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NCEEER NOTE

This Report consists of four papers to be distributed seriatim by the Council under the general title SINO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS, of which this is the third. They are:

#1. Will the Strategic Partnership Endure? by Professor Gilbert Rozman; Director, Council of Regional Studies; Princeton University


#3. China in Russia’s Eastern Policy: The Opinions and Concepts of Russian Scholars and Politicians, by Professor Vilya Gel’bras, Moscow State University, Institute of the Countries of Asia and Africa.

#4. China’s Views of Some Important Questions in the New Russia, by Professor Lu Nanquan, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Institute of Central Asia, Russia and Eastern Europe.
CHINA IN RUSSIA'S EASTERN POLICY:

THE OPINIONS AND CONCEPTS OF RUSSIAN SCHOLARS AND POLITICIANS

V. Gel’bras

Executive Summary

Russians have offered little criticism of the pretenses of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership even as they have expressed little confidence in China. Gel’bras finds the explanation for this paradox in short-term factors. He does not find notable improvement in attitudes toward China nor signs that assessments are focused on temporary problems likely to be overcome with time. He sees Russian assessments as a brake on relations. But as long as the partnership does not seem very real to Russians, they accept it as a useful tactic.

Russian experts do not follow China as closely as Chinese specialists follow Russia. Similar to the Chinese, they often have their own country’s political disputes and reform needs in mind when they write about the other country. Even more than the Chinese, they are guided by emotional impressions. Their diversity of thinking is also more pronounced. Less for reasons of different levels of trust in China than for overall geopolitical calculations, Russians diverge sharply in their expectations for the partnership.

The gap between China’s growth and Russia’s decline leaves a deep impression in Russia. Lacking confidence in their own country’s recovery, Russians fear China’s advance. This contributes to a tendency to exaggerate its scale or its consequences for bilateral relations. Gel’bras focuses on fear of Chinese immigration. Despite the fact that controls on border crossings have been tight for more than three years, he does not suggest that fear is already much reduced. But he does volunteer that public opinion in the Far East and the country as a whole may change. Deeply rooted images cannot be expected to respond quickly, especially when Russians have found few reassurances for their own country’s future.

Gel’bras finds a cacophony of opinions about China’s future international policies. Above all, this relates to different notions of Russia’s future as a great power. This suggests that Russians are paying scant attention to China’s actual behavior and thinking. Until they can make up their minds about their own country, they will continue to project onto China images that serve other needs rather than digging deeply to uncover the reality.

The superficiality of academic and media reporting on China might lead to alternative conclusions. First, it could be a sign that although criticisms and fears of China abound, they may not last. They could be swept away by a sharp change in Russia’s international position or by

\[2\]Composed by Gilbert Rozman.
persuasive results in bilateral relations. Second, it could mean that when Russians really focus on China the fears will play a greater role in relations. If so, the partnership is on shaky ground. The fact that Gel’bras does not draw either of these conclusions suggests that he is more comfortable with a third alternative: while assessments are in flux and could respond to external forces, the uneasy bifurcation of suspicious assessments and improving relations may be with us for a considerable time to come.

The section on how China has been treated in the strategies of Russia’s four main political groupings reenforces the notion that China has been a tool for campaign rhetoric as much as if not more than for achieving Russian interests in the world. Among many of the political forces in Russia, China appears inconsistently. It has both positive and negative implications for Russia’s interests. Gel’bras notes that the official national policy in favor of closer relations is strangely removed from the actual political discussions. Nearly all forces raise qualifications about cooperating with China.

In 1997 as Russians respond to the reality of the expansion of NATO and then to the completion of the border demarcation with China, attitudes may be particularly volatile. Before long, however, with these two controversial themes settled a greater consensus may form. Earlier rationales for upgrading Sino-Russian relations will need to be superseded by a clearer statement of how Russia benefits. Determined leadership at last on setting an economic strategy for growth may lead to new foreign policy priorities.

Stressing NATO expansion, Gel’bras alerts us to the great importance of the U.S. and its allies in Russian thinking towards China. Given the assessments in Russia to date, we can detect an opportunity to capitalize on that thinking and to redirect it. While some are obsessed with the need to boost Russia as a great power by weakening unipolarity under U.S. leadership, many Russians would welcome reassurance that they will not be left alone with China as the weaker partner in a rather separate Eurasian environment. Instead of fearing the Sino-Russian partnership and taking strong countermeasures, the U.S., Japan, and other allies can recognize the current frailty of this partnership and find ways to channel it into multilateralism. Russians are little inclined to an exclusive partnership if they find encouragement for their national aspirations from the established world powers.
The formation of the Russian Federation placed on the agenda of life in the society an enormous range of questions about state construction. Among those with the highest priority, naturally, there appeared also questions of Russian foreign policy, her national security, and foreign economic activity. For the first time, after almost 70 years of uncompromising obedience to authority, the society, its scientific circles, political parties, and social organizations not only used the right to their own point of view—from 1985 onward—but confronted the necessity of resolving questions in the dramatic process of national identification, of forming a new state. Agreement did not come easily. In the eyes of many observers, even in 1997, after six years have passed since a memorable 1991, it is still impossible, in essence, to name even one problem of the formation of the new Russia concerning which the discussion had led to a firm consensus. In the view of State Duma Deputy A. Arbatov, one of the best known specialists in international studies, however, this situation is changing. He considers that for a whole range of basic positions on foreign policy and national security a consensus has at last been reached in society.\footnote{Arbatov includes among them attitudes to the widening of NATO (on this agreement has been reached, in his opinion, between “democrats and communists, patriots, ‘derzhavniki’ or strong state supporters, and nationalists,” leaving only as an exception the group of ‘superliberal’ politicians—E. Gaidar, Andrei Kozyrev, Sergei Iushenkov, and Konstantin Borovoi), the unacceptability of a unipolar world, recognition that the main priority of Russian foreign policy is the territory of the former USSR, and some others. Nevertheless, even if Arbatov is correct, beyond the limits of this “rare consensus” there remains much about which agreement could not be reached. Prominent on this list is Russian policy toward China. While there may be fairly widespread tactical acceptance of the recent upgrading in Sino-Russian relations, there is a sharp divide in Russia about the prospects of the Sino-Russian partnership.}

Many authors, speaking out in the past against the drawing together of Russia with China, have preferred not to say anything regarding the “strategic partnership, directed to the 21st century,” as a fundamentally new and important formula of Russian-Chinese relations. However, this does not mean that they have changed their positions. Arbatov, himself, pointedly acknowledged that “As for the rapidly growing superpower in the form of China, on this in Russia they experience mixed emotions and a consensus is less expressed.”\footnote{Inasmuch as the Eastern policy of Russia, including the priority of relations with China, cannot be a secondary element in foreign policy activity, we must recognize that for problems of foreign policy and national security intense discussions will continue.}
Over the past years so much has been said and written on these themes that the time has come for attempts at systematization of viewpoints and of the movements of thought, perhaps even schools that are forming. For this it is necessary to examine publications for at least three main groups of problems: first, the image of the PRC and the Chinese people forming in Russia; second, Siberia and the Far East facing the presence of the PRC and the resolution of the border problem; and third, the conception of Russia's Eastern policy appearing in the course of recent discussions. Since the second problem is treated elsewhere in this volume, at the center of our attention are the first and third problems.

This overview draws on the publications of 130 authors, of whom 48 percent are leading academic figures, 28 percent are less prominent analysts, and 24 percent are politicians. Of the articles analyzed—in some cases several per author—29 percent broadly treat foreign policy, national security, and foreign economic relations, 28 percent the policies of Russia in the Asia-Pacific region concerning China, 21 percent Siberia and the Far East in the internal and foreign policy of Russia, and 22 percent the situation in China. These themes represent the primary interests of analysts concerned with Russo-Chinese relations.

The Image of the PRC and the Chinese in Russia

An image of the PRC was formed in Russia in 1992-1997 on the basis of what, at first glance, may seem to be a wide range of information. Books have been published on Chinese philosophy, on separate genres of art, and on some other topics that were less often covered in the preceding years. But, at the same time, limitations of knowledge are evident if we consider that, by comparison, coverage of vital problems of economics and politics is quite scant. Recently citations from Chinese philosophers and Chinese sayings are often encountered in the works of Russian authors. One can even say that citations from Chinese wisdom have become a sign of a highbrow tone. Unfortunately, commentaries on international relations have failed to recognize in-depth information on China as similarly vital.

Before 1992 more than a few politicians and scholars spoke out in the spirit that Russia in the conduct of economic reforms must learn from the PRC and actively use the experience accumulated in that country. After 1992 it became clear that the reform paths of Russia and the PRC diverged. Participants in a discussion at the Institute of the Far East were forced to note that “the results of study of the Chinese experience in essence remain of little demand...” Interest in the reforms in the PRC fell sharply. From 1993 there gradually began to form an interest in another side of Chinese activity—in factors of economic growth. Simultaneously, yet another theme—the juxtaposition of the economic potential of Russia and the PRC—began to attract a lot of attention. The main contrasts seemed evident; little serious research was required to prove one's point.
Many of the leading economic journals of Russia publish little on China. Even in the journal *Dialogue*, an organ of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, leading figures of which more than once have voted for using the experience of economic reforms in the PRC, only in 1995 was there published one article on China, which was devoted to the agrarian reform in Russia and the PRC. At the same time as a wide circle of journals turned over their pages for working out questions of Russian foreign policy and national security, this organ showed complete indifference to this theme. Such neglect illustrates the point that those who invoke China in Russian political discourse often do not give much attention to its actual conditions.

Nonetheless, Chinese reforms, in the form of a certain sum of general ideological dogma and emotional impressions of Chinese reality, remain one of the factors in the socio-political life in Russia. At the base of the platform of the Communist Party lies, in essence, a model of Chinese reforms. This circumstance either is not acknowledged due to an insufficiency of knowledge of the Chinese experience, or is acknowledged but for various reasons is not advertised. For instance, China is mentioned as a guide on land policy. In essence, what “is guiding” is only that in the PRC private ownership of land was not introduced, which is a programmatic point for the communists in Russia. They are absolutely not bothered by the fact that in conditions of a severe shortage of arable land and dramatic rural overpopulation in the PRC private property of land could arouse a kind of civil war. Therefore it was not introduced, although discussions on this theme continue. In other words, the Russian communists do not want to consider the realities of China or they intentionally hide them in the name of affirming their own positions. This is despite the fact that their theses on state regulation and management of the economy, preservation of a powerful state in a leading position, and much else are a repetition of the central starting points of Chinese reforms. One reason for reticence may be that the communists in Russia are more conservative in their economic inclinations than are Chinese communists who have already become accustomed to many changes: Russians who invoke China as a model are often not prepared to follow many of China’s reform examples. For instance, communists who write that Chinese industry is growing and Russian policies are failing are not distinguished for their boldness in supporting laws modeled on Chinese ones.

Special academic journals do pay some attention to the Chinese economy, but they are few and their impact is not great. The volume of coverage is meager, especially considering the overlap in reform themes facing the two countries’ economies.

Examination of factors of growth for the Chinese economy bears an episodic and fragmentary character. Among the factors of growth, most attention is given to several: state regulation of economic processes, mass attraction of foreign capital, the role of free economic zones in the rise of the economy, and increases in the export orientation of industrial production. But systematic research even on these themes rarely appears.
One of the most important questions is: what is the attitude in Russia to the high growth rate of the Chinese economy. Some politicians and scholars react to China's growth as natural and normal, but others all the more often are beginning to speak of a Chinese challenge, about a growing geopolitical threat to Russia from the PRC. The rise of the PRC's economic power is producing an enormous impression in Russia. It would not be a big exaggeration to say that, perhaps, no other international phenomenon can be compared in the scale and depth of its effect on Russian public opinion. Not a few authors have begun to call the PRC a superpower. In the past years for the first time interest has arisen in Russia in evaluating the economic potential of China. There are an extraordinary diversity of evaluations.

V. Shabalin and V. Portiakov consider that the potential of Russia and China is approximately equal, but the fall of production in Russia quickly is changing the balance of economic power in favor of the PRC.4 In the opinion of M. Vidasovaia and L. Fridman the economic potential of Russia is about one-third that of China.5 S. Glaz'ev, not revealing his methods and data, declared that "Now the level of GDP in Russia is two times less than in any of the G-7 countries and five times less than in China."6 A. Ansimov spoke out, pretending to a sensational declaration, "China has already overtaken the USA in GNP approximately one and one-half times. Russia simply looks by comparison to its Asian neighbor like a dwarf: the Russian GNP is eight times less than the Chinese. All of our GNP equals the growth of China in one year."7 Amidst such diversity, we observe a tendency to exaggerate for political effect.

We should keep in mind that in the 1990s practically all leading political figures of Russia and their analysts visited China as did hundreds of thousands of small- and middle-scale Russian traders.8 For the first time such a large number of Russians had the possibility of becoming directly acquainted with Chinese reality and of transmitting their impressions to relatives, friends, and acquaintances. The results of Chinese reforms arouse in Russians coming to China, as a rule, the most favorable impressions of growth. For the first time Russia has become aware that China is transforming itself quite quickly. A startling impression is created also by data on the absolute number of its population, especially in conditions of a reduction of the population in Russia.

In this connection it is necessary to touch on the following question—the reaction in Russian society to the inflow of Chinese into Russia. At the beginning of the 1980s the appearance of Chinese in Russia was still welcomed by politicians, managers, and the population. The idea had arisen of the large-scale attraction of Chinese labor into the economy of the USSR. In later years this view could still be found, for instance in the writings of M. Titarenko and B. Kulik;9 however, in the current period the reaction in Russia to the inflow of Chinese has become negative, especially in the Far East. A quick reading of the newspapers Vladivostok, Delovaia Sibir', Izvestiia, Rossiiskaia gazeta, Segodnia, Nezavisimaia gazeta, and Vek for 1992-96 allowed me to identify 171 articles in which readers were informed about the illegal crossings of the border by Chinese, illegal hunting or
fishing, illegal stays on the territory of Russia, unclean business activities, crime, etc. But if we do not count epitaphs addressed to official Chinese figures visiting Russia for state visits or serving as official representatives of the PRC in the RF, then in only seven articles was the reader informed about praiseworthy news concerning the activities of Chinese firms on Russian territory or about interesting Chinese worthy of respect who were present in the country; seven versus 171! In a series of cases in the Far East conflicts occurred, as a result of which visits by Chinese came to be limited. The problem, however, remained unresolved; an uncontrolled inflow noticeably slowed, but did not stop.10

In the country there is no strict migration law which clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of foreigners present permanently or temporarily in Russia. B. Larin of the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East in Vladivostok remarks that the powerlessness of the authorities, “multiplied for already more than a century by fears cultivated in the east of Russia of the ‘yellow peril,’ gave birth to declarations about a ‘quiet expansion’ of Chinese and the ‘quiet’ settlement by them of the Russian Far East, supported, by the way, by certain very high-placed figures from the government. Actually, these declarations about a new threat to the security of Russia, solidified by really inflated figures and not always verified facts, were widely publicized... in print, and to a certain degree even acquired the character of an anti-Chinese campaign.11 V. Portyakov of the Institute of the Far East in Moscow, recognizing the presence of objective causes of fear and alarm in the population, proposed a sober view on the situation, “First, neither statistics nor visual observations support a continuing Chinese expansion in the Far East. Second, in the Chinese migration to Russia of recent years there is a fully legal element. This is export of workers within the limits of officially concluded contracts for labor resources...”12. The number of “shuttle traders” from both countries has fallen sharply. Finally, the percentage of Chinese in Russia and in the Far East even to this day is decidedly less than in Canada, Australia, the USA, and the majority of countries of Western Europe.

There are examples of quiet, practical resolution of the problem—the regulation of migrants from China in Russia. In Amurskaia oblast' and the Jewish autonomous oblast', where local legislative organs adopted corresponding legal acts, conflictual situations have been reduced to a minimum. The governor of the Jewish autonomous oblast', Nikolai Volkov, in one interview said “We do not have the same kind of situation as in Primorski krai, where an unorganized influx of Chinese citizens is taking place. We passed a law on foreign citizens, their rights for staying in the oblast', so that we do not observe this problem. There is some tension on the border; this mainly occurs here along the Amur river. On our side measures are taken in defense of salmon and sturgeon fish supplies, which, unfortunately, cannot be said for the Chinese side.”13

Examining these questions, we should note that in the 1990s the flood into Russia of Chinese as well as of low quality Chinese goods recalled among many the negative feelings and antagonism
toward China aroused in the 1960s, which had practically disappeared in the 1980s with the rising interest in Chinese reforms. Impressions had begun to be spread about the Chinese as a nation of extremely persistent, but dishonorable, traders, of people without good will and of criminal elements. Again feelings of tension and distrust between Russians and Chinese were spreading. At times they acquired a sharp tone, as at the end of 1995 when the commander of the Pacific border district, Lieutenant-General Vitalii Sedykh, in a conversation with correspondents of Izvestiia, acknowledged that border guards often ask “will a war with China not begin?”

It can be supposed that such a disposition gradually will fade into the past. The agreements reached during 1996 concerning joint operations of the border services, organs of internal affairs, prosecutors, and other offices of Russia and the PRC, have already yielded their first results: they have reduced the quantity of illegal crossings by Chinese of the border, of illegal fishing in Russia’s territorial waters, contraband and other illegal acts. If this kind of change becomes a persistent tendency, public opinion in the Far East and in the country as a whole will change. Assertions that the migration of Chinese into Russia is a policy of the Chinese government will lose their effect. However, this is a matter for the future. In 1997 Russia was alarmed by news of joint actions of the Russian and Chinese mafias in illegally bringing into Russia large batches of narcotics.

Attention in Russia to the growth of the PRC’s economic power and the inflow of Chinese onto the territory of Russia became serious from the beginning of the 1990s. As a consequence, the theme of China became especially acute in connection with working out not only a conception of foreign relations and national security for Russia, but also a conception of national policies which would unite all of the political forces of Russia, in connection with the search for a “new national idea” designed to unite the citizens of the country regardless of their political convictions in “one friendly family.”

In such a complex situation in Russia, attention to resolving the border problem with the PRC sharply intensified. No single other question of contemporary China has aroused such expansive publications, for instance a collection of documents prepared by supporters of Evgenyi Nazdratenko, governor of Primorskii krai, issued in the very sizeable edition for today’s political literature of 5,000 copies.

The agreements of 1991 and 1994 on the demarcation of the Russo-Chinese border were initially received in society as a whole positively. I could not discover even one presentation in the Russian press containing a principled disagreement with these agreements. However, announcements much later that in a series of cases some pieces of Russian territory would be transferred to the PRC as a result of the border demarcation aroused furious protests. Only in 1995-96 in the newspapers Vladivostok, Delovaia Sibir’, and the aforementioned Moscow media there were published 73 statements with protests against the border demarcation in Primorskii krai, the Jewish autonomous oblast’ and Khabarovskii krai, and there were two television shows on the ORT channel with protests
against the transfer to the PRC of pieces of Russian territory. In solidarity with the protests were the Liberal-Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovskii, and the Russian All-National Union led by Vice-Speaker of the State Duma Sergei Baburin. Characteristically, the Slavianskii Foundation awarded the order of the Holy Andrei Pervozvannii to Nazdratenko “for strengthening the Russian state and inter-Slavic agreement.” Aleksander Lebed spoke out in support of protests against the transfer to the PRC of pieces of Russian territory. In various cases even announcements on the course of demarcation were able not so much to quiet as to heat up fears of an unjust transfer of land.

Actually, there is a question, which still has remained not completely clear, namely with what intentions are Chinese coming and settling in Russia. Vladimir Miasnikov of the Institute of the Far East in his book writes, “The bulk of Chinese appearing in Russia are businessmen and merchants of various categories. Similar to a gigantic pump, their activity draws from Russia resources and hard currency. Their psychology is the psychology of a rich neighbor.... Another factor is the demographic imbalance.” No matter what Chinese are occupied with in Russia, especially in its Far Eastern oblasts, they are filled with consciousness that they are only temporarily accommodating themselves to an “historic injustice.” In general Chinese know already on their school benches about the territorial losses to Russia and believe in it as an unquestioned historical fact, Russians are told. These are the views of the leading specialists at the Institute of the Far East, although they are not proof of the real state of mass consciousness of the Chinese who have arrived in Russia.

Russians do not have confidence in China’s policies or in the inclinations of the Chinese people. If China solves its own problems, Russians fear that it will be emboldened to apply more pressure—political, economic, demographic—on their country. If it cannot solve those problems, the results would be even worse regardless of the Chinese government’s intentions. If the two countries achieve a close partnership in the short run, China may bide its time and build its strength for later demands on Russia. If relations quickly turn problematic, Russia is too weak and preoccupied at present to deal with such problems. Thus, there is no easy way or timetable to handle relations with China.

What should we make of the contradiction between the ever improving relations between Russia and China and the rhetoric weighted toward suspicion of China? The image of China has formed over a long time and is deeply rooted, while the partnership is recent and seems rather thinly operative at the top well removed from people’s deepest concerns. Lately, the two governments have cooperated in plans to deepen the partnership, extending it to middle levels such as border guards and security forces as well as to banks and commercial organizations. Yet, these steps are proceeding slowly and have not brought ties much closer. Indeed, Chinese in Russia tend to live in closed communities under their own leaders and often responsible for much of their own security. Neither they nor Russians in China are finding enough acceptance to suggest close personal relations and a firm partnership.
The Asia-Pacific Region and the PRC in the Foreign Policy Conceptions of Russian Scholars and Politicians

In 1992-95 there was an active discussion, above all of many theoretical and methodological questions of foreign policy and national security linked to the self-identification of Russia as a new state, and in later years a reexamination mainly of concrete aspects of the foreign policy activity of the state and of national security. 1995-96 are noteworthy for the fact that society in the course of electoral campaigns for the State Duma and the presidency of Russia was offered foreign policy doctrines of numerous political blocs, parties, and presidential candidates. This, to a great extent, explains the change in the contents of foreign policy discussions, as in the publications of politicians and specialists. In this connection I present below two main tendencies in the views of Russian scholars and politicians: on the current and future foreign policy of China, and also on the policies of Russia toward the Asia-Pacific region and China.

In the Russian literature on the direction of Chinese foreign policy we are interested in answers to three questions: what is the contemporary international position of the PRC? how is the role of the PRC in the international arena evaluated? what can we expect from the foreign policy of the PRC in the future?

On the question of when China can become a center of power, only two authors of 45 are inclined to consider the PRC a state which only in the future will be able to rise to the level of such power centers as the U.S., Western Europe, or Japan. Five authors consider the position of the PRC the same as that of Russia, with almost the same economic potential and role in the world and a status as one of the great powers. Ten authors not only consider China a great power, but consider that China's status will be higher to the extent "Greater China" is formed. More than a few authors do not use the concepts of "center of power" or "great power," but speak of the potential of China as greater than that of Russia, which will create a threat to Russia. Thus, one can with ample evidence conclude that many scholars and politicians of Russia are inclined to assess very highly the international status of the PRC and to predict that it will grow.

On the second question, more than a few authors note the positive role of the PRC in the international arena. But in the concept "positive" authors have in mind diverse qualities. For example S. Praskurin believes that China, above all, will help to develop a healthier political climate in the world. But for A. Iakovlev it is important that China will stand at the head of countries able to carry out a struggle against the U.S. and the vile influence of the West. Moreover, ten authors consider that in the policies of China expansionism is present. They consider that a threat originates from China to Russia and to the whole world. Ten authors also believe that China is capable of renewing its territorial pretensions toward Russia, even after the border demarcation is completed. Thus, responding to the second question, a large percentage of academics and politicians are guarded in their assessments of the international role of the PRC.
On the third question, 19 of 45 authors when speaking about the future of the foreign policy of the PRC note the unpredictability of the development of the internal political situation in this country, which unavoidably adds an element of unpredictability to foreign policy. Eight authors consider that the broadening cooperation between Russia and China in the military sphere can in the future cause a big loss to Russia, undermining its national security. Influencing the positions of many of these observers is the fact that along the border with the PRC are located poorly developed and little settled regions of Eastern Siberia and the Far East.

Commenting on the future foreign policy of the PRC, some authors tend to calculate that expansion will be directed toward Southeast Asia, while others expect its expansion to target the north into Russia. A third group denies the possibility of expansionism in China; they are confident that all of the forces of the country will be concentrated on resolving problems of its own development. Finally a fourth group is confident that the hegemonistic policies of the USA will oblige the PRC to conduct a struggle for its own independence and simultaneously for the independence of all countries in the "periphery" including Russia.

Striving to clarify the answers of scholars and politicians to the third question we find ourselves facing an extraordinary cacophony. They describe all possibilities, all thoughtful and even far-fetched variations. Since practically nobody gives a detailed argument or even explains well how he has reached his conclusions, it is difficult to argue with these analysts.

E. Bazhanov came out categorically against the proposal to form an alliance of Russia and the PRC. "As it is proposed, the new 'axis' Moscow-Beijing (not long ago the president of Belorussia proposed supplementing it with Minsk) is unrealistic and harmful to our real interests. Unreal, inasmuch as the PRC does not agree to the establishment of a union.... In the PRC they understand beautifully that unification with some against others quickly would turn into the failure of the strategy of modernization."

It is important to consider that in the conclusions of the above schools we find completely different views of Russia as a great power. D. Furman correctly writes about three fundamentally different images of Russia, dominating the consciousness of both scholars and politicians. "The first image is the image of greatness as "physical greatness," assuming territorial expansion, an archaic and outdated image for the contemporary world...." "The second image is also linked with territorial expansion, but in a softened... form. This is an image of Russia surrounded by vassal countries or weak allies..., construction of a type of 'Eurasian common identity,' a 'Slavic common identity,' and an 'Eastern Orthodox civilization.' The greatness of such countries as the USA, Japan, Germany--in general the G-7 countries--which have refrained from territorial expansion, the power of which has a completely different nature, this is above all the power of a developed economy and a stable democratic socio-political system."
In Russia, accustomed over the duration of centuries to consider itself one of the strongest countries of the world and a great power, the syndrome of a “small nation” has begun to form. The drama of this phenomenon is difficult to transmit, it is so deep. Russia is not Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Hungary. In this situation some authors are unwilling under any circumstances to recognize that Russia in contemporary conditions actually has stopped being a great power, although it remains one of the major states, and must put in much work in order to recreate the image and the real international meaning of a great power. Others, on the contrary, have gravitated to the other extreme, almost in panic regarding the economic and demographic rise of China, describing various kinds of catastrophic pictures of the near future. And a third group, despite everything, demands that Russia continue to regard itself as a great power, equal to the U.S., and behave on the international arena as, according to its perceptions, a great power should act.

China in the Foreign Policy Strategies of the Political Forces of Russia

The political forces of Russia are very diverse. To group them, I have used six criteria: the concept of the state; domestic national policy; the place of industrial collectives in society and politics; attitude toward ownership; attitude toward the plan and the market; and attitude toward individual rights and liberties. This yields four groups of fundamentally different political tendencies. And in connection with these we find distinct attitudes toward the U.S. and China. I call these groups “Social Capitalism,” “Sacred Homeland,” “Great Power Russia,” and “Great Power Eurasia.”

“Social Capitalism” refers to individuals favorable to the West. One cluster is Democratic Choice of Russia, whose leader Egor Gaidar writes, “We fully welcome the economic successes of China, we are interested in her democratization, but we must take into account that, unfortunately, in the near future China will not be a stable, prosperous, market-based, democratic state.” And since Russia is weak, he concludes, “It is necessary to strengthen a military alliance with the West and put an end to our potential backwardness in the Far East.” 24 A second cluster is Our Home Russia, which fully supports the decisions of the president’s foreign policy toward China. The third cluster, Iabloko, is interested in a stable and developing China and seeks the establishment of a security system in the Far East, but nevertheless, expects that in the coming 15-20 years one can expect a serious threat from the side of China. 25 What all three groups have in common is that they think Russia needs to be careful in its relations with China even if the second and third groups do not let that stand in the way of support for partnership relations.

At the head of the movement identified as “Sacred Homeland” was Alexandr Rutskoi, for whom Russia must be a global great power with the capability to conduct military operations throughout the world. This group is prepared to cooperate with China, as with India, in order to
counterbalance the U.S. This is a limited notion of partnership as part of a strategy of Russian renewal, but in the final analysis it is Russia that must be a superpower.

"Great Power Russia" includes three groups: the Communist Party of Russia led by Zyuganov, the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia under Zhirinovsky, and the group of parties united around Alexandr Lebed. In Zyuganov's thinking, China—like Russia—represents an independent civilization and in relations between Russia and China one can find the same contradictions as exist in the world as a whole.26 Ambiguous in his characterization of bilateral relations, Zyuganov does not say whether he is for or against the partnership with China. But Stanislav Govorukhin, one of the deputies to Zyuganov, speaks directly about China expanding and implies the occupation of Russian territory right up to the Urals without any kind of war.27

Zhirinovsky considers that China along with a long list of other countries—the U.S., Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Japan, etc.—is getting ready to occupy Russian territory and that Russia must be prepared to defend itself with military force. He proposes his own geopolitical model for the twenty-first century, in which China could satisfy its interests through a sphere of influence ranging from Mongolia to the countries of Southeast Asia. A. Mitrofanov, a State Duma member of Zhirinovsky's party, proposes an "axis" of Berlin, Moscow, and Tokyo, while giving Mongolia to China and dividing Kazakhstan between Russia and China. In principle, for the LDPR China is an enemy like the U.S., but an enemy that the LDPR wants to calm down.28

For Alexandr Lebed Russia is one of the world civilizations and the heir to the Russian empire. His ideal is a new world order in which Russia cooperates with the U.S. and China, but his preference leans to China and the establishment of a gigantic, self-sufficient system with enormous potential for development and an independent and effective foreign policy toward any other geopolitical system.29 At the same time, Lebed spoke out against the transfer of land to China in the course of the border demarcation. Thus, his views are internally contradictory, leading to quite contrary policy implications in Russia's approach to China.

From the above overview, it can be seen that representatives of this school in fact propose decidedly different policies toward China. Some are ready for cooperation, while others recommend opposition. What keeps them together is the goal of raising Russia again to a global great power and willingness to cooperate as long as Russia plays the leading role. In contrast to "Sacred Homeland" this is a softer position not oriented toward Russian expansionism.

"Great Power Eurasia" has two main tendencies. Supporters of Nurultan Nazarbaev concentrate on integration of the republics of the former Soviet Union and see cooperation with China as an important factor facilitating the international environment suitable to this end.30 The Russian All-National Union of Sergei Baburin sees Russia as a special civilization under constant threat from countries of the West, China, and the Islamic world.31 They warn of global danger from
China and the Islamic world for the rest of the world. On the whole, advocates of this school also
have a diverse outlook on China, at times friendly and at other times antagonistic.

Considering the whole spectrum of political commentary, we detect an underlying suspicion
toward China, a fear that cooperation with China will not be useful for Russia. This demonstrates
that the official Russian policy, which is backed by Our Home Russia, is strangely removed from the
actual political discussions. Just about all forces raise qualifications about cooperating with China.

Some may think that because more than 54% of the Russian population voted for Yeltsin this
means that Russians favor his policy toward China, but the large opposition moved especially by
nationalistic inclinations is a sign of likely hesitation over close Sino-Russian relations. After the
elections, the forces against Yeltsin have united in a national-patriotic union of Russia, while the
democratic forces have been unable to unite. This means that the forces suspicious of relations with
China have a basis for consolidation.

In 1997 an entirely new element may arise in views of China and the foreign policy of Russia
as a whole. The expansion of NATO to the east has already incited a consolidation of the various
schools excluding only the supporters of Gaidar. In this connection, a very new attitude toward
China is forming. It is not an accident that President Lukashenko of Belorussia has proposed the idea
of an “axis” of Minsk, Moscow, and Beijing. The number of supporters for transforming the
partnership into a military alliance with China will increase, but that does not mean that the
likelihood of such an alliance will be high. One way or another, the fate of NATO will to a large
degree determine the fate of relations of Russia and China. In an atmosphere of strong anti-
Americanism, hesitation about a partnership with China may seem inconsequential to most Russians.
Emotional reactions may outweigh rational ones.

In the first stages of improved Sino-Russian relations, the rationale was less a positive view of
China than a negative assessment of a one-side foreign policy that had left Russians dissatisfied.
With the rise in nationalism in 1992-93 came the reasoning that Russia needs an Eastern policy and
China must be at its center. Later as a partnership took shape, nationalism highlighted the goal of
multipolarity rather than that of bilateralism. China still represented a means to an end that did not
require looking too closely at China’s own nature. Indeed, the discrepancy widened between policies
and assessments. With attention focused over the past year on NATO’s expansion, closer ties with
China have slipped through with little objection.

Paradoxically, even the political forces that warn of a potential China threat have hesitated to
criticize improving bilateral relations or Foreign Minister Primakov’s Eastern strategy which relies
heavily on China. But their assessments of China alert us that this silence may not continue. If the
preoccupation with NATO lessens, attitudes toward China may rise to the surface. The closer the
partnership grows and the deeper its impression on Russians, the more likely they are to take it
seriously and the more nervous they will be about it. The only way the partnership can continue to
be treated nonchalantly is if it remains quite abstract without great substance or if Russians are
distracted by a more pressing foreign concern.

ENDNOTES


2. Ibid.


8. The number of “chelnoki” or shuttle traders is put at 10-20 million. According to figures of economists at the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, in 1995 they brought into the country tariff-free goods valued about $10 billion dollars. At this same time, legal imports amounted to $46 billion. Of course, many “chelnoki” lugged their imports from places other than China. Vladivostok, August 6, 1996.


19. V. S. Miasnikov, Dogovornymi stat'iami utverdili..., p. 413.


