensive power.'<sup>28</sup> So it may be that **a growing convergence in general foreign policy priorities** from opposite ends of a realist-constructivist continuum between Russia and China is beginning to take place.

However, there is one further aspect of foreign-policy making in China (and to a lesser extent Russia too) that needs to be kept in mind. That is the bureaucratic weakness of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in determining overall foreign policy. In the ranking of Chinese ministries the Ministry of Foreign Affairs comes well below many of the economic ministries, as well as the Ministry of Defence. As a variety of different Chinese governmental actors become increasingly involved in international affairs, they develop their own interests, which do not always reflect those of the foreign ministry. The body that decides and coordinates the overall national priorities in foreign affairs is the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group of the CCP Politburo, chaired by the Party General Secretary where, apart from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the rest of the members have other ministerial or party responsibilities. They do not have a background in diplomacy. So various agencies, e.g. state corporations with interests abroad, can pursue them without having to submit to Foreign Ministry approval, still less coordination. All of this complicates attempts to understand the coherence of Chinese diplomacy. Sometimes that coherence may be lacking.<sup>29</sup> Whilst this problem does not apply with such force to Russia, nonetheless according to Kozhanov, the same issue of lack of overall strategy and multiplicity of actors to some extent also applies to Russia's policy towards Iran.<sup>30</sup>

Garver suggests that it is this incoherence of bureaucratic politics in Beijing that explains the PRC's apparently contradictory policies towards Iran. For him it consists of six objectives:

- Cooperate with the US as far as necessary to demonstrate that China is not a strategic rival or challenger and should be seen as responsible partner
- Support Iran against US diplomatic pressure and help it to advance its nuclear programmes
- Expand economic cooperation with Iran and deflect sanctions
- Facilitate the flow of a wide range of dual use technologies to Iran
- Cooperate with Iran to strengthen its military capabilities
- Try to mediate between the US and Iran<sup>31</sup>

Whilst Garver acknowledges that this combination of policies could also be read as part of a grand design to hoodwink the US, he comes down on the side of bureaucratic politics as the most likely explanation, with different Chinese government agencies each given their head.

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<sup>26</sup> Johnston, A.I., *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000*, Princeton UP. Princeton, 2008

<sup>27</sup> Kashin, 'Vyiti iz teni'.

<sup>28</sup> Shambaugh, D., 'Coping with a Conflicted China', *Washington Quarterly*, 34:1, Winter 2011, p.24.

<sup>29</sup> For a recent analysis of this problem, see the testimony by Susan V. Lawrence to the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission at <http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/4.13.11Lawrence.pdf>; and for analysis of the difficulties of understanding the coherence of China's policies towards Iran, see testimony by John W. Garver at <http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/4.13.11Garver.pdf> (both accessed 7 February 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Kozhanov, op.cit.

<sup>31</sup> Garver, op.cit., p.1.

### 3.1 Chinese Strategic Interests in the UNSC

In 1989 Deng Xiaoping laid down that China should adopt a low profile in international affairs. As he put it, China should 'coldly observe, secure our positions, cope calmly, conceal our positions and bide our time, keep a low profile, never take the lead, and make a contribution.'<sup>32</sup> China was to focus its foreign policy exclusively upon economic objectives. As a Russian academic has observed, the consequence was China's 'greatest dependence on interaction with Russia' as the main exponent of the interests of the non-Western world in global issues. So China generally supported Russian initiatives.<sup>33</sup>

One interpretation of the practice of Chinese diplomacy as the country gradually sought to integrate itself into international organisations was that **its representatives observed cautiously the ways in which these organisations operated so that they could better fit in**. Rather than challenge the existing international order, they sought to learn how to work in it and how to make it work.<sup>34</sup> They have been more concerned to reassure governments around the world that China's 'rise' is peaceful, and not a threat to anyone. More recently Yang has analysed Chinese diplomacy in the UNSC on issues concerning Iraq between 1991 and 2003. Whilst the PRC was as opposed as Russia to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, she showed that throughout the preceding decade the PRC increasingly practised multilateralism and balance of power, accommodating and hedging. As she put it, 'on balance China did not tend to opt for obstructive behaviour in the SC'.<sup>35</sup> Or, as a Russian commentator observed, China kept half a step behind, letting Russia take the lead. According to him, Chinese officials were more nervous than Russians about antagonising the US.<sup>36</sup> This is a striking fact, given that, at least at the beginning of the decade-long confrontation between the West and the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, China was itself the target of Western sanctions in the aftermath of the massacres of protesters around Tiananmen Square in 1989. It might have been expected that China's leaders, who felt both threatened by and resentment about this isolation, might have responded with greater opposition to Western diplomacy, but this did not happen. Xiao agrees that in its decade-long involvement in international diplomacy over Iraq, China tried to satisfy Western counterparts as well as appease domestic audiences.<sup>37</sup>

To some extent **this divergence between Russia and China over confronting the US has diminished more recently**. In part this is because the prestige of the West and its models of development have been eclipsed by the global financial crisis and its aftermath. This has encouraged Chinese elites to be more self-confident. Chinese leaders do not feel so threatened by the West, even the US. And in part, too, it reflects a change of generation in Chinese leaders. China under Xi Jinping has become more robust in its foreign policy in the Pacific in pursuit of China's territorial claims in the South and East China Seas, even though several of its neighbours have begun to hedge their positions by looking back towards the US again. So China has become a little more assertive. Official

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<sup>32</sup> Chen, D. and Wang, J., 'Lying Low no More? China's New Thinking on the Tao Guang Yang Hui Strategy', *China: an International Journal*, vol.9, no.2, 2011, pp.195-216.

<sup>33</sup> Kashin, V.B., 'Vyiti iz teni', op.cit.

<sup>34</sup> Johnston, A.I., op.cit.; Morpeth, S., 'China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council', *Security Dialogue* 31, 2000, pp.151-66.

<sup>35</sup> Yang, S.X., *China in the UN Security Council Decision-Making on Iraq: Conflicting Understandings, Competing Preferences*, Routledge, London, p.100.

<sup>36</sup> Galenovich, Iu.M., *Rossii, Kitai, Amerika: ot sopernichestva k garmonii interesov?*, Russkaia Panorama, Moscow, 2006, pp.567, 270.

<sup>37</sup> Yang, S.X., op.cit., p.188.



pronouncements have modified the original Deng invocation to keep a low profile, suggesting that China should now 'proactively' seek to do more.<sup>38</sup>

What are the main priorities of Chinese diplomacy at the UN? According to Yang, China has four main objectives there: 1) **protecting sovereignty**, autonomy and its independence of decision-making there; 2) **maintaining geostrategic balance** and national security; 3) **cultivating a favourable international image** and status as a responsible member of the international community and a great power; 4) **promoting China's economic and political interests**.<sup>39</sup> This list would hold equally well for Russia, and indeed most states at the UN. Odgaard has provided a fairly similar list of China's strategic principles, again with four elements: 1) a steadfast adherence to absolute sovereignty and the prioritisation of dialogue over the use of force to resolve conflicts; 2) the conviction that Chap. VII operations must have the consent of governments against whom they are directed, except where UN agencies can show clear evidence of breaches of UN rules; 3) support for government efforts to promote social and economic development, with stability prioritised over human rights; 4) the upholding and strengthening of the rule of law in international relations.<sup>40</sup>

Both of these lists show that **the most fundamental concern for both China and Russia at the UN is the first principle, i.e. maintaining the sovereignty of existing states**. For them this is the fundamental principle of diplomacy in the modern world. For the PRC there is a specific concern. Its absolute bottom line concerns the issue of recognition of the nationalist regime on Taiwan as the government of the whole of China. Ever since 1971 this has been the most common cause of PRC vetoes. In 1996, for example, the PRC vetoed an extension of a UN peacekeeping mission to Haiti, and in 1999 it did the same for FYRoM because both governments recognised Taiwan or appeared to be moving in that direction – though not for long. The effect of these vetoes was to make them quickly change sides.

But more generally this issue of respecting existing sovereignty helped to explain why China did not oppose the Gulf war in 1991 to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait, because Iraq had been first in using force to change borders. This principle makes both Russia and China very reluctant to endorse diplomatic solutions to international security crises that involve external involvement in the internal affairs of a state without its agreement. It means for instance that **they are very wary of new concepts of international law, such as the responsibility to protect, that legitimise the overriding of national sovereignty even for the sake of averting or ending a large-scale humanitarian disaster**, not least because it could encourage separatism – they are only too aware of the danger of precedents being used against them over problem areas in their own territory, such as Chechnya, Tibet and Xinjiang. For China this issue of principle outweighed its diplomatic cooperation with Russia in 2008 during the war with Georgia and the subsequent Russian declaration of independence for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which China has not recognised. It should be remembered that China only agreed to the inclusion of the positive reference to the 'responsibility to protect' in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document when it was agreed that it could only be applied with the agreement of the Security Council, in other words where it would have a potential veto. At the same time, though, it did acknowledge the force of the need for the international community to be able to intervene to prevent humanitarian catastrophes.

<sup>41</sup> And its experience of being criticised for its opposition to condemnation of abuses in Darfur, southern Sudan, made it more sensitive to the reputational damage of insisting upon non-interference

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<sup>38</sup> Cheng and Wang, op.cit.

<sup>39</sup> Yang, S.X., op.cit., p.61.

<sup>40</sup> Odgaard, op.cit., pp.129-30.

<sup>41</sup> Garwood-Gowers, A., 'China and the "Responsibility to Protect": The Implications of the Libyan Intervention', *Asian Journal of International Law*, 2, 2012, p.381.

at all costs. However, both China and Russia still insist upon the need for focusing on intervention to strengthen state capacity to prevent refugee catastrophes, and the need for host government consent, rather than trying to bring about regime change. If a viable government still seems to be in place, Russia and China prefer to structure any external intervention around it, preferably with its approval.

At the same time, **China no longer holds to absolute support for the principle of sovereignty in all circumstances**, as it did two decades and more ago. China's growing integration into the world economy, its growing embrace of globalisation and its increasingly active involvement in global governance in the UNSC have brought home to it the dilemmas of reconciling acceptable global governance with national sovereignty.<sup>42</sup> Wuthnow quotes interviews with senior Chinese diplomats who accept that the sovereignty of **pariah states that challenge regional stability and nuclear non-proliferation cannot be granted absolute respect**. Nuclear non-proliferation is a core concern of China. And China seems to recognise that a nuclear arms race in the Middle East would destabilise the whole region.<sup>43</sup> So, as has been shown above, China and Russia have in recent years voted for UN declarations, and even occasionally resolutions, that committed the UN to intervening in the internal affairs of individual states for the sake of resolving international challenges to peace and security.

Nevertheless one extension of this principle is that **China is still extremely reluctant to approve the use of force to impose peace-keeping solutions on parties that are in conflict**. The Chinese government believes that premature imposition of peace-keeping operations can lead to accusations of partiality, even when the peace-keepers claim to be acting on behalf of the international community through the UN. These suspicions in turn can prolong conflict, causing further casualties, including among the peace-keepers. Their standard position, although in crises it may sometimes seem like a counsel of perfection and insensitive to the scale of casualties that is already taking place, is that diplomatic negotiations should be pursued between all the parties involved until a consensus emerges over the most acceptable solution. Thus China, more than Russia (although sometimes Russia adopts this position too), seeks to present itself as a mediator in international conflicts, with the implication that a bona fide mediator should not appear to take sides if it is to be trusted by the protagonists. Admittedly this was a role that was easier for China to adopt in earlier years, when it was a relative newcomer on the international stage and it had fewer commitments to strategic partners or clients that might displace dispassionate objectivity. But it remains a starting position for China when it is confronted by a new challenge to international security to resolve. And China justifies this position as well by claiming to want to preserve the status of the SC as an impartial body. For good or ill, it argues that if the SC becomes bogged down in unsuccessful and never-ending peace-keeping operations, where it is perceived to have intervened on one side rather than another, this diminishes the readiness of other governments to turn to it as the main and most authoritative place to resolve future international disputes. In this respect it represents a different perspective on the role of the UN in upholding global governance, because it does not seek so much to lead as to mediate. This often puts China apart from the US and also, though less often, from the UK and France.

There is a **paradox about a recent emerging trend in China's attitude** towards dealing with the challenges to international peace and security that constitute the criterion for SC intervention under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. China does wish to see the role of the SC enhanced. Yet at the same time the Chinese government has edged towards involving regional organisations such as the African Union in decisions as to whether a particular situation really does represent a threat to international peace and

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<sup>42</sup> Carlson, Allen, 'Helping to keep the Peace (Albeit Reluctantly): China's Recent Stance on Sovereignty and Multilateral Intervention', *Pacific Affairs* 77, 2004, pp.9-27.

<sup>43</sup> Wuthnow, op.cit., pp.87-8, 117, 174

security, or at least in legitimising them. Without that corroboration, it is more reluctant to grant the SC powers to act except in circumstances where the threats are most blatant. In other words, it has shown itself reluctant to concede sole adjudication power to the UNSC, when the majority of the P5 members are still Western and developed, rather than from the developing world where most peace-keeping activity takes place. It implicitly accepts that assessments of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security may vary from one region of the world to another. So, for example, China and Russia (and South Africa) opposed a UNSC draft resolution in 2007 calling on the Myanmar government to desist from military attacks on civilians in ethnic minority areas and begin substantive political dialogue over a transition to democracy in part because the regional security organisation, ASEAN, did not regard events there as a threat to international peace and security, even if they did represent a disruption of domestic peace and security. Odgaard comments that this was consistent with China's desire to stake out common ground with states outside the West.<sup>44</sup> It helps to explain why China and Russia were prepared to abstain on UNSC Resolution 1973 which authorised NATO intervention in Libya in 2011 because it had the support of the Arab League and the African Union – the Chinese ambassador explicitly referred to this. On the other hand they vetoed a draft resolution in July 2012 over Syria, where the Arab League sent observers and tried to mediate between the warring parties, but the Syrian regime refused to accept outside intervention.

But one important element in China's self-image as an international actor has not changed, despite the dramatic economic success of the last 30 years, and it differentiates China from Russia. **China sees itself as the only P5 state that normally backs the concerns of the developing world** – since 1992 it has had observer status at the Non-Aligned Movement, the only P5 state to attend. Even though China's development has brought problems as well as opportunities for many developing countries as they try to compete economically, that prestige still holds sway. At the same time, according to Morphet it has traditionally balanced those concerns with equal concern for its status as a Permanent Member.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.2 Russian Strategic Interests in the UNSC

The characteristics identified above for China's strategic concerns in the UNSC could be **applied with equal force to Russia**. It too prioritises respect for the principle of sovereignty in international affairs, maintaining a geostrategic balance and international security, cultivating a favourable international image and status as a responsible member of the international community, and promoting its economic and political interests. It too prioritises dialogue over force to solve international conflicts (although it has shown itself more willing to pursue a muscular foreign policy than China, viz. the brief war with Georgia in 2008). It too believes that UN peacekeeping operations should only be authorised when the consent of the host government has been obtained. It too places economic stability and development over respect for human rights. It too believes in the principle of upholding and strengthening the rule of law in international relations.

However, there is a key difference between Russia and China. Russia's particular attachment to its membership in the UNSC stems from **the trajectory of change in Russia's place in the world**, which has been different from that of China over the last two decades. Where China is a gradually rising power, Russia inherited its P5 seat from the Former Soviet Union (FSU), when it was accustomed to be treated as the superpower opposing the US. Although President Yel'tsin and other Russian leaders expected that this prominence would continue, they were disappointed by the decline in Russia's status

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<sup>44</sup> Odgaard, op.cit., pp.148-9.

<sup>45</sup> Morphet, op.cit., p.152.



in the world, even though this was also partly caused by the collapse of the Russian economy. Russia became an overlooked power. One of the prime concerns of President Putin has been to restore Russia's prestige and clout. Being a Permanent Member of the UNSC is a key element in that self-image. According to Orlov: **'For Russia today no world order is acceptable unless it can influence the taking of strategic decisions or be a member of the board of management (*direktorskii sovet*)'**.<sup>46</sup> This particularly means its permanent membership of the UNSC. As Gromyko puts it, although Russia 'thinks, feels and acts basically like a European power, [...] its "Europeanness" has nothing to do with the state of its relations with the European Union or with states to the West of its borders. [...] When Russia went South or East, it carried with it the European way of thinking and the European culture, being one of its sources. [...] If Russia moderated its ambitions and listened to the voices urging it to turn into a "normal European country", [...] in practice it would have voluntarily to give up its status of permanent member of the UNSC'.<sup>47</sup> Paradoxically, on this view, Russia is most 'European' when it behaves differently from most other European states. It is Europeanness with a global outlook, the same qualities that are to be found in the UK and France. So the P5 status remains something extremely valued by Russian foreign-policy makers, because it embodies that wider vision. It requires them to display global activism to justify it. Even though Russia's capacity to influence the whole range of global issues is now diminished by comparison with the Soviet era, Russian economic resurgence does at least provide them with greater capacity to make a difference in selected parts of the world. And the current priority is to thicken Russia's relations with Asian states, especially China. So **cooperation with China in the SC contributes both to the image and the substance of Russia as a global power.**

But another factor in the motivation behind Russian foreign policy today represents a change compared with the earlier Putin presidency. Then the concern was to demonstrate that Russia had overcome the traumas and weaknesses of the 1990s, i.e. that Russia was back. Most importantly it showed that Russia was back in control of its own development, the master in its own house. For Putin's Russia, 'real sovereignty' and 'sovereign democracy', with the emphasis upon the 'sovereign', became defining objectives of foreign policy.<sup>48</sup> In foreign policy terms this has led to a tendency to confront the US,<sup>49</sup> although relations with Europe have been more cooperative. It meant that Russia took a lead in opposing the US and UK invasion of Iraq. This combativeness towards the West became more pronounced after the outbreak of the democratic 'colour' revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia and Central Asia, where Putin believed that Western connivance amounted to a reversal of previous agreements by the US to cooperate with Russia. The rapid economic growth, fuelled by dramatic rises in the price of oil, financed a more outward-looking foreign policy. It showed greater self-confidence. 'Today Russia and the United States share few interests and even fewer priorities. [...] Moreover, there is an imbalance: whereas the United States, as a global superpower, needs Russia's help in addressing many issues, Russia needs the United States for relatively little.'<sup>50</sup>

Now, however, according to Lukyanov, the motivation is more defensive. The preoccupation with effective sovereignty remains, but Putin's message to other leaders has changed: 'At that time [...] he wanted to say: "you guys, you disregard us, you disrespect us, and we will force you to change your mind." This time it is very defensive: "everything that you do is wrong, you don't understand what you are doing. We need to protect ourselves from this instability, which is spilling over."'<sup>51</sup> So **as Chinese**

<sup>46</sup> Orlov, D., 'Politicheskaya doktrina suverennoi demokratii', in *Suverennaya demokratiya: ot idei k doktrine*, Evropa, Moscow, 2006, p.6.

<sup>47</sup> Gromyko, A.A., 'Rossiya mezhdru Evropoi i Aziei', *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*, October 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Kokoshin, A., *Real'nyi suverenitet*, Evropa, Moscow, 2006.

<sup>49</sup> 'Speech at Munich conference', op.cit.

<sup>50</sup> Shleifer and Treisman, op.cit., p.125,

<sup>51</sup> 'Talking point', op.cit.

**foreign policy begins to evolve gradually in the direction of greater self-confidence and assertiveness, Russian foreign policy goes in the opposite direction, towards greater defensiveness.**

### 3.3 Common Russian and Chinese Strategic Interests in the UNSC

In addition to the general list of priorities listed above that are shared by Russia and China, there are two other common objectives that deserve note. The first is that policy-makers in Russia and China see each other as **the P5 state with whom they have most in common**. Insofar as both governments wish to avoid being isolated at the UN, they have a natural incentive to try to coordinate their positions at the very least because it provides them with reassurance and likely support. It also means that they are reluctant to impose vetoes on their own.

This applies particularly with regard to issues concerning the Middle East. There, according to Lukyanov: 'There is an informal agreement between China and Russia to vote in solidarity in the UN Security Council. When Russia voted for sanctions against Iran, China did the same. When Russia abstained in Libya, China did the same. When Russia was opposing on Syria, China did the same.'<sup>52</sup> Chinese diplomats claimed that they were pressured by Russia into going along with a veto on Syria.<sup>53</sup> China has much greater commercial interests in Iran than does Russia – China is the largest buyer of Iranian crude oil whilst Iran is China's third-largest supplier of oil, China is Iran's second largest supplier of military equipment including missile technology, China is also involved in infrastructure projects in Iran, so that overall in 2011 trade with Iran was just under one tenth of its trade with the US.<sup>54</sup> Yet China up to now has deferred to Russian diplomatic leadership. The same was true of Libya, though not in Syria, where Russia has more significant military ties. If this continues, then Russia is likely to take the lead in further diplomatic manoeuvrings over Iran.

The second concern that both Russia and China share in the UNSC is **to avoid being taken for granted by the other Permanent Members**. Russian foreign policy-makers in the early 1990s felt very keenly the diminished regard that other states, and allegedly especially the US, paid them as compared with the time when they were the world's second superpower. And the Chinese leadership's self-imposed low profile after the Tiananmen Square massacres encouraged Western leaders to snub them. Gradually, as both governments have recovered self-confidence, they wish to make sure that that does not happen again. Occasional brandishing of the veto, especially jointly, ensures that they are not taken for granted.

## 4. CONVERGENCE AND POTENTIAL DIVERGENCES BETWEEN RUSSIA AND CHINA AT THE UN

This section will focus upon longer-term and broader trends of Chinese and Russian relations insofar as they may impact their cooperation at the UN, identifying the extent of efforts at convergence before moving on to consider the sources of possible divergences.

In general the factors that determine common and differing positions of Russia and China at the UN, including the SC, derive at least as much from the broader configuration of their foreign policies and the different interests that they pursue as from specific disagreements over the UN and the way that it

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*; cf. Kashin, 'Vyiti iz teni', *op.cit.*

<sup>53</sup> 'With Rare Double UN Veto on Syria, Russia and China Try to Shield Friend' (<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20111005/ZNYT03/110053039?p=4&tc=pg>) (accessed 10 February 2013)

<sup>54</sup> Kasting and Fite, *op.cit.*; Cordesman et al., *op.cit.*

operates. It is these broader divergences that determine differences in approach and in attitudes towards issues at the UN. As Wuthnow puts it: 'Council negotiations do not turn purely on the issue at hand, but are also embedded in broader political relationships. It is necessary to refer to both sets of factors in order to understand why states adopt the positions that they do.'<sup>55</sup>

#### 4.1 Promoting foreign policy cooperation

At the bilateral level both regimes have tried to develop **a broader-based network of trust among elites on both sides**. As the relationship at the top began to blossom over the last decade, the leaders were aware that relations lower down were much thinner. Though the two countries were neighbours, there was a shallow sense of mutual understanding lower down. And the problem was getting worse as the generation of Chinese and Russian officials who had trained with each other in the 1950s was gradually dying out. Their successors had only known the suspicion and enmity of the Sino-Soviet dispute. So the Russian and Chinese governments made 2006 the Year of Russia in China, and 2007 the Year of China in Russia. They provided a framework for a broad range of joint activities, some cultural, but many aimed at stimulating economic cooperation between provincial administrations in Russia and China, as well as business cooperation between companies. This was intended to establish a broader base for future cooperation. They were followed by years of Russian culture in China and vice versa, and most recently years promoting tourism in both directions.

Surveys carried out in both countries after these two years showed a definite effect, registering an increase in the proportion of positive and very positive attitudes towards each other. However, Table 3 (Appendix) displays the findings of repeated annual surveys carried out subsequently in Russia by the Levada Centre. It shows that since the spike in perceptions of China in 2006, the favourable rating has somewhat fallen back, although it is still higher than it was in 2005. Still, since then China has consistently overtaken India as the fifth most friendly state. Nevertheless 48 per cent of the respondents to another question regarded the countries of Western Europe as the ones with whom Russia should most seek to develop cooperation, whilst only 23 per cent thought it should be with China and India, one per cent more than those who prioritised cooperation with the US.

In addition the two governments cooperate in various international and regional organisations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the now annual BRICS summits with Brazil, India and (since 2011) South Africa. Whilst it is still early to identify significant changes brought to the foreign policies by membership of the BRICS grouping, it is striking that two of them – Brazil and South Africa – are now much more reluctant to vote in the GA to criticise the human rights records of other states. In this respect they have converged with Russia, China and India which now never do so either. The embryonic Shanghai Cooperation organisation was originally established in 1996 and graduated to a fully-fledged organisation in 2001. The Russian media has sometimes presented it as Russia's equivalent to NATO, but this is a great exaggeration. It is not an alliance. Its members have not committed themselves to come to each other's defence if attacked. Nevertheless it is important because it is the first multilateral grouping of this kind where China has participated as a full member, since China rejects formal alliances. So it provides a learning experience for China on how to work with and inside such a grouping, which should have long-term influence on Chinese foreign policy.

In addition to the UN, Russia and China also share common positions in wishing to see the international economic order gradual evolve away from exclusive dependence upon the US dollar as the only, or at any rate the dominant, reserve currency. In the longer term they would envisage their own currencies

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<sup>55</sup> Wuthnow, op.cit., p.3.

playing a much more prominent international role, but that would require greater openness in their own economies, for which they are not yet ready.

**To what extent have all these efforts at various forms of collaboration led to common positions at the UN?** In addition to the figures on UNSC voting presented in Table 1 (Appendix), the figures on voting by P5 states in the GA are also revealing.

There nearly two-thirds of all resolutions are adopted either by consensus or without a vote. In these cases a form of words has been found that is acceptable to all member states. So the following analysis focuses upon those occasions when a vote has been taken, i.e. roughly one third of all resolutions. For the period in question this amounted to 3398.

Analysis of voting patterns of P5 states in the UNGA between 1974 and 2008 shows firstly a great disparity between their propensity to vote 'yes', 'no' and to abstain (Appendix, Table 4). China voted 'yes' on nearly 90 per cent of all resolutions, the US did so only 20 per cent of the time, with the other three states in between.

Secondly, Table 5 in the Appendix shows the percentage of occasions when China and Russia voted the same way as the US, whether 'yes', 'no' or abstained.

Thirdly, Table 6 tries to synthesise the voting behaviour of P5 states throughout the whole period and in sub-sets of years into one indicator (the Agreement Index, or AI) so as to estimate the extent to which positions have converged or diverged. It shows that in general the positions have converged most in the post-1991 era compared to the period before the collapse of the USSR, although the figure was highest for the Yel'tsin presidency, whilst the time of the George W. Bush administration showed a limited decline in convergence – although not to the pre-1991 levels.

Fourthly, Table 7 tries to compare pair-wise voting behaviour of all P5 states using a different index, the Index of Voting Convergence (IVC). This shows the very high degree of convergence between the UK and France that reflects the efforts to implement a Common and Security Policy, but also shows that there was a high degree of convergence even before that. But for China and Russia two things are striking. The first is the high degree of convergence throughout the whole period, even when the two states were confronting each other militarily in the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s. Whilst this convergence did not rise to the same level as that of the UK and France, it still surpassed the convergence between the US on the one hand and the UK and France on the other – and here convergence was significantly lower in the post-Cold War era. Secondly, the pattern of overlaps between their positions and those of the three Western P5 members is also striking. They show in general a higher degree of convergence between China and Russia with France and the UK, than with the US – which is not particularly surprising given the overall tendencies of all these states to vote 'yes', 'no' or to abstain shown in Table 4. But what they also show is that China has voted less often the same way as the UK, France and the US than has Russia. This is true throughout the whole period, even in the more recent years when, according to Johnston, China has been making efforts to present itself as a responsible and cooperative interlocutor. It suggests greater possibilities for France and the UK than the US to negotiate common acceptable positions with Russia than with China, but also to some extent with China too, although of course it says nothing about whether compromise is more likely in specific issue areas. In turn that could weaken potential diplomatic cooperation and leave China more isolated in certain circumstances. On the other hand there remains the question of the inbuilt majority for the developing world in the GA. 'Neither Russia nor the United States consistently votes with the majority

as often as do most members.<sup>56</sup> China does vote with that majority more often than other P5 states. And that knowledge could lead to greater Chinese diplomatic self-confidence. It also means that winning Chinese support or at least acquiescence could be an important precondition for winning at least the same response from non-permanent members of the SC who are from the developing world.

## 4.2 Frictions and Divergence

So what are the causes of differences, whether potential or actual? Their diplomatic collaboration in the UNSC is part of the wider picture of their diplomatic and economic cooperation. The first and most fundamental difference or constraint is the fact that **neither state intends a formal alliance**. However great the efforts they have made to achieve closer cooperation as 'strategic partners' over the past decade or two, however great the warmth of the personal relationship between Russian and Chinese leaders and however much they have invested in trying to achieve closer collaboration between domestic and foreign policy makers at regional as well as national levels, there is a limit to the ultimate closeness of the relationship that they envisage. They are not committed to some kind of 'ever closer union'. Even the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which has been touted by commentators in Moscow (though less so in Beijing) as a putative equivalent to NATO, is not a formal alliance and the members do not plan to make it into one. So strategic partners are always on the look-out for other partners if they can find them. In that sense they would each like the other to commit to monogamy with them, whilst they are free to practise polygamy elsewhere.<sup>57</sup> Most importantly, both Russia and China still hold reservations about putting their complete trust in some kind of 'special' or exclusive relationship between them. Kutchins has remarked that 'Russian elites remain at best ambivalent about the emerging Chinese superpower.'<sup>58</sup> Salin goes further. He discusses 'pro-China' and 'anti-China' groupings in Russian public opinion and concludes that the 'anti-China' tendency is significantly stronger. At any rate it is more vocal.<sup>59</sup>

One commentator has characterised Russo-Chinese relations as 'the axis of convenience'. Whilst this may understate the extent to which the leaders of the two countries see the world and desired future global governance in similar ways, he is right to emphasise: 'The "strategic partnership" is the embodiment of ambivalence and ambiguity, in which little is at it seems. At heart it is an opportunistic arrangement – an *axis of convenience*. What drives it is not a shared vision, but expediency, the constantly shifting forces of national interests as defined by the respective ruling elites, and external circumstances. Moscow and Beijing believe that it benefits them to play up the importance and strength of their relationship. But at the same time its numerous limitations undermine this façade.'<sup>60</sup> A Russian commentator agrees: '[O]ur relations with China ... are much more realistic and pragmatic. No one has the illusions about a close alliance; both sides are aware of the limits of our cooperation.'<sup>61</sup>

On the Russian side **the main reservation comes from misgivings about China's long-term evolution**, in terms of both domestic policies and foreign policy. Fundamentally there are many in the

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<sup>56</sup> Riggs, R., Plano, J.C. and Ziring, L., *The United Nations: International Organization and World Politics*, Wadsworth, Belmont, CA, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004, p.110.

<sup>57</sup> Ferdinand, P., 'Sino-Russian Relations: an Analytical Overview', in Arkady Moshes and Matti Nojonen (eds), *Russia-China Relations*, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki, 2011, p.32.

<sup>58</sup> Kutchins, A., 'Russian Perspectives on China: Strategic Ambivalence', in James Bellacqua (ed.), *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 2010, p.46.

<sup>59</sup> Salin, P., 'How Russians perceive China', in Arkady Moshes and Matti Nojonen (eds), *Russia-China Relations*, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki, 2011, pp.60-75

<sup>60</sup> Lo, B., *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing and the New Geopolitics*, Chatham House and the Brookings Institution Press, London and NY, 2008, p.194..

<sup>61</sup> Spassky, N., 'The Russian Age', *Security Index*, 17(1), 2011, p.17.



Russian government elite who are uneasy about the implications of the shift in relative global power as Russia declines and China rises. However well Presidents Putin and Hu or Xi may get on and work with each other, is this enough to provide assurance that their successors will do the same? At its heart is Russian anxiety about its long-term control over Siberia and the Far East. Alexei Arbatov, then Deputy Chairman of the Duma Defence Committee, wrote in 1997 that China is the only country that poses a direct military challenge to Russia, particularly to the region east of Lake Baikal, albeit one that is more long-term than immediate.<sup>62</sup> Even though Russia and China have recently signed agreements guaranteeing their mutual borders in perpetuity, worries persist in Russia about their long-term inviolability. This is based upon fears about the contrasting population trends in Russia and China, with the population in Russia set to decline fairly precipitately over the coming decades from its peak in 1991 of 148 million, whilst the Chinese population is set to continue rising for two more decades, peaking around 2027-2030 at around 1.45 billion. If this happens, it means that the Chinese population over the period 2010-30 will have grown by over 130 million more people, i.e. not far short of the equivalent of the total current Russian population of around 145 million. By then the Chinese population will dwarf that of Russia even more than it does today, being then over ten times larger. And whilst the predicted fall in the Russian population will affect all regions of the country, Siberia and the Far East feel particularly vulnerable because there the population density is so much thinner. Within the first decade of post-Soviet rule, the Russian population in the Far East was estimated to have fallen by one million, i.e. about one eighth of the total. Most there still live in a ninety-mile strip of land between Chita and Vladivostok.

The implications of these changes are exacerbated in Russian minds by six things. The first is the sense that China, for all its size, **lacks adequate land** to feed a population of that size, especially one that is becoming more prosperous and expects a much more varied diet than earlier generations did, and that China also lacks adequate natural resources to fuel its industrialisation drive. Siberia could at least in theory make a big contribution to solving both problems. So occasional articles that appear in China which evoke in general terms the need for broader “living space” for the Chinese population (though this could also be interpreted as a Chinese intention to extract more resources from the Pacific Ocean) are seized upon by Russian nationalists as evidence of a covert plan to take over Siberia at some point in the future, when Russia is weaker than it is today. For example, the Head of the Analytical Department of the Institute for Military and Political Analysis, Alexander Khramchikhin, cites a 1988 article from the People’s Liberation Army newspaper, *Jiefangjunbao*, as saying: ‘Effective control, exercised for a prolonged period of time over a strategic region beyond geographical borders will ultimately lead to a transfer of those borders.’<sup>63</sup> The anxiety is exacerbated by the fact that in the past Chinese maps have implied a historical claim to Siberia dating back before the arrival of Russian settlers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689. This was reinforced by the fact that the People’s Republic now has a law stating China’s claim to sovereignty over territory that was ‘historically’ Chinese, since it could be taken as a potential long-term challenge to Russian sovereignty. And even though the border agreement should remove the threat from China, Russian analysts are aware of a popular nationalism in China that would support using the armed forces to back up China’s position in commercial disputes and to ensure fair distribution of global resources that were in short supply, e.g. oil.<sup>64</sup>

Secondly, there is lingering memory of the **unregulated cross-border migration by Chinese into the Russian Far East** for a few years after 1988 when no visas were required. The number of Chinese who profited from this to find work in Russia is unknown, but nationalists fear that large numbers have

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<sup>62</sup> Arbatov, A., ‘Voennaia reforma: doktrina, voiska, finansy’, *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* 1997(4), p.11.

<sup>63</sup> Khramchikhin, A., ‘Kak Kitai razdavil Rossiiu’ (<http://www.apn.ru/publications/article20421.htm>) (accessed 2 May 2012).

<sup>64</sup> e.g. Song X., Wang X., Huang J., Song Q., *Zhongguo bu gaoxing*, Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, Nanjing, 2009, pp.106-8.

stayed behind as a potential 'fifth column', surreptitiously grabbing land as a prelude to some more explicit attempt to take control of the region later, even though the Russian government has reintroduced visas and administrative controls. In 1994 visa-free entry was limited to stays of a maximum of 30 days, and this was reduced to 15 days in 2006. But in July 2002 the Khabarovsk newspaper *Tikhookeanskaia Zvezda* reported that there were 8.5 million Chinese living in Russia, with 100,000 in Moscow alone.<sup>65</sup> According to the head of the Russian immigration service, however, Chinese accounted for a quarter of the only 1 million illegal immigrants in the whole of Russia in 2006.<sup>66</sup> No matter how much the government and researchers attempt to ascertain the true scale of the immigration so as to disprove the danger,<sup>67</sup> they can never convince the most suspicious critics who allege that police and officials have not looked hard enough, possibly because they have been bribed, or that the Chinese are 'hiding' in remote rural areas.

Thirdly this fear is further exacerbated by the visceral memory in Russian historical consciousness of oppression by the Tartar hordes in the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries. **The fear of renewed oppression from the East** still resonates.

Fourthly, there is **the continuing imbalance in trade relations between the two countries, to the great benefit of China**. For China international trade rates as the most important consideration, since the primary objective of the regime is to maintain the rate of economic development. For Russia a particular concern is the development of the Far Eastern region, to which they hope that Chinese investment may contribute. In 2009 the two governments signed an agreement for cooperation between Siberia and China's northeastern provinces that will last until 2018 which designated 158 projects that would develop agriculture, the extraction of resources, and energy and transport infrastructure.

The overall volume of officially reported bilateral trade has risen from US\$ 8 billion in 2000 to \$55 billion in 2010. Overall there has been an impressive growth. Nevertheless it is worth remembering that there is an asymmetry in the importance of this trade to each other. China's reported trade with Russia in 2000 was equal to roughly one third of China's trade with the US in 2000. By 2010, however, China's trade with the US was seven times greater than its trade with Russia. By contrast, Russia's reported trade with China in 2000 was equivalent to 60 per cent of Russia's trade with the US, whilst by 2010 this figure had gone up to 224 per cent. Thus China is a much more important trading partner for Russia, than Russia is for China. Table 7 (Appendix) presents figures on the reported trade balance between the two countries.

This shows a big disparity between the figures reported by each side. Even after making allowances for the costs of shipping and insurance, the difference between China's reported surplus of \$378 million in 2010 and Russia's reported deficit of \$1.93 billion is simply enormous. The disparity between the figures for 2005 was 22 times, whilst in 2010 it was a mere 6 times. Nevertheless the figures still obviously need to be treated with care. Assessing the precise balance of economic advantage is far from easy, though the general trend is clear enough.

In addition these figures show a trend that is common in other parts of the world, namely a rapid increase in Chinese penetration of foreign markets. Where in the first half of the last decade Russia

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<sup>65</sup> Reported in Galenovich, op.cit., p.330.

<sup>66</sup> Wishnick, E., 'Why a "Strategic Partnership"? The View from China', in James Bellacqua (ed.), *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, p.63.

<sup>67</sup> See for example Gel'bras, V.G., *Kitaikaia real'nost' rossii*, Muravei, Moscow, 2001; Larin, A., *Kitaitsy v Rossii vchera i segodnia: istoricheskii ocherk*, Muravei, Moscow, 2003.

enjoyed a significant surplus on its balance of payments, by 2010 this had been reversed into a much larger Chinese surplus (at least according to Russian figures).

This trend reflects **a deeper asymmetry in foreign trade interests between Russia and China**. Russia's exports to China were dominated by natural resources (oil, gas, timber and minerals), nuclear power stations and (at least until 2007) advanced military equipment. China's exports to Russia were dominated by manufactures – usually consumer goods. In one sense this represents a mutually beneficial complementarity. Nevertheless since Russian industry finds it difficult to compete internationally with the Chinese, this suggests that the long-term trend increasingly favours China. Between 1992 and 2005 Russia reportedly exported arms worth US\$26 billion to China, which accounted for nine tenths of all China's arms imports, assisted indirectly by Western embargos on such exports to China.<sup>68</sup> In recent years, according to SIPRI, Chinese purchases from Russia have been restricted to missiles, jet engines, and a few helicopters and transport aircraft rather than complete weapon platforms. The change may partly be explained by China's needs having been basically met for the time being. But allegedly this decline can also partly be attributed to Russian irritation at unauthorised Chinese exports of military equipment using clones of Russian technology. More recent reports have suggested that at the end of 2010 Russia agreed to a revival of sales of some military equipment to China because of the need to fill order books, even if this led to more cloning, but a deal to supply 48 SU-35 fighters still languishes as Russia insists on a Chinese commitment not to copy them.<sup>69</sup> In general a recent large-scale study of future trends in Russian policy remarked that it was widely believed that Russia could not be a 'strategic partner' for China in economic terms insofar as '[China] acts only in its interests and creates new problems for Russia. The Chinese economy is strategically aimed at swallowing up Russian resources, turning its neighbour into a "raw material appendage" and inflicting irreparable damage to Russia's natural riches.' And it was claimed that in time China will seek to buy up Russian enterprises too.<sup>70</sup>

Fifthly, **Russian local government in the Far East has been more suspicious of the Chinese 'threat' than is Moscow**. In part that is because the people there still feel somewhat neglected or 'forgotten' by Moscow,<sup>71</sup> and some governors out there have tried to use the idea of a threat as a means of attracting more attention – and resources – from Moscow.

Sixthly, **the Russian military have become more exercised about China's increasing military expenditure and capabilities**. The Shenyang Military District in northeast China has conducted exercises in recent years that show its potential to wage a campaign that could penetrate deep into Siberia. In 2010 Russia conducted its first major military exercises of its own in the Far East for two decades, which some saw as a response to a Chinese military exercise near there in 2009,<sup>72</sup> and Russia has also announced the intention to build up its Pacific Fleet as its most important naval force, surpassing the Baltic and Northern fleets.

For all these reasons, as well as the fear of the technology involved being copied, the Russian military have been reluctant to sell the most advanced weapons to China for fear that at some point in the

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<sup>68</sup> Yuan, J.-D., 'Sino-Russian Defense Ties: the View from Beijing', in James Bellacqua (ed.), *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 2010, p.208.

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[http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=37427&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=25&cHash=c2050b9af5](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37427&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=25&cHash=c2050b9af5); <http://www.arms-expo.ru/049057052048.html?year=2012&month=3> (both accessed 23 April 2012)

<sup>70</sup> Dynkin and Ivanova, op.cit., p.273.

<sup>71</sup> Kozlov, L., 'Obshchestvennoe mnenie dal'nego vostoka o vneshnei i vneshneekonomicheskoi politike Rossii v ATR', *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka* 2007(3), pp.70-81.

<sup>72</sup> Trenin, op.cit., p.41.



future they might find it being used against them. There is a clear contrast with Russian policy on sales of advanced military equipment to India and Vietnam, to whom Russia has offered, for instance, the latest avionics installed in Sukhoi fighters which it has refused to China. Russia has also agreed with India joint development of a new 'stealth' fighter, whilst China is developing its own. In turn these facts are known to the Chinese, who similarly fear that these weapons may be used against them if the still unresolved Sino-Indian border dispute ever turned into conflict again, or if there is renewed conflict over the South China Sea.

Strikingly the recent large-scale study of future trends in Russian foreign policy by the Russian Academy of Sciences remarked that doubts about deepening interdependence with China among Russian elites are actually increasing. Amongst other things they remarked on two 'philosophical' factors. Firstly, there is the historical mistrust of China. 'In Russia there is a widespread view that the Chinese are very cunning and that China "sooner or later will somehow deceive Russia".' Secondly, 'the Russian elite consider themselves "part of European civilisation". Insofar as China is part of the "Asiatic" one [...], this points to the conclusion that Russia should lean towards Europe and not China.'<sup>73</sup>

For their part, the Chinese government has been **disappointed at the relatively slow pace of growth in mutual trade and the reluctance of Russia to open up its market to Chinese exports**. In 2002 Chinese premier Wen Jiabao expressed the hope that bilateral trade might amount to US\$100 billion by 2010. As can be seen from Table 2, the actual result was a little over half that figure. Indeed Lukyanov has pointed out that the most recent Russian document Strategy 2020, which appeared in March 2012, specifically identifies the growth of China's economic potential as the main risk to Russia's international economic status.<sup>74</sup>

In contrast, **Beijing is primarily concerned with whether Russia will fulfil its promises**. Chinese officials have been frustrated by extremely opaque Russian energy-industry decision-making. China has been disappointed in the past by Russia dragging its feet over the implementation of agreements over exports of oil and gas, as well as the increasing costs of building the pipeline for which China has had to make substantial loans. Finally Russia has completed the pipeline from Skovorodino to the border with China, from which the Chinese have built an extension to Daqing, but it was nearly a decade later than originally agreed, and in the meantime China's dependence on oil imports from other regions has soared further.

In foreign policy **the Chinese government has had reservations about the robustness with which the Russians have challenged the West**, and especially the US, since 2003. Whilst they may share many common positions with Russia on the objectives of foreign policy, Chinese officials are more concerned about American perceptions of China's 'rise' in the world and they do not wish to see the US provoked into more confrontational policies that might jeopardise China's prospects for peaceful growth and increasing prosperity. To a certain extent they were happy to keep in Russia's shadow,<sup>75</sup> though that may now be changing. Nor are they prepared to give Russia unconditional support. For example, they failed to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the aftermath of the Russo-Georgian conflict in 2008, because they disapprove of unilateral movements of secession that undermine the sovereignty of existing states, whether it is Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia, or Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Georgia. They do so both on principle and also out of the fear that this could later be used as a precedent to change the status of Xinjiang or Tibet, not to mention Taiwan.

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<sup>73</sup> Dynkin and Ivanova (eds), op.cit., p.272.

<sup>74</sup> Lukyanov, F., 'Russia-China: Change of Course?', *Russia in Global Affairs*, March 2012 (<http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/redcol/Russia-China-Change-of-course-15494>, accessed 2 May 2012).

<sup>75</sup> Galenovich, op.cit., pp.270, 567

At root **China is uncertain over Russia's 'natural' place in the world** and the long-term direction of its evolution. They have been confused by Russia alternately leaning westwards and then eastwards since 1991, just as Western governments have been perplexed by the same shifts in policy, though the consequences would be inverted.<sup>76</sup> Jakobson et al cite a Chinese academic who puts it in a broader perspective: 'We have had 400 years of contact, and Russia has deceived us many times. We cannot completely trust them.'<sup>77</sup> One commentator remarked on the inherent volatility of Russo-American relations, but warned that Russia and the US could continue to cooperate when they thought it beneficial.<sup>78</sup> Another remarked that the West and Europe are the 'home' to which Russians yearn to return, whilst the East for Russia is only for partnership.<sup>79</sup> Even though there seems greater consensus in Russia now about it being a 'Eurasian' as opposed to a Western state, and even though the Medvedev administration explicitly identified the Far East as its second highest priority after Europe where in the 1990s it was ranked sixth,<sup>80</sup> the sense that Russia might again at some point in the future opt for a more Western-oriented vocation is not easily dispelled. It encourages China to hedge its bets and avoid becoming too dependent upon Russia.

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<sup>76</sup> Zhou, L., 'Eluosi wenhua de jiben jingshen yu waijiao', *Eluosi Yanjiu* 2010(4), pp.80-1.

<sup>77</sup> Jakobson et al, op.cit., p.2.

<sup>78</sup> Yu S., 'Lun e mei guanxi zhi duobian', *Guoji wenti yanjiu* 2007(1), pp.30-5 and 52.

<sup>79</sup> Wang S., *Lengzhanhoude zhong e guanxi*, Shishi chubanshe, Beijing, 2005, p.156.

<sup>80</sup> See Borodavkin, A.N., 'Vostochnoe napravlenie rossiiskoi vneshnei politiki: itogi i perspektivy'; and '2010 god: Rossiia smotrit na vostok?', both in *Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn'* 2011(1).

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- Russia and China share more of a common outlook on the priorities and objectives of foreign policy than they do with the other three P5 states
- Russia and China highlight the potential for the UN to contribute to multilateral solutions to increasing turbulence in world affairs
- Russia and China see their permanent membership of the SC as the symbol of their global reach, as well as a tool for realising it
- Russia and China ascribe to the UN the sole source of legitimacy for the authorisation of joint military action
- China, and to some extent Russia, is more likely to be persuaded to accept the legitimacy of collective military action if the regional political organisation is also in favour
- In general Russia and China are more reluctant to apply coercive multilateral pressure and prefer bilateral diplomacy and non-coercive mediation
- They insist upon the consent of the host government for the deployment of international peacekeepers, however long it takes to negotiate such an agreement
- Though Russia and China place great stress upon upholding the principle of inviolability of national sovereignty, they have occasionally accepted UNSC resolutions that run counter to this principle and involve some kind of UN intervention
- Russia and China have devoted considerable efforts to thickening their 'strategic partnership'
- There still remain a number of underlying tensions in the bilateral relationship that constrain their full commitment to each other

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## 7. APPENDIX

Table 1 P5 Voting in the UNSC, 2000-12

Votes N=796	United States	Russia	China	France	United Kingdom
Yes	776	772	776	789	786
Rate	97.5%	97%	97.5%	99.1%	98.7%
Abstentions	9	17	16	7	10
Rate	1.1%	2.1%	2%	0.9%	1.3%
Vetoes	11	7	4	0	0
Rate	1.4%	0.9%	0.5%	0%	0%

Table 2 Key Dates in UNSC Negotiations on Iran, Libya and Syria, 2006-10

Date	Resolution	Event
<b>Iran</b>		
4/2/2006		Iran withdraws from IAEA's Additional Protocol on verification: IAEA votes to 'report' situation to Security Council
29/3/2006		SC issues Presidential RST calling for suspension of uranium enrichment and directing IAEA to issue report within 30 days
31/7/2006	1696	SC unanimously threatens further measures for continued non-compliance with IAEA requests
23/12/2006	1737	SC imposes ban on sales of nuclear-related goods and other measures (Qatar voted no). Committee established to monitor compliance.
24/3/2007	1747	SC unanimously bans Iranian arms exports, calls for vigilance on arms sales to Iran, and other measures
3/3/2008	1803	SC calls for cargo inspections and enacts other measures (Indonesia abstained)
27/9/2008	1835	SC unanimously urges Iran to comply with obligations 'fully and without delay'
15/4/2010		Substantive negotiations begin in New York on fourth round of sanctions, based on US draft resolution
19/5/2010		Agreement reached between E3+3 states, draft resolution submitted to non-permanent members for consideration
9/6/2010	1929	SC bans arms sales to Iran (Turkey and Brazil opposed, Lebanon abstained)
21/3/2012		1737 Non-Proliferation Committee briefs SC on alleged Iranian violations of sanctions: Russia condemns additional unilateral sanctions; China repeats that sanctions are not an end in themselves – the real objective is



		comprehensive dialogue and negotiation
12/6/2012		SC extends mandate of 1737 Committee. China warns against 'excessive pressure' on Iran or unilateral sanctions
20/9/2012		1737 Committee presents regular report on implementation of sanctions: Russia praises its balance. France and the US raise the prospect of stiffer sanctions. South Africa remarks that sanctions are not an end in themselves. China restates its opposition to the use, or the threat of the use, of force.
13/12/2012		1737 Committee reviews evidence of Iranian ballistic missile tests: China urges 'relentless' diplomatic negotiations, but opposes 'excessive pressure' on Iran or new sanctions
<b>Libya</b>		
26/2/2011	1970	SC unanimously imposes arms embargo and travel ban on members of Gadhafi regime, and refers events to ICC
17/3/2011	1973	SC imposes no-fly zone and other actions to protect civilians (China, Russia, India, Brazil and Germany abstained). Russian representative emphasises lack of clarity on limits of action
16/9/2011	2009	SC unanimously welcomes rep. from the new Libyan transitional regime and partially lifts the no-fly zone
27/10/2011	2016	SC unanimously ends NATO civilian protection mandate
31/10/2011	2017	SC unanimously acts to stem proliferation of portable missile systems and other weapons from Libya
2/12/2011	2022	SC unanimously extends mandate of UN support mission to Libya for three months
12/3/2012	2040	SC unanimously extends mandate for UN mission to Libya for further twelve months, and ends authorisation for inspection of cargoes suspected of containing arms
<b>Syria</b>		
30/6/2011	1994	SC unanimously extends mandate of UNDOF in monitoring Israel-Syria ceasefire, whilst Russia and China resist attempts to add a condemnation of Syria for violence against civilians
3/8/2011		SC issues statement condemning widespread violations of human rights against civilians by Syrian authorities and calls for immediate end to violence
4/10/2011		SC fails to adopt resolution condemning Syria's crackdown on anti-government protesters (Russia and China voted against; Brazil, India, Lebanon and S.Africa abstained)
4/2/2012		Russia and China veto Moroccan proposed SC resolution to support the Arab League's peace plan in Syria as 'unbalanced', putting undue pressure on the Syrian regime to comply



12/3/2012		High-level SC meeting where UN Sec.General tells leaders in N.Africa and Mid.East to reform or give way to others. Russia and China (and S.Africa) warn against external intervention for regime change. Russian foreign minister again laments lack of investigation into alleged killings of civilians in NATO air strikes in Libya. Russia has achieved agreement with Arab League over plan for inclusive Syrian political dialogue and peace monitoring.
21/3/2012		SC issues Presidential Statement fully supporting six-point plan from UN Special Envoy and Arab League for ending violence and human rights violations and for facilitating a Syrian-led political transition.
5/4/2012		SC issues Presidential Statement calling on Syrian government to fulfil pledge to pull military back from population centres by 10 April, to be followed by general cessation of armed violence, or SC will consider 'further steps'
14/4/2012	2042	SC unanimously adopts proposal for advance team to monitor cease-fire
21/4/2012	2043	Russia and China co-sponsor resolution establishing monitoring mission with 300 observers in Syria.
19/7/2012		SC fails to approve resolution that would have extended the UN monitoring mission's authorisation for a further 45 days, calls on all parties to implement the Annan six-point plan, and warns of Chap.VII action if Syrian regime does not pull military forces out of population centres (Russia and China voted against, Pakistan and S.Africa abstained)
20/7/2012	2059	SC unanimously accepts resolution proposing extension of monitoring mission for 30 days, but warns that further extensions will only be possible with removal of heavy weapons from population centres

Table 3 Russian Responses to Survey Question: 'Name Five Countries That You Regard as the Closest Friends or Allies of Russia' (top five, in per cent)

	2005	2006	2007	2009	2010	2011
<b>Belarus</b>	46	47	38	50	49	35
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	20	33	39	38	32	33
<b>Ukraine</b>	17	10	11	3	20	21
<b>Germany</b>	23	22	24	17	24	20
<b>China</b>	12	24	19	18	16	18

Source: Analiticheskii Tsentri Iuriya Levady, *Obshchestvennoe mnenie – 2011* (Moscow, 2011), p.212.

Table 4 Voting Records in the General Assembly of the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, 1974-2008 (in per cent)

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>China</b>	88.1	9.1	2.8
<b>France</b>	43.9	35.5	20.6
<b>USSR/Russia</b>	75.1	16	8.9
<b>UK</b>	41.8	32.7	25.4
<b>US</b>	20.2	23.6	56.2

All GA voting data taken from Eric Voeten and Adis Merdzanovic, "United Nations General Assembly Voting Data", <http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/12379> UNF:3:Hp6qOkDdzzvXF9m66yLTg== V1 [Version] (accessed 10 March 2011).

Table 5 Comparison of UN General Assembly Voting for China, Russia and the US by pairs, 1974-2008 (in per cent)

	Convergence	→	Divergence
	<b>2 Yes/ 2 No/ 2 Abstain</b>	<b>1 Yes/No + 1 Abstain</b>	<b>1 Yes + 1 No</b>
<b>China/Russia</b>	72.2	20.6	7.2
<b>China/US</b>	14.4	29.9	55.8
<b>Russia/US</b>	18.5	32.6	48.9

Table 6 Agreement Index Scores for UN Security Council Permanent Members

<b>1974-2008</b>	<b>0.49</b>
1974-1980	0.49
1981-5	0.45
1986-91	0.46
1992-3	0.52
1994-2000	0.56
2001-8	0.53

The Agreement Index (AI) was originally proposed by Hix et al for measuring the cohesion of political groups in the European Parliament.\* Their basic formula for assessing each resolution is the following:

$$AI = \frac{MAX\{Y,N,A\} - 0.5[(Y+N+A) - MAX\{Y,N,A\}]}{Y + N + A}$$

MAX(Y,N,A) represents the highest number of particular kinds of votes within a given group for a particular resolution, whether it is 'yes', 'no' or 'abstain'. The range of possible final AI scores is between 1 (perfect cohesion) and 0 (total lack of cohesion, i.e. equal numbers of 'yes', 'no' and 'abstain' votes). As Hosli et al explain, if there are equal numbers of 'yes' and 'no' votes and no abstentions, AI > 0, since the countries were at least cohesive in agreeing not to abstain.\*\*

\* Hix, S., Noury, A., and Roland, G., 'Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament, 1979-2001', *British Journal of Political Science* 35, 2005, pp.209-34.

\*\* Hosli, M.O., van Kampen, E., Meijerink, F., and Tennis, K., 'Voting Cohesion in the United National General Assembly: The Case of the European Union' (Paper presented to the ECPR Fifth Pan-European Conference, 24-26 June, 2010, Oporto) at <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-porto/virtualpaperroom/082.pdf>, (consulted 5 January 2012).

Table 7 IVC Scores for BRICSAM and P5 States in UN General Assembly (by pairs)

	1974-2008	1992-2008
<b>China-France</b>	60.16	62.66
<b>China-Russia</b>	82.53	80.73
<b>China-UK</b>	55.78	58.91
<b>China-US</b>	29.3	23.39
<b>France-Russia</b>	60.84	75.66
<b>France-UK</b>	92.42	95.06
<b>France-US</b>	66.46	57.94
<b>Russia-UK</b>	57.37	72.56
<b>Russia-US</b>	34.75	39.98
<b>UK-US</b>	72.25	61.95
<b>Average</b>	<b>61.19</b>	<b>62.88</b>

The Index of Voting Cohesion was devised by Hurwitz.<sup>\*\*\*</sup> This relies upon calculating the degree of similarity of voting of each pair of states in a given group according to the following formula:

$$IVC = \frac{(f + 0.5g) \times 100}{t}$$

where  $f$  denotes the number of cases where these two states vote identically (whether 'yes', 'no' or 'abstain'),  $g$  denotes the number of votes where one of the two states votes either 'yes' or 'no' whilst the other abstains, and  $t$  represents the total number of votes in which the two states participate. As can be seen, the final figure is expressed as a percentage.

Table 8 Russia-China Trade Balance As Reported by Each Side (in mIn US\$)

	2000	2005	2010
<b>China-Russia</b>	-3536.2	-267.6	378.1
<b>Russia-China</b>	4284.6	5934.1	-1927.6

Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbooks (various years)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Hurwitz, L., 'The EEC in the United Nations: the Voting Behaviour of Eight Countries, 1948-73' *Journal of Common Market Studies* 13:3, 1975, pp.224-43.

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