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The Strategic Alignment between Russia and China: Myths and Reality

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Speculation about the possibility of China and Russia creating an official strategic alliance in response to American unipolar dominance is not new and can be traced back to the early 1990s. Recently, however, the American “pivot to Asia,” China’s new assertiveness in territorial disputes, Russia’s high-profile “turn to the East,” and the deterioration of Russia-America and, more broadly, Russia-West relations as a consequence of the Ukraine crisis have generated a complex geopolitical milieu that reignited discussion among both policy advocates and scholars about the prospects of a China-Russia strategic alliance.

For example, Alexei Pushkov (the head of the Foreign Affairs Committee in Russia’s lower house) stated that “the United States runs the risk of making a huge foreign policy blunder by simultaneously antagonizing two major world powers.... For the United States, Russia is an enemy and China is a potential enemy. But the confrontation course with both major powers is a strategic mistake.”¹ Some Russian analysts also argued that “America cannot stop containing China. America cannot stop containing Russia. America cannot stop pushing China and Russia to a new political and military alignment.”² In China, where until recently the official line was “non-alignment” (*bu jiemeng zhengce*), some prominent scholars have started to make unambiguous calls for a comprehensive strategic alliance with Russia by arguing on the pages of the CCP Central Party School’s internal publications that “China-Russia strategic relations are the most substantive ones”³ and elsewhere that “China will be unable to shift the world from unipolarity to bipolarity unless it forms a formal alliance with Russia.”⁴ Most recently, John Mearsheimer on multiple occasions castigated American policy towards Russia by calling it “strategic foolishness of the first order” because it drives Russia and China together, which is against American interests.⁵

The recently reinvigorated discussion of the prospects of a new China-Russia alliance is accompanied by the reemergence of age-old myths about China-Russia relations. These myths are cliché views of Russia, China, and the relations between them that have become the default rhetorical background of many evaluations of the chances for a China-Russia alliance to materialize (the actual sources of these views can be a topic for a different paper). In this article, I use empirical evidence to debunk four such popular myths that are often brought up as reflecting the obstacles of a potential alliance between the two countries.

The first myth runs as follows: because post-Soviet Russia is much weaker than China, any alliance between the two will be disproportional and will look like a “union of unequals.” This is not in Russia’s interest, and therefore, Russia is reluctant to enter any alliance with China. The second myth addresses demography and revives the “yellow peril” bogeyman, mostly forgotten in Russia. According to this story, if Russia and China become too close to each other, Russia’s underpopulated regions in the Far East and Siberia are going to be quietly occupied by the Chinese, whose country is already overpopulated. Russia obviously does not want this and, therefore, will not form an alliance with China. The third myth is about Russia’s excessive economic dependence on China at the expense of Russia’s relations with other Asian countries. Excessive closeness to China will turn Russia into an energy appendage of China and, in a worst case scenario, can generate strong centrifugal pressures within Russia and even result in the loss of control by Russia over its underdeveloped eastern

territories. Therefore, Russia is highly unlikely to form an alliance with China. The fourth myth is that there is no trust between China and Russia. Because they do not trust each other, alliance is unlikely.

All four myths emerge in different forms and shades and all try to reveal the obstacles to a future alliance. Some of them are very convincing at first sight because they seem to be based on some geographic, economic, social, and demographic circumstances of the region surrounding China-Russia common border. At a closer examination, however, one can see that all four myths lack solid empirical grounds.

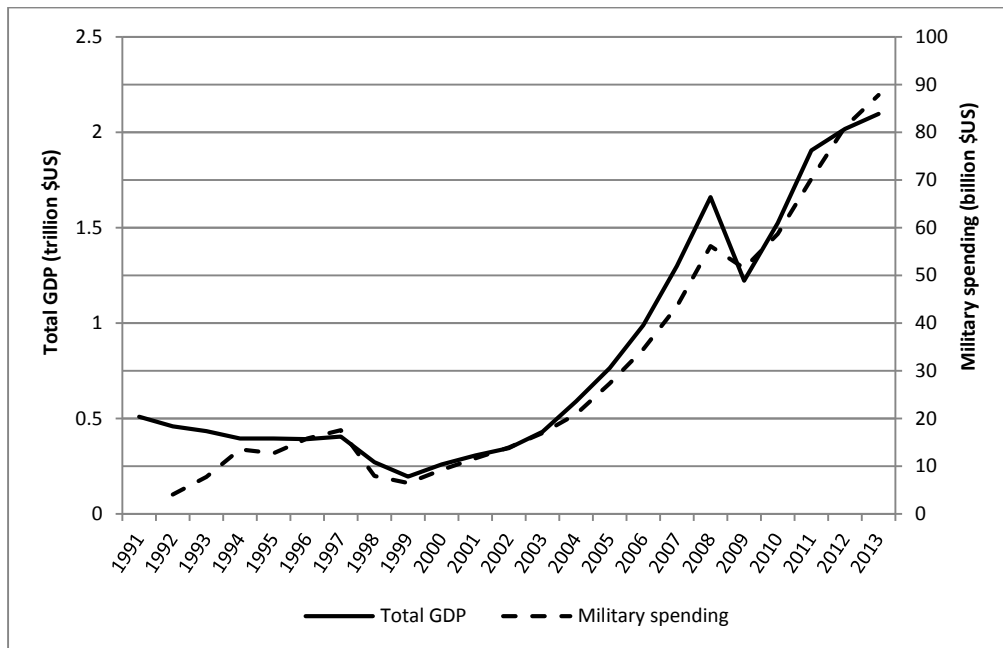
Myth One: Russia's Declining Power and Non-alignment with China.

Russia is consistently pictured as a weak or weakening power. Joseph Nye, for example, wrote in his recent commentary on the possibilities of a China-Russia alliance that Russia may not be able to manage a real alliance with China and that one of the reasons for this is that "Russia's economic and military power has been in decline, whereas China's has exploded."⁶ He further argues that Russia is anxious "over China's conventional military superiority" and that the power imbalance between China and Russia suggests that Russia would resist a tight military alliance with China.⁷

These statements can be rejected upfront because relative weakness/strength is not a decisive factor in alliance formation. Most military alliances are asymmetrical in terms of the relative power of their members. All American allies are disproportionately weaker than the U.S. but nevertheless are very useful for American global supremacy, and moreover, the allies are unwilling to withdraw from their alliance with the U.S. However, how has Russia's power vis-à-vis China been changing over the last decade or so? Is Russia, indeed, in a state of hopeless decline?

A cursory glance at the empirical data demonstrates that the above-cited statement that Russia's economic and military power "has been in decline" is wrong. Post-Soviet Russia has been making significant progress both economically and militarily. In this sense, the world, for some reason, is very selective in terms of picking up examples of rising powers. Figure 1 displays the change of GDP and military expenditures of post-Soviet Russia. Aside from 8 years of decline following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has been growing remarkably and consistently over the last 14 years. In 1999, Russia's GDP fell to a meager \$US 196 billion; by 2013 its GDP reached \$US 2.1 trillion, which is an 11-fold increase. Russia's military spending in 2013 was \$US 88 billion, which is 14 times larger than \$US 6.47 billion—what it was in 1999.

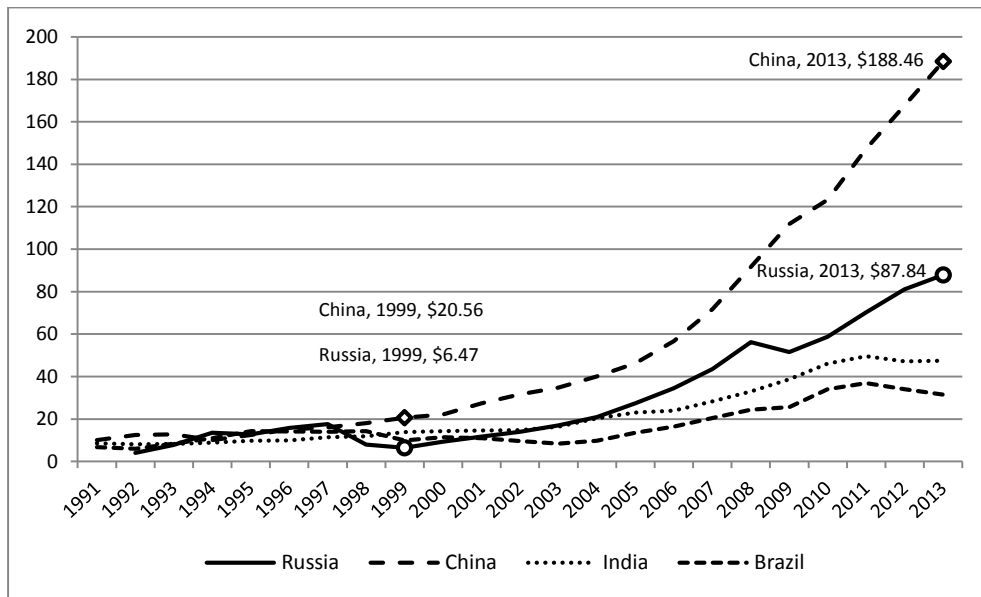
Figure 1: Economic and Military Growth in Post-Soviet Russia



Source: World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD/countries>
 SIPRI Military Expenditure Database http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database

Russia is also not a declining power in comparative terms. Figure 2 shows military spending of BRIC member states since 1991. Russia was below both India and Brazil in the late 1990s but leaped forward after the turn of the century. According to an SIPRI report, in 2014 Russia’s military budget was approximately 2.5 trillion rubles, which ranks Russia third in the world after the U.S. and China. Since 2008, Russia’s military budget has grown by 31 percent, and Russia had surpassed the UK and Saudi Arabia. Over the last 16 years, Russia’s military budget has increased almost 14-fold. In relative terms, in 1999, China’s military budget was 3.2 times larger than Russia’s (\$US 20.56 billion and \$US 6.47 billion, respectively), but by 2013, this ratio dropped to 2.2, with China’s and Russia’s military budgets amounting to \$US 188.46 and \$US 86.84 billion, respectively. Therefore, it cannot be argued, either in absolute or relative terms, that Russia’s power has been in decline. If relative power matters at all for alliance formation, a China-Russia alliance now is much more feasible than it was 10 or 15 years ago because, contrary to the theories of Russia’s continuous weakening, Russia has been accumulating power rapidly.

Figure 2: Military Spending of BRIC members (\$US billion)



Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database

Another crucial aspect of China-Russia relations is the fact that Russia is a major exporter of high-tech weaponry. The importance of this must not be underestimated. The lack of advanced military technology is the Achilles Heel of China's superpower standing and a source of frustration for the Chinese government. Although China's arms export is growing, it still lacks state-of-the-art military technologies, and Russian weapons remain a "holy grail" for China. Russia's qualitative comparative advantage in military technology vis-à-vis China substantially elevates Russia's position in bilateral relations and reduces China's quantitative advantage, which is not necessarily directly convertible into power capabilities.

The final point that should be kept in mind is the quantity and quality of Russia's nuclear weapons, which are on par and in some aspects even better than those of the U.S. The story of global-range nuclear capabilities is still the story of two countries: Russia and the U.S. Moreover, Russia is still the only power that has guaranteed second-strike capability against the U.S. In this regard, those IR theorists who argue that in the post-Cold War world America is powerful to the extent that there is no existential threat to it are plain wrong. The Soviet nuclear capacity effectively contained the U.S. during the Cold War. Russia's current and considerably modernized nuclear weapons continue to contain the U.S. Russian and American nuclear stockpiles are still the guarantor of the rule according to which American soldiers never shoot Russian soldiers, and vice versa, in a direct military conflict. Having nuclear capability sufficient for containing the U.S., Russia will feel very comfortable in the arms of the Chinese, whose nuclear capabilities lag far behind both the U.S. and Russia.

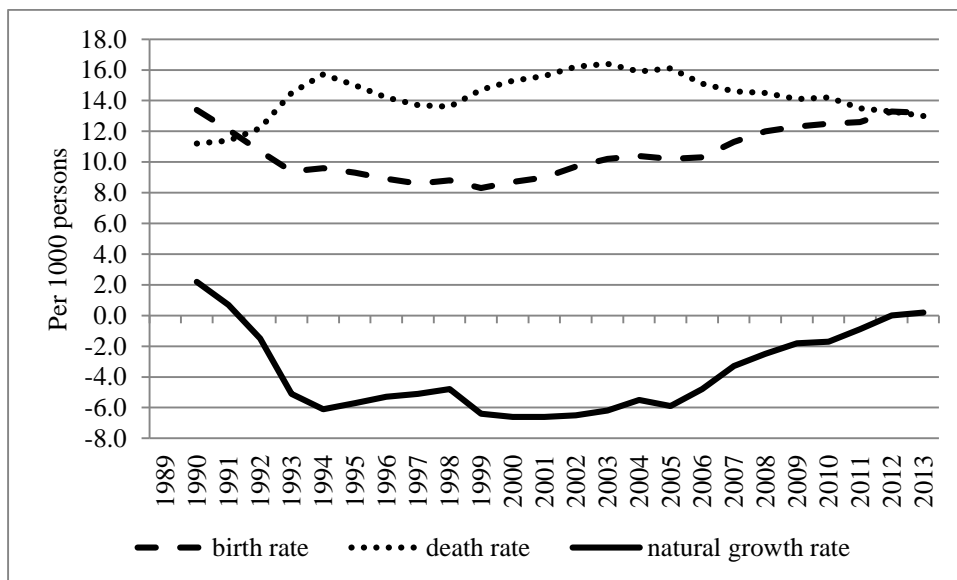
Myth Two: Demographic Factor as a Barrier for China-Russia Alliance.

Another alleged concern about China-Russia relations that may undermine the potential for alliance lies in demographic conditions. The issue of China being overpopulated and Russia, especially its Far Eastern territories, being underpopulated frequently appears in different

publications. Some talk about a “vast population of potential migrants” that may come from China.⁸ Others draw scary pictures of the disappearance of Russia’s ethnic identity, threats to Russia’s territorial integrity, and “creeping Sinicization” that may happen because there are too many Chinese and too few Russians along the China-Russia border.⁹ According to Nye, one of the deep problems hindering the formation of a China-Russia alliance is that in Eastern Siberia, six million Russians live across the border from up to 120 million Chinese.¹⁰ Others write that Russia is reluctant to form an alliance with China because it is “demographically in decline” and there are concerns about the uncontrolled migration of Chinese citizens into the sparsely populated areas of Russia’s Far East and Siberia that may eventually be taken over by China.¹¹

Under closer examination, the statement that demography is what Russia should worry about when forming an alliance with China crumbles. First, Russia’s demographic decline is not the case any longer, and the depopulation trend had been reversed by the end of the first decade of the 21st century. In 2009, Russia recorded population growth and added 23,300 people.¹² In 2012, Russia’s population increased by 292,400 people.¹³ In 2013, Russia’s total fertility rate reached 1.707 children per woman and became the highest in Eastern, Southern and Central Europe.¹⁴ By 2013, the trend of depopulation had been reversed, and natural population growth started.¹⁵ Figure 1 reflects Russia’s long term demographic trend, which refutes the statement that Russia is in decline demographically.

Figure 1: Population Dynamics in Russia



Source: Calculated based on data from ROSSTAT <http://www.gks.ru/>

Second, regarding the demographic gap between the border regions of Russia and China, the situation may not be as troubling as is pictured and there are no reasons to expect Chinese immigration to Russia’s Far East. Table 3 compares population density in border provinces of China (first column) with that in corresponding bordering provinces/regions of Russia and Mongolia (second column). Column three divides the population density of a

Chinese province by population density of a corresponding bordering Russian and Mongolian province. As seen from the table, the average population density of Russia's Krai and Oblast bordering China is 17.83 times lower than that of Chinese provinces bordering Russia. In the case of Mongolia, which also shares a long border with China, this figure is 32.9. In other words, the population gap between bordering Mongolian and Chinese provinces is much larger than that between Russian and Chinese provinces. China so far has not displayed even a slight desire to occupy Mongolian provinces that are much more underpopulated than the Russian ones. If China does not occupy the bordering territories of Mongolia (a state that can barely defend itself), what would make China start occupying territories of a nuclear superpower? Moreover, as the last segment of Table 3 demonstrates, China has its own Siberia—Tibet and Qinghai—with population densities 60 and 20 times lower than in the Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces, which border Russia. Therefore, the natural population imbalance is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for migration.

Table 3: Comparative population density of border regions (people/km²)

Population density in bordering regions of China and Russia			Pop. Density Ratio	
Heilongjiang (86.4)	Khabarovsk Krai	(1.70)	50.82	
	Amurskaya Oblast	(2.24)	38.57	
	Primorsky Krai	(11.74)	7.36	
	Jewish Autonomous Oblast	(4.64)	18.62	
Jilin	(149)	Primorsky Krai	(11.74)	12.69
Inner Mongolia	(21.4)	Zabaykalsky Krai	(2.52)	20.4
<i>Average of border provinces</i>	<i>(85.6)</i>	<i>Average of border regions</i>	<i>(4.57)</i>	<i>18.73</i>
<i>China average</i>	<i>(145)</i>	<i>Russia average</i>	<i>(9)</i>	<i>16.11</i>
Pop. Dens. in bordering regions of China and Mongolia			Pop. Density Ratio	
Gansu	(56.3)	Govi-Altai Province	(0.38)	148.1
Inner Mongolia	(21.4)	Dornod Province	(0.56)	38.21
		Sükhbaatar Province	(0.66)	32.42
Xinjiang	(13.1)	Khovd Province	(1.0)	13.1
		Bayan-Olgii Province	(2.0)	6.55
<i>Average of border provinces</i>	<i>(30.27)</i>	<i>Average of border provinces</i>	<i>(0.92)</i>	<i>32.90</i>
<i>China average</i>	<i>(145)</i>	<i>Mongolia average</i>	<i>(1.76)</i>	<i>82.39</i>
Jilin, Heilongjiang and least-densely populated China's provinces			Pop. Density Ratio	
Jilin (149)	Tibet	(2.5)	59.6	
	Qinghai	(7.8)	19.1	
	Xinjiang	(13.1)	11.37	
	Inner Mongolia	(21.4)	6.96	
Heilongjiang (86.4)	Tibet	(2.5)	34.56	
	Qinghai	(7.8)	11.07	

Source: World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.DNST> for country data. Provincial level data were collected from various sources, including statistical reports by local governments.

Another important fact in contradiction with the assumption that China is going to be demographically expansionist is the demographic trends within China. China has long since entered a phase of extremely low birth rates. In the early 1990s, the total fertility rate in

China crossed the 2.14 mark, which is the natural replacement rate.¹⁶ By the late 1990s, the TFR in China reached 1.8, and by 2011 it dropped to 1.5, which is significantly below that in a number of advanced economies, such as the US, the UK and France.¹⁷ According to China's sixth population census, in large cities, the country's TFR dropped to 0.88, which is one of the lowest in the world. Interestingly, according to some research, the record low of 0.14 for the entire TFR history was registered in 2000 in the urban district of Jiamusi in Heilongjiang province, which makes this bordering-on-Russia Chinese province the absolute record-holder.¹⁸ These population dynamics within China are the cause of the rapid aging of population. As a result, China will need its working population at home in the years to come.

Most importantly, recent research on the patterns of migration between China and Russia reveals that the Chinese do not come to Russia and its Far East in large numbers. Most of those who actually go to Russia return home once their visas or work permits expire. This was the case during early 2000s, when the population of Russia was in decline and China was poorer than now, and it is even more so now, when the trend of depopulation in Russia has been reversed and living standards in China have further improved. The problem of the migration dimension in the "Chinese threat" to Russia was successfully dismissed by V.Ya. Portyakov in a series of articles on Chinese migration to Russia.¹⁹ The issue of Chinese emigration to Russia has been overblown by irresponsible media and Russian local politicians who have tried to build political capital by creating an image that they are fending off the Chinese threat. The real essence of the phenomenon of the Chinese migration to Russia was very precisely expressed by a Russian journalist who wrote, "Russia is not a lusted-after land for the Chinese eager to settle there, while trips to Russia are simply a compulsory economic necessity."²⁰ Protyakov demonstrates that Russia is not a priority destination for the Chinese emigrants. Responsible voices of the representatives of the academic community in Russia, who do not make "threats" out of nothing, are now gaining increasing force. It has become a consensus that Chinese immigration has no significant impact on the demographic situation of the Russia's Far East and, when properly managed, can be in Russia's geopolitical interests. The myths and imposed stereotypes about Chinese migration to Russia are dissipating and an adequate understanding of its nature as temporary migration is emerging.²¹

Myth Three: Russia's Excessive Dependence on China.

The third myth is a continuation of an old story about Russia, particularly its Far Eastern regions, becoming excessively dependent on China and, even worse, turning into an energy appendage of China. Mankoff wrote that "Russia's ambitions to become a significant player are at odds with its growing dependence on China."²² Rozman believes that "The door is closing on a strategy to maximize Russia's leverage in the Asia-Pacific region and to develop the Russian Far East as anything but a resource appendage for China."²³ Russia's Asian pivot, therefore, amounts to Russia's pivot to China, not to a broader Asia. This may be a problem for a China-Russia alliance because "there is the worry that in exporting little more than raw materials to China, Russia is increasingly tying itself into a semi-colonial relationship."²⁴ This myth emerges every time China-Russia relations develop and the two countries enter a new stage of cooperation.

The reality is that the largest stable trade partner of Russia is still the EU. Almost 50% of Russia’s external trade is with the EU, whereas China occupies slightly more than 10% in Russia’s total external trade. It is also not a secret that natural resources so far remain the lion’s share of Russia’s export to the EU. Thus, if Russia is an “energy appendage” of anyone, it is of Europe, not China. If Russia has been able to manage such asymmetrical trade relations with Europe for decades (even through troubled Ukraine), why is it assumed that a similar pattern of relations with China is going to be a problem?

The most revealing evidence is the comparisons of the relative weights of China, Japan, and South Korea in the external trade of Russia’s Far Eastern Federal District (RFEFD)—the one that, as some predict, is particularly vulnerable to becoming a resource colony of China. As Table 4 clearly demonstrates, the external trade of RFEFD is actually more dependent on South Korea than China. Relative to China, the overall trade with Korea has been larger most of the time. As to exports from RFEFD to China, it is much smaller than exports to either Japan or Korea, and its share has not grown over the last 8 years. This completely debunks the myth that the region is turning into an energy appendage of China. If it is an energy appendage at all, it is that of South Korea and Japan, but not China.

Table 4: Share of China, Japan and South Korea in external trade of RFEFD (%)

Year-country	Share of China			Share of Japan			Share of South Korea		
	export	import	overall	export	import	overall	export	import	overall
2006	37.9	22.4	30.8	22.1	25.6	23.4	12.3	23.1	18.0
2007	16.4	33.0	23.3	36.9	26.5	32.5	38.3	16.9	29.3
2008	13.5	36.5	23.1	34.2	31.0	32.8	42.1	8.1	28.0
2009	22.1	43.5	28.7	33.4	10.1	26.2	35.0	8.3	26.7
2010	16.6	51.5	26.6	31.1	10.1	26.4	28.8	11.6	23.8
2011	16.8	46.7	24.9	27.7	9.9	22.9	33.8	14.4	28.6
2012	20.0	45.5	27.2	28.9	9.3	23.2	32.4	17.9	28.2
2013	19.4	46.8	27.7	32.7	14.2	27.0	30.1	12.1	24.7
2014	19.0	45.0	26.0	29.7	19.6	26.3	32.0	10.6	26.2

Source: Far Eastern Branch of Federal Custom Service of Russia <http://dvtu.customs.ru/index.php>

As to the recent \$400 billion gas megadeal, its impact on China-Russia relations, especially in terms of who becomes dependent on whom, is not clear-cut because it ties China to Russia the same way that it ties Russia to China. It is a strategic shift for China as well. It is an indication not only of how seriously Russia is taking steps towards China but also of how seriously China is taking steps towards Russia. To realize gas delivery from Russia to China, the two countries have committed themselves to developing a powerful pipeline network also worthy of hundreds billions of dollars. Once put in place, pipelines are immovable and both sides become committed to using them and fulfilling a range of mutual obligations. Such long-term infrastructure commitments are not taken lightly by the governments on both sides and demonstrate certainty about the partner and the willingness to

compromise, which is going to underpin China-Russia relations. From this standpoint, the gas deal is not just a step by Russia towards China, but rather a step by both towards each other.

Arms trade between China and Russia is where China becomes dependent on Russia and not the other way around. China is not the main market for Russian weapons, but for China, Russia is the main source of advanced military hardware. Table 5 shows trends in international arms transfer. The share of Russian weapons accounts for more than 60 percent of China’s total import of military hardware, whereas the role of the Chinese market for Russian arms exports is only 11%. In case Russia decides to cut its exports to China, it will lose only 11% of sales, whereas China will lose 61% of all of its purchases. If one is to talk about the dependence of Russia on external markets, it seems that the Indian market is more important because it occupies almost 40 percent in Russia’s total exports.

Table 5: Arms exports from Russia to China and India (%)

Indicator-year	2005-2009	2006-2010	2007-2011	2008-2012	2009-2013	2010-2014
Share of China in Russia’s total export	35	23	16	15	12	11
Share of Russia in China’s total import	89	84	78	69	64	61
Share of India in Russia’s total export	24	33	33	35	38	39

Source: SIPRI, Trends in International Arms Transfer <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/transfers>

Contrary to many statements, the excessive dependence of Russia, and particularly Russia’s Far Eastern territories, on China is not in accord with reality. Therefore, should the two countries decide to form an official alliance, the overdependence of former on the latter should not be an issue.

Myth Four: There is not Enough Trust between China and Russia

The fourth myth is about the lack of “trust” in China-Russia relations. The role of what is meant by the vague concept of “trust” is being played up by many who comment on China-Russia relations in general and the chances of a China-Russia alliance materializing in particular. Some talk about the “transactional nature of the Sino-Russian relationship” and argue that “Sino-Russian relations lack trust and are characterized by competition, especially in the two countries’ shared region”²⁵ Others argue that “in spite of a series of common interests on the global scene, there is a fundamental lack of strategic trust between the two [China and Russia].”²⁶ Still, others go so far as to argue that “Russia neither trusts anyone, nor is, in turn, trusted by anyone, in Asia.”²⁷

However, the reality is that states’ policies are shaped, first and foremost, by national interests and not trust. “Trust” between states in the international politics is unlikely. At the core of any alliance is a transaction based on common interests, and the degree of overlap in these interests predefines whether there is any “trust.” An alliance between two countries is

not a marriage between two people, a relationship where trust plays crucial role. Trust never plays a decisive role in shaping the foreign policies of states. Similarly to Russia, the U.S. and China also do not trust anyone and are not trusted by others. Alliances emerge and disappear according to international circumstances. China was ally of the Soviet Union in the 1950s. By the 1970s, however, there was an alignment between China and the U.S. In the 1980s, China announced a non-alignment strategy, whereas Russia has always had allies. The U.S. was the major anti-Communist country during the Cold War. However, as some scholars perspicaciously note, how does one explain the fact that Nixon, who was a major opponent of Communism, courted Mao's China and abandoned Taiwan, which was America's loyal anti-Communist ally? Why did Carter, a human rights crusader, turn a blind eye to China's human rights violations and elevate U.S.-China relations? Why did Reagan, a militant anti-Communist, restore U.S.-China military cooperation? What made Clinton rush to delink China's Most Favored Nation status from its human rights performance?²⁸ Were these sudden outbursts of American trust toward China?

When conditions for a balancing coalition are ripe, states do not have the luxury of following their subjective preferences and basing their relations on the things called "trust." China-Russia relations have had ups and downs during their long history, but there is nothing abnormal in terms of trust and mistrust between the two countries. Like many other states, China and Russia do not have to trust each other to form an alliance that will serve certain purposes and then be dismissed once the international situation changes.

Even if we buy an assumption that trust matters in alliance formation, there are no reasons to see trust as a problem in China-Russia relations. China and Russia started to interact with each other on the ground well before the United States emerged on the world map, and there is a certain geopolitical sense of a big neighbor in both Russia and China. Recently, as some rightly noted, Putin and Xi seem to be friends and the level of trust between them is higher than it regularly is between two countries. According to Gabuev, "Putin has more trust in Xi than in any Chinese leader before him and any current Western leader," and that the "sincerity Putin feels in Xi has helped the Kremlin to adjust many policies towards China that had been in place for over a decade."²⁹ In centralized political systems like China and Russia, personal trust between top decision makers may have a greater impact on foreign policy than in decentralized systems. At the same time, as recent public opinion surveys in Russia demonstrate, the way the Russians view the Chinese has improved dramatically. More than 60% of ordinary Russians consider Russia-China relations to be friendly.³⁰ Moreover, a positive turn in Russians' views of China occurred long before the Ukraine crisis and the subsequent deterioration of Russia's relations with the West. Thus, various public opinion research centers register positive perceptual dynamics in Russia-China relations at least since 2006.³¹ This reconfirms the disappearance of the "China threat" complex in the Russian society. Today, the majority of the Russian public considers China a friendly state and believes that a stronger China is not a threat to Russia. It is reasonable to expect that these trends will considerably facilitate comprehensive Russia-China cooperation.

Conclusion

The main goal of the analysis presented here is not to prove that China and Russia will soon enter and inevitably develop alliance relations. This will depend on many factors, one of which is American policies towards both China and Russia. As the American policy makers' recognition of the ongoing China-Russia rapprochement grows, the U.S. may start trying hard to put a wedge between China and Russia, and it is hard to predict the results of such policies. Instead, the goal of the analysis was to dissipate the preset views and biases regarding China-Russia relations that, according to many observers, may become a barrier for a China-Russia alliance to emerge. As demonstrated above, none of the four myths fully conform to reality. They are elements of a constructed counter-productive "matrix" prevailing in the thinking about China-Russia relations.

¹"Confronting Both Russia and china 'Strategic Mistake' for US – Russian" *Lawmaker*

<http://en.ria.ru/world/20140421/189291820/Confronting-Both-Russia-and-China-Strategic-Mistake-for-US-.html>

²ANALYSIS: US Containment Policy Pushes Russia, China Together

<http://en.ria.ru/world/20140421/189366921/ANALYSIS-US-Containment-Policy-Pushes-Russia-China-Together.html>

³Yan Xuetong, "Zhong E Zhanlue Guanxi Zui You Shizhi Yiyi [China-Russia Strategic Relations are the Most Substantive Ones]." *Zhengdang Ganbu Cankao*, 2013, No. 4, 31-32.

⁴See Xuetong Yan, "The Weakening of the Unipolar Configuration," in *China 3.0*, ed., Mark Leonard, (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2012), 112-118.

⁵See interview with John Mearsheimer by Nikkey Asian Review "US, China heading toward face-off,"

<http://asia.nikkei.com/magazine/20150326-Singapore-after-Lee/Viewpoints/US-China-heading-toward-face-off-says-Mearsheimer>

⁶Joseph Nye, "A New Sino-Russian Alliance?" *Project Syndicate* 12 January 2015 <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/russia-china-alliance-by-joseph-s--nye-2015-01>, accessed 2 April 2015.

⁷Ibid

⁸Gilbert Rozman, "The Russian Pivot to Asia," *The Asan Forum* Vol. 2, No. 6 (November-December 2014) <http://www.theasanforum.org/the-russian-pivot-to-asia/> accessed 4 April 2015.

⁹Marlene Laruelle, "Russia's National Identity and Foreign Policy toward the Asia-Pacific," *The Asan Forum*, January 24, 2014, <http://www.theasanforum.org/russias-national-identity-and-foreign-policy-toward-the-asia-pacific/> accessed 4 April 2015.

¹⁰Nye, op cit.

¹¹James D.J. Brown "Ukraine and the Russia-China Axis" *The Diplomat*, 2 April 2015,

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¹³Rosstat <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/85653155/russian-population-rises-by-292-400-2012-rosstat>, accessed 5 April 2015.

¹⁴"Russian Birth Rate above Regional Average," *Euromonitor International* <http://blog.euromonitor.com/2013/02/russian-birth-rate-above-regional-average.html>, accessed 8 April 2014.

¹⁵Rosstat http://www.gks.ru/bgd/free/B13_00/IssWWW.exe/Stg/dk12/8-0.htm

¹⁶Alexander Korolev "The Demographically Uncertain Foreign Policy of Today's China," Russian International Affairs Council, 7 March 2013 http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=1505#4, accessed 5 April 2015.

¹⁷World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>

¹⁸Terrell H.K.M. *Fertility in China in 2000: A County Level Analysis*. Unpublished Master of Science Dissertation: Texas A&M University, 2005. P. 52.

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