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Master's Thesis of International Cooperation

Will China ally with Russia?
- An interpretation from Alliance Theories -

중국은 러시아와 동맹을 맺을 것인가?

February Year 2022

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Title of your thesis (22pt)

- Subtitle of your thesis (16pt) -

Name of Examiner

Submitting a master's thesis of

○○○○(ex. Public Administration)

February 2022

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Full Name of you

Month Year

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Vice-Chair _____(Seal)

Examiner _____(Seal)

Abstract

Why has China been strengthening its relations with Russia, especially this year? Will China ally with Russia eventually? This article explains the issue with the currently more popular realism and neo-realism theories. That is, State ally with others to balance the possible threats. For now, Sino-U.S. relations have been deteriorating since 2018, which both sides perceive each other as an inevitable threat.

Furthermore, the U.S., at least, relies on the current “Hub and Spoke” architecture to balance China’ s rising influence globally. China is relatively isolated considering the global alliance topic. The starting point of this article is based on two realities. First, there are limited states which China could choose to form alliances. Many factors cause this. Among them, the “most likely” state is Russia. Second, due to the space limitation of the article, this article cannot analyze all possible conditions. Therefore, for analysis, this article chooses to lay the perspective on Russia, a country with a higher voice and a more significant trend in recent years. This article aims to test the possibility of China's alliance within the theoretical frameworks.

Keyword: Alliance Theory China-Russia alliance China-U.S. competition

Student Number: 2021-27042

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Study Background

Like all the alliances in history, the original motivation was to balance against foreign threats. For China, the United States is taking a more aggressive move to curb China's development in all dimensions. On 20th January 2021, Joe Biden was elected as the 46th President of the United States. According to Biden's remarks on America's position in the world, the U.S will confront China in economic conflicts, security, human rights, intellectual property, and global governance. China-U.S. relations deteriorated dramatically, and this trend will continue.

Biden administration carried out more radical policy in the rivalry against China. On the Biden administration's foreign policy agenda, major power rivalry with China remains the top international issue¹. Biden calls China America's principal challenger and appeals to take a collective countermeasure against China- "Prepare together for a long-term strategic competition with China."². As Biden declared at the Munich Security Conference, "America is back," competition with China is going to be stiff.

Biden evinced a solid will to maintain and strengthen the U.S alliance system. He said, "America's alliances are our greatest asset, and leading with diplomacy means standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies and key partners once again."³ The US-centered alliance system – a "Hub and Spoke" system, has provided 65-years of regional order. This order, forged by bilateral agreements and a set of security arrangements worldwide, is considered a "Cold War Relic" from China's stand. To what extent would this alliance serve Biden's policy ambitions in the case of confrontation with China? Moreover, how

¹ The White House. 2021. Remark by President Biden at the 2021 Virtual Munich Security Conference. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/19/remarks-by-president-biden-at-the-2021-virtual-munich-security-conference/> Accessed 19th February 2021.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

would China react accordingly?

There is no doubt that China will not swallow this hostility easily. On 2nd February, Yang Jiechi (杨洁篪), Director of the Office of the Central Committee for Foreign Affairs, delivered a speech⁴, which advised the new US administration to "strictly abide by the one-China principle" and "should stop interfering in issues involving China's sovereignty and territorial integrity" because "these issues concern China's core interests and national dignity... It is untouchable.". However, the spokesperson of the US State Department rejected it during the press conference. On 18th March, in Anchorage, Alaska, Yang Jiechi, and Wang Yi met with Brinken and Sullivan; Yang added that the United States had abused the so-called concept of national security to obstruct regular trade exchanges and even incited some countries to attack China. He said, "Let me say here that in front of the Chinese side, the United States does not have the qualification to say that it wants to speak to China from a position of strength."⁵

China has been facing severe hostility from the U.S. and its alliances since the very foundation of 1949. The U.S military bases form a "C" circle surrounding China's territory⁶, there is no denying that those military outposts, from Afghanistan to the Philippines, pull the nerves of Beijing. With the withdraw of forces deployed in Afghanistan, the Biden administration may better focus on Asia-Pacific by redistributing resources and staffing into the "Pivot." That will undoubtedly create new tension in Asia-Pacific, or we say Sino-U.S. confrontation.

In 2021, the positions of China and Russia on international issues are getting closer and closer, and the United States has served as an essential catalyst after Biden took

⁴ 中华人民共和国外交部驻纽约总领事馆: 杨洁篪同美中关系全国委员会举行视频对话.

<https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cgny/chn/xw/t1850617.htm> Accessed 2nd February 2021.

⁵ US and China publicly rebuke each other in first major talks of Biden era. Accessed 19th March 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/19/us-china-talks-alaska-biden-blinken-sullivan-wang>

⁶ 戴旭:《C型包围圈》, 武汉: 长江文艺出版社, 2017年版。

courageous decision towards the Donbas conflict between Ukraine and Russia by sending and proclaiming NATO support to Ukraine. On 15th April, the Ukrainian crisis was escalating at a sensitive moment. The Russian Foreign Minister and the Chinese Foreign Minister held talks, expressing that they would maintain high-level exchanges and strategic communication, increase mutual political support, and strengthen coordination and cooperation in international and regional affairs⁷.

Reinforced treaties are proof of the countermeasure. On 28th June, the "Joint Statement on the 20th Anniversary of the Signing of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation" stated that China and Russia had established a structure that conforms to the fundamental interests of the two countries and the aspirations of the two peoples to promote a multi-polar international order and maintain international and regional peace and stability. A new model of international relations that plays an essential role⁸. Article 9 of the "Sino-Russian Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation" stipulates: "If a contracting party believes that it will threaten the peace, destroy the peace, or involve its security interests and threaten aggression against the contracting party, the contracting parties shall, in order to eliminate the threat that arises, immediate contact and consultation." ⁹

Besides, China and Russia have similar pursuits on international order. Therefore, there is a necessity in forging tighter cooperation. On 25th August, Xi Jinping and Putin had a phone call, expressing similar positions to promote bilateral strategic coordination, deepen anti-interference cooperation, and support the Afghan political settlement.
¹⁰The two sides agreed that the current international and regional situation is complex

⁷ 中华人民共和国和俄罗斯联邦关于《中俄睦邻友好合作条约》签署 20 周年的联合声明（全文） Accessed 28th June 2021. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2021-06/28/content_5621323.htm

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ This treaty was signed in 2001 and raised wide speculation. However, China and Russia have declared a "non-alliance." See 中俄签署睦邻友好合作条约 Accessed 16th July 2001.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gj_676203/oz_678770/1206_679110/1207_679122/t11111.shtml

¹⁰ 新华社：习主席同普京总统通电话 释放这些重要信息 Accessed 25th August 2021.

http://www.news.cn/2021-08/25/c_1127795599.htm

and evolving¹¹. It is crucial and necessary for China and Russia to promptly maintain communication on major bilateral and multilateral issues and agree to continue maintaining close exchanges through various means.

1.2. Purpose of Research

Will China change its "Independent non-alliance diplomacy" to strengthen the increasing competition between China and the United States? When vying for world hegemony or regional dominance, will China's partnership relations shape gradually into an alliance system as the United States or the former Soviet Union did? It is what the article is trying to find out.

¹¹ Ibid.

Chapter 2. Literature Reviews

At present, the most fruitful research results and the most in-depth researches regarding will China ally with Russia are the following questions: First, under what motivation does the state ally? Second, with whom does the country ally? Third, China's alliance policy is especially under U.S. pressure. Researches of most scholars are based on theories of realism or neo-realism, trying to explain these two issues. At the same time, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact have added new variables to the interpretation of the above issues.

2.1. Alliance Theory

Current Alliance theories focus on the motivations and the problems of allying. Among those factions, Realism and new Realism provides a most vivid explanation.

Stephen M. Walt addresses that making alliances has two primary functions: "weapons of power" and "tools of great power management."¹². Therefore, in the current situation—the unipolar international system, U.S. controls a disproportionate share of the political and economic resources, states have three main resorts—to ally with each other to try to mitigate the unipole, to align with the unipole to sever their interests and remain neutral. He suggests the U.S. should keep its global engagement in check to reduce other states' concerns if the U.S. wishes to maintain the current international order. James L. Cook¹³ It tries to answer the fundamental question of why states make an alliance and the pros and cons of doing that by analyzing the U.S.'s alliance system. He argues that there are two means streams of defining the reason of state making alliance. First is by "idealism," meaning that values and other ideological

¹² Walt, Stephen M. "Alliances in a Unipolar World." *World Politics*, vol. 61, no. 1, [Cambridge University Press, Trustees of Princeton University], 2009, pp. 86–120

¹³ James L. Cook. 2013. "Military Alliances in the 21st Century: Still Relevant after all These Years?" *Orbis*. (Fall 2013), pp.559-573.

explanations are the answers. However, it is merely a case-by-case situation. Since the end of the Cold War, states typically judge according to their national interest. The second stream hides behind the "realism" faction. States make rational considerations based on cost-benefit calculations. In other words, states ally with benefits. He lists the benefits of allying as deterring war, facilitating burden sharing, offering international legitimacy, and gaining geostrategic access. As a result, he suggests a "Coalitions of the Willing and Partnerships."

Those articles mainly focus on the U.S. view, though those analyses are rational and incomplete. Those articles offered a pattern of analyzing different national interests in an alliance but were not convincing structural when dealing with the current Sino-Russia alliance issue.

2.2. Sino-U.S. competition

Regarding the Sino-U.S. competition, there are numerous researches. However, this article focuses on the Sino-Russia relations, under which circumstances, Sino-U.S. relations serve as background. If the U.S. policy goes as Biden claimed, what should China react towards the growing threats from the U.S. alliance system?

Ge Hanwen(葛汉文)¹⁴ argues that the United States cannot give up its alliance system and global hegemony. The asymmetry between benefits and costs of most allies in the alliance system is still or worsened, and the United States continues to maintain or even strengthen its global alliance system, forcing its allies to upgrade their alliance system. An option for structural strategy is to promote the deterioration of the regional and global security environment or shape an external adversary for the alliance to correct the significant security threat. In order to achieve its strategic goals, it will deliberately exaggerate or reiterate the minor differences between some major powers in a limited

¹⁴ Ge Hanwen, "The alliance policy and alliance system of the United States in the Trump era," *Forum of World Economics and Economic*, Jan.2019, No.1

scope and limited areas. To re-assemble and mobilize its alliance system to continue consolidating its global hegemony. Adam P. Liff suggests¹⁵ that “Beijing expresses deepening frustration towards, and even open opposition to, recent alliance strengthening, and instead champions alternative security architectures free of what it alleges to be “exclusive,” “zero-sum,” “Cold-war relic” US-centred alliances.” Therefore, China has been calling for regional alternatives for a long time as China is gradually expanding its power and growing its capabilities. Naturally, China considers the U.S containment policy consistent with its territory and interest. The author disagrees that US-China competition is defined as a "Zero-Sum" game, and the U.S alliance in Asia-Pacific is far from unbreakable as each of the countries shares considerable economic benefits.

Scholars believe that considering the current status quo and Beijing's increasing power, the attitude of China will add a fundamental variable shaping the regional order shortly. However, neither of those answers the current issue related to this article. Articles viewed China's reaction as a whole but lacked a specific analysis on the possibility of the Sino-Russia alliance.

2.3. China’s Alliance Policy and Sino–Russia Relations

Yan Xuetong (阎学通) brought up the idea.¹⁶ That China should seek alliance relations with Russia. He reckons that "the foundation of an alliance is a common strategic and security interest. The reliability of an ally is mainly decided by to what extent they share common security interests"¹⁷. He focuses on those topics widely accepted in China as significant reasons China should not ally with Russia. First, he believes that even Russia is falling and no longer share the former glory of the former Soviet Union, Russia still holds an unquestioned position in the military field. Thus, allying with Russia will provide China with a considerable military advantage when facing the challenge from

¹⁵ Adam P. Liff, "China and the US Alliance System," *The China Quarterly*, 233, March 2018, pp. 137–165.

¹⁶ Yan Xuetong, “Is Russia Reliable?” *International Economic Review*, 2012(03):21-25+4.

¹⁷ Ibid.

the West. Second, although Russia has been recognized with a notorious reputation for standing by its promise, a rising China will undoubtedly take control of the alliance's initiative and exert more influence on Russia's behavior. Third, the most important reason lies in the joint strategic interest. Both Russia and China are now facing increasingly violent threats from the U.S. In Europe, the threat is NATO. In Asia, the "Hub and Spoke" military commitments. This confrontation is by no means modifiable because, as a hegemonic leader, the U.S will never accept allies like China and Russia. Therefore, both states might seek a defensive alliance. At least, the Sino-Russian alliance is harmless to both sides. Alexander Korolev¹⁸ Believes that China and Russia relations have progressed continuously since the demise of the Soviet Union. Both states established a relationship that evolved from "good neighborliness" in the early 1990s to a "comprehensive strategic partnership of equality, mutual trust, mutual support, common prosperity, and long-lasting friendship."¹⁹. Given the situation in which China and Russia have no existing alliance treaty, and therefore, when confronting the U.S.s' "Grand Alliance," both states need to balance the U.S., along with its alliance, in power politics. Furthermore, two major factors could lead them into an alliance without a formal treaty. First, both states share similar perceptions and interests towards U.S. and international politics. Second, China and Russia's cooperation has come to fruition in diverse ways. Thus, the author argues that despite the current cooperation mainly being ad hoc, "meaning that a strong basis for an alliance is in place, and only minor steps are needed for a fully-fledged alliance to materialize."²⁰.

On the contrary, Ling Shengli (凌胜利) tried to answer why China should not adopt an

¹⁸ Alexander Korolev. "Beyond the Nominal and the Ad Hoc: The Substance and Drivers of China-Russia Military Cooperation." *Insight Turkey* 20, no. 1 (2018): 25–38.

¹⁹ Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Slovenia, "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei's Regular Press Conference on 27th June 2016," retrieved 5th October 2017, from <http://si.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t1375607.html>.

²⁰ Alexander Korolev. "Beyond the Nominal and the Ad Hoc: The Substance and Drivers of China-Russia Military Cooperation." *Insight Turkey* 20, no. 1 (2018): 25.

alliance policy.²¹ He argues that a non-alliance policy is of China's national interest despite the challenge of increasing security pressure. It is explainable that a rising power is often forced to face security pressure. First of all, China's non-alliance policy is appropriate considering the effect of safeguarding national interests in both domestic and international situations. China needs more friends who could boost China's development rather than an alliance that might drag China into conflicts. Second, in terms of security threats or pressures in the recent history of the Peoples' Republic, alliances are not necessary. The benefits of alliances for improving China's security environment are not obvious but may intensify contradictions and differences by exasperating neighboring states.

Last but not least, the non-alliance policy is also more in line with China's historical mainstream and culture. China has formed an alliance with the former Soviet Union which broke up as a "bitter relationship." Historically, China has maintained its international status through the tributary system more than through alliances. He concludes that China's practice of the new security concept is more feasible regarding developing common security and cooperative security.

Some scholars hold unfavorable views on this issue. Although they recognize the possibility of a Sino-Russia alliance, they do not tend to put it out explicitly so long as there are other options. Xie Chao (谢超)²² This suggests that China is most likely to approach the dominant power. Whether China and Russia can ally first depends on China's policy choices. Although the rapid rise of China makes it possible to adjust the non-alliance policy, and as a rational state, China should adopt a flexible policy to safeguard national interests. However, if the international structure reaches the critical point of transformation, it can be foreseen that Russia will become the leading partner of China's alliance. Prudent scholars tend to suggest an alternative option instead of a

²¹ Ling Shengli, "Why doesn't China ally?". *Diplomatic Review* (Journal of China Foreign Affairs University), 2013, 30(03): 20-33.

²² Xie Chao (谢超), "Will China form alliance? Russia Interests and Prospects of a Sino-Russia Alliance", *Contemporary Asia Pacific*, 2016(04): 44-69+153-154.

full-alliance. Sun Degang(孙德刚) thinks²³ that China needs to re-examine the principle of "non-alignment" per its national interests, security, and the needs of the current situation, to upgrading from "non-alignment" to "quasi-alliance." Whereas, China's quasi-alliance diplomacy should be different from that of the United States' alliance system: The former is based on informal security cooperation agreements while the latter is based on mutual defense treaties;

Those researches analyze from the policy view, and some provide quantitative data. Even though scholars provide solid views on China's alliance behavior based on national interests, those abundant researches mainly focus on the possible policy change aspects. Neither of them answers the question of "will or not?". Therefore, to answer the question "will China ally with Russia" the article needs to exam the pros and cons under a coherent theoretical framework. The answer could not reach every aspect of the matter or provide a research perspective in this area.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. In section, I summarize the existing studies scholars conducted on alliance theory and China's alliance policy under the background of Sino-U.S. competition and discuss the current issues. Section II concludes current researches on China's alliance policy under the background of Sino-U.S. competition. Furthermore, section III sorts the prevalent theories on alliance theory which will be used as powerful instruments for my analysis in later sections. This section focuses on classical realism and neo-realism alliance theories that discuss and analyze the pros and cons of the alliance policy. Section IV analyzes China's alliance policy under the realism alliance theoretical frameworks. From the retrospective sorting on the background since 2018, the break of the Sino-U.S. trade war analyzes both China and Russia's national interests in allying. This section offers conjectures Sino-Russia rational countermeasures regarding the impact of U.S. hostility and competition. Section V concludes China's rational choices and policies under the current situation.

²³ Sun Degang, "China's Quasi-alliance Diplomacy in the New Era," *World Economics and Politics*, No.3,2012
孙德刚：论新时期中国的准联盟外交

2.4. Hypothesizes

Before the article reaches the answer under the current theoretical framework, the article gives hypothesizes as follow:

First, as China-U.S. relations deteriorate, China will resort to enhancing Sino-Russia relations in order to balance the threat from the U.S. and its alliance. Second, China has its hesitation of allying. After discreetly weighing the pros and cons, reasonable explanations emphasize China's current non-alliance policy.

Chapter 3. Applicable Theoretical Frameworks

As China-U.S. relations deteriorate since the "Trade War" outbreak, China is now facing severe threats from the U.S. and its global alliance system. Questions have been asked continuously: would China ally as it used to do, and whom would China align with? This article applies the current theoretical methods to answer this question.

There are affluent explanations for the motivation of states forming alliances with states. Among those theoretical frameworks, realism, liberalism, and constructionism, most of the research paradigms of scholars can be included in the realism or neorealism category.

3.1. "Balance of Power" Theories

Realism scholars believe that the function of alliances is to enhance allies' security or advance their interests in the outside world. Military power, security interests, and external threats, rather than internal factors, are the decisive factors that determine the behavior of national alliances.

Morgenthau believes that "Politics Among Nations" is that the function of the alliance is to increase the power of the country to respond to threats and that allies provide military assistance to each other to deter threats²⁴. The relationship between alliance theory and balance of power theory is that alliance is an effective tool to maintain the balance of power or the balanced distribution of power between countries or groups of countries, and "alliance is a necessary function of power balance in a multi-polar system."²⁵ Concluding an alliance clarifies the existing common interests and the related policies and implementation steps. Whether the alliance can be maintained depends on the consistent interests of the allies. Regarding the choosing of the allies, Morgenthau believes that its starting point and destination are both for power so that

²⁴ Hans, J, Morgenthau, *Alliance in Theory and Practice*, Arnold Wolfers(ed), *Alliance Policy in the Cold War*, Baltimore, MD: *The Johns Hopkins Press*, 1959, pp.184-212

²⁵ *Ibid.*

the alliance partner can be changed at will without any moral constraints. Ideology is an ineffective factor in alliance behavior. Therefore, He believes a purely ideological alliance that has nothing to do with material interests is unsuccessful.

Robert E. Osgard argues that alliances are usually formed in an international environment where conflicts or threats exist. The alliance is "a potential community of war."²⁶ It is based on universal cooperation beyond the scope of the formal agreement, and the contracting states must review the situation from time to time so that all parties have confidence in the sincerity of each other's specific obligations. As a result, the function and role of the alliance are concluded as: First, to enhance external power, which is the most basic function of the alliance. Second, maintaining domestic security is because the alliance significantly influences the regime's stability. Third, restrain the allies, prevent allies from taking actions that harm each other's interests, affecting the international order and, thus, collective security.

According to the alliance theory of realism, the functions of alliances can be summarized into the following categories: (1) Balance against potential threats (2) Enhance national interests, especially security interests. (3) Control of allies by restricting allies that may cause instability to maintain international equilibrium (4) obtain international recognition through alliances to consolidate or legalize the regime.

3.2. "Balance of threats" Theories

Neo-Realism theories believe that the pursuit of the state is to secure and maintain its position in the international system. Therefore, allying must serve the state's international interests as long as its international status.

“Balance of Threats”

Stephen M.Walt tried to answer two questions. First, why do states form alliances?

²⁶ Robert E. Osgard, *Alliances and American Foreign Policy*, Baltimore: *The Johns Hopkins Press*, 1968,p19.

Second, how the state chooses its allies. He believes that the main reason why countries form alliances is to balance threats, not just balance power. Threats mainly stem from four aspects: comprehensive strength, geographical proximity, offensive strength, and aggressive intentions.²⁷ "States possessing all of these traits— large capabilities, proximity to others, offensive military forces and aggressive intentions—will be especially likely to provoke a countervailing coalition."²⁸

Walt concluded that the purpose of alliances between states is to check and balance the state that poses the most threat to it, not necessarily the most powerful state. When responding to threats, the state is more likely to exercise a balanced strategy, and complying with the strong is only the last resort of those vulnerable and weak countries that are isolated and helpless. Ideology, economic assistance, and transnational penetration play a limited role in allying.

Therefore, he believes that the motives for the alliance of nations are nothing more than the following points: (1) Balance, nations align against foreign threats (2) Bandwagon, nations align with foreign threats (3) Ideology, States align with nations that share a common ideology. (4) Assistance, states form alliances with states that assist them; (5) Domestic Politics, states are aligned with those that successfully infiltrate them and manipulate their domestic politics.

3.3. The Dilemma of Alliance

An explanation suggests that no-alliance can be beneficial. In some cases, the alliance is a loss of national power. In a zero-sum game, the alliance leader often suffers because the value of victory cannot replace the leader's continuous consumption of wealth to establish or maintain a materially unprofitable alliance. Hegemonic powers allied with small countries for particular political and military interests while restricting small

²⁷ Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of Power," *International Security*, Spring 1985, Vol.9, No.4, pp.9-12.

²⁸ Ibid

countries from taking specific actions which jeopardize regional stability.

Moreover, the promise of assistance is often uncertain. Consequently, the alliance should not be maintained for a long time. The alliance should collapse on its own after victory or the completion of the alliance task because the formation of the alliance is basically for joint opposition or standard support. Decision-makers must always weigh the pros and cons, gains and losses. Once the cost is higher than the income, it is necessary to change.

The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics

Glenn Snyder reckons that according to the logic of neorealism, the reason why states form alliances is that the expected benefits are more significant than the costs borne. The relationship between benefits and costs is determined by the power relationship and its most possible opponent. The greater the power gap between a state and its expected enemy, the more it wants to join the alliance. Once an alliance is formed, extensive and long-lasting bargaining will be carried out to maximize the benefits while effectively responding to the security challenges issued by hostile countries. As a result, there will be two related dilemmas within the alliance: abandonment and entrapment. This kind of dilemma, Snyder calls it the "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics."²⁹

On the one hand, allies must demonstrate their value and make a clear commitment to the alliance's obligations within the alliance. Otherwise, other alliance partners may seek other security arrangements and abandon them; on the other hand, if alliance members are eager to prove their commitment to the alliance. Faithful and active commitment to the obligations of the alliance may drag a state into a conflict or war which does not fit its national interest. After allying, any state that allies will inevitably have to weigh "abandonment" and "entrapment." Allies must demonstrate their value so as not to be abandoned by their partners.

²⁹ Glenn Snyder, The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics, *World Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 3, July 1984, pp. 461-495.

Nevertheless, the problem is that a state wants to "show firmness."³⁰ It will be more likely to be dragged by its allies into a war that it does not want or is not inevitable. On the contrary, a state worried about being "entrapped" and intends to distance itself from its allies will risk being abandoned by the allies³¹. How should the state weigh the two? This constitutes the first meaning of "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." The second meaning of "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics" is that if a state chooses to strengthen its alliance to avoid being abandoned, it may trigger hostility from its adversaries, which will intensify tensions and eventually backfire. If a country chooses to weaken its alliance, it may encourage adversaries with expansionism pursuit.

Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder³² It is proposed that there are two possible negative situations in state alliances: "chain-ganging" and "buck-passing." The so-called "chain-ganging" means that every member of the alliance will go to war because of the failure of an individual ally, which, in turn, dramatically reduces its security; "buck-passing" means that some alliance members will evade responsibility in conflicts and take the efforts of other states for itself. Alternatively, Bandwagon to maintain the balance of power.

Accordingly, States believing that the survival of the allies is essential to the maintenance of the balance of power, and thus unconditionally linking oneself to the reckless allies, this behavior pattern, is so-called "chain-ganging," led to the outbreak of WWI; In contrast, states counting on it all to take the risk of containing power, as described as "buck-passing" which led to the outbreak of WWII.

Because the more likely a state is to be attacked, the more inclined it is to form an

³⁰ Glenn Snyder, The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics, *World Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 3, July 1984, pp. 466-467, p. 494.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity, *International Organization*, Spring 1990, Vol.44, No.2, pp.144 — 147.

alliance and defend the attacked allies; By the same token, the less likely a state is to be attacked, the more likely it is to evade the responsibilities of the alliance. If states believe that they are vulnerable to a possible attack by the enemy, they will adopt a strategy of "chain-ganging"; If states believe that they have an advantage in defense, they will choose a strategy of "buck-passing" in order to evade responsibility. As long as there is a possibility for choice, states will choose to let other states bear the cost of balance of power, and if the offensive advantage of the adversary makes other allies more likely to be attacked and quickly defeated in the war, then the state will lean to the strategy of "chain-ganging" instead.

They believe that under a multi-polar system, if state leaders believe that offensive military strategies are effective, then there is a greater possibility to form close alliances, which will escalate conflicts; On the contrary, if leaders believe that the defensive strategy is effective, they will try to pass on the cost of early confrontation to other states. The formation of "offensive advantage" and "defensive advantage" mainly depends on the relationship between the government and the military system and history lessons, especially the lessons of the last large-scale war.

Chapter 4. Analysis

4.1. The definition of alliance

George Modelski ³³ defines alignment as "all forms of political cooperation" and alliance as "military cooperation"; Stephen Walt considers ³⁴ "Alliance" and "alignment" can be used interchangeably. An alliance is a formal and informal arrangement for security cooperation between two or more sovereign states³⁵.

Glenn Snyder strictly distinguishes alliance and alignment. The former is regarded as a formal military alliance, which is defined as "a formal alliance of states on the use or non-use of force to safeguard the security of member states or expand their power"³⁶. Whether these countries have been confirmed and aligned in Snyder's view is a broader concept, defined as an expectation of a country, whether they will be supported or opposed by other countries in future contacts, defining friends. At the same time, it is also defining potential opponents.

U.S. joint doctrine defines an alliance as a "relationship that results from a formal agreement between two or more nations for broad, long-term objectives that further the common interests of the members."³⁷

Since many contemporary countries are unwilling to sign formal alliances with their "countries with the same interests," too strict a distinction between formal and informal alliances may lead to significant mistakes in policy judgments. For example, the United States and Israel have not signed any formal alliance treaty for a long time, and the signing of the Soviet-PRC Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1950 has buried the

³³ George Modelski: *Studies of Alliance*

³⁴ Stephen Walt, *The origins of Alliance*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1982,p.12

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Glenn Snyder, Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut, *Journal of International Affairs*, Spring 1990, Vol.144, No.1,p.104

³⁷ The Joint Staff, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, D.C., 8th November 2010), p. 13.

crisis and later inflicted the tension between the two sides. "The full essence of the alliance is rarely revealed in a formal military agreement or treaty, just as the essence of marriage is rarely reflected in a marriage certificate."³⁸

According to the practice of alliance politics and alliance strategy, there is a "de facto" commitment and expectation relationship between countries. Moreover, the member states have made specific collective commitments in security, and the other parties also expect their allies under the particular incident. Alternatively, even with specific uncertain threats, the obligation to use force or to consider the use of force is obligated to use force or to consider the use of force³⁹. The above-mentioned sovereign states constitute a particular form of alliance relationship.

4.2. Background: The New "Great Triangle"

China, the United States, and the Soviet Union had a "Great Triangle" history in the 1970s. The "Great Triangle" refers explicitly to the Sino-US-Soviet relationship since the 1970s. The nature of the "triangle" is the confrontation and game between three powers, including geopolitical competition and the default rule of "zero-sum game."⁴⁰ Fundamentally speaking, the "triangle" is a structure of checks and balances, not a cooperative relationship.

Before that, China's adapted policy varied. In the 1950s, China was "leaning to one side" to the Soviet Union. In the 1960s, Sino-Soviet relations broke down, and China implemented the "two fists" policy of "anti-imperialist and anti-revisionist," opposing the United States and the Soviet Union. After the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1980s, China developed relations with the United States and the Soviet Union, simultaneously playing a role of balancer between both superpowers. China took advantage of the Soviet-America confrontation, thus, maintaining its independence

³⁸ Robert Osgood, *Alliance and American Foreign Policy*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968, p.18.

³⁹ 吴心伯: "论中美战略竞争", 《世界经济与政治》2020年第5期

⁴⁰ 李勇慧. (2018). 中俄美三角关系:现状、特点、成因及应对. *俄罗斯东欧中亚研究*(05),57-70+156.

under the bipolar structure.

However, after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the demand for the triangle ameliorated. Neither the United States nor Russian Federation was motivated to use China balancing against each other as they did in Cold War. After the Crimea incident in March 2014, the United States and European Union introduced policies and measures such as economic sanctions, political isolation, and military deterrence against Russia, which led to a full-scale confrontation. The new dynamic has granted China an opportunity to rethink the "Great Triangle."

4.2.1. Intensified Russia-US confrontation

The Crimea incident is Russia's concentrated resentment and fierce resistance to the long-term containment policy of the United States and its allies, and the United States cannot tolerate such violations of the current international order and international law. Therefore, Russia and the United States cannot compromise on the Ukrainian issue, and a showdown is inevitable.

After the Ukraine crisis, the exchange mechanism between Russia and the United States was completely interrupted. The West, led by the United States, punished Russia in the economy, military politics, diplomacy, and propaganda⁴¹.

First, in terms of economic sanctions and counter-sanctions, the combined effect of Western sanctions and the fall in international oil prices led to a sharp drop in the value of the Russian currency (ruble) since late 2014 and a decline in the annual GDP growth rate, which caused Russia to fall into an economic recession since 2015⁴².

Second, in terms of confrontation with conventional armed forces. After the Ukrainian

⁴¹ 柳丰华. (2017). 乌克兰危机以来的中俄美三角关系:调整与走势. 国际经济评论(04),103-115+7.

⁴² 李勇慧. (2018). 中俄美三角关系:现状、特点、成因及应对. 俄罗斯东欧中亚研究(05),57-70+156.

crisis, to support Ukraine and punish Russia, the United States promoted NATO's conduct military containment of Russia and strengthened the deployment of U.S. troops in East Europe. To counter this hostility, Russia has increased the frequency of military exercises on the Russian-Ukrainian border. Moreover, at the end of 2021, there was speculation that the Russian army would launch a large-scale siege of Kiev.

Russia has had hoped to be embraced into the West only to found the West abandonment, in Russia's most desperate time, during the early years of the doom of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the United States' hardline containment policy to Russia left Russia no choice but to face this western challenge head-on.

4.2.2. Sino-US competition

Biden once stated in the campaign that the United States' "biggest competitor is China"; After swearing in the White House, he declared that China is the United States' "most severe competitor." Thus, the Biden administration competed with China in property rights and global governance.⁴³

The Sino-US competition includes three aspects. The first of which is the competition on ideology. Secretary of State Blinken listed "Renew democracy."⁴⁴ As a priority in American diplomacy, and vowed to support democracy throughout the world, emphasizing defending American values in relations with China. In the Chinese view, this speech is closely related to U.S.' intention to intervene in China's domestic issues as the U.S. has been criticizing China's human rights violation.

The second aspect of the competition is about the institution of international commerce. Specifically, the United States will focus on state-owned enterprises, labor standards, environmental standards, intellectual property protection, "forced transfer of

⁴³ 吴心伯: "论中美战略竞争",《世界经济与政治》2020年第5期

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of the State. Antony J. Blinken. 2021. "A Foreign Policy for the American People." Accessed 3rd March 2021. <https://www.state.gov/a-foreign-policy-for-the-american-people/>

technology," and other aspects, and play a rule game with China.⁴⁵ To China, it is just an attempt to curb China's economic growth and national development. Therefore, China has to compete with the U.S. in all aspects listed by the U.S., although this competition is far from being fair and healthy.

The Third aspect of the competition lies in security. The Biden administration inherits the main contents of the Obama administration's "the Asia-Pacific rebalance" strategy and the Trump administration's "Indo-Pacific strategy."⁴⁶ The Western Pacific is explained as the focus of security competition, including continuous attention to the South China Sea and increased intervention in the Taiwan Strait. Although China has no intention of seizing global hegemony and it does not possess the power to combat the U.S. for it, the U.S. has to take preemptive actions to prevent that from happening.

However, this competition could be healthy, not endanger each state's national interests. The normal state of international relations involves competition and cooperation, "just plain old" in international relations. The competition between China and Russia is both strategic and natural. Regarding the definition, "strategic competition is distinguished by the fact that it is an active program of action, supported by resources, and aimed at significant favorable changes in the existing balance."⁴⁷ Furthermore, "natural competition is reactive, opportunistic, and relatively slow which can take a very long time."⁴⁸ Therefore, the competition is strategic because it is made deliberately as a national policy to manually balance China's influence worldwide and prevent China from seizing global hegemony; It is also natural since China's rising took place smoothly as political dominance is an ordinary course of economic growth.

However, the current U.S.-China competition does not resemble the Cold War

⁴⁵ Cassidy McDonald. 2021. "Biden Says U.S. will not Lift Sanctions until Iran Halts Uranium Enrichment," CBS News, Accessed 7th February 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/biden-interview-iransanctions-nuclear-agreement/>.

⁴⁶ 吴心伯: "论中美战略竞争", 《世界经济与政治》2020年第5期

⁴⁷ Andrey Sushentsov. 2021. "The Triangle as Metaphor," *Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, SUMMER 2021, No. 19, Building Forward Better: After the Rain (SUMMER 2021), pp. 104-113

⁴⁸ Ibid.

confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States. Without the considerable struggle for global hegemony, a global geopolitical confrontation, which manifested itself in acute crises⁴⁹It is not to be expected. Should Americans keep pressing China with power politics globally, Beijing will have no choice but to tighten the Sino-Russia relations preparing for a reconfiguration of the world order. The question, for now, is what to expect in this new competitive dynamic between China and U.S.?

4.2.3. Sino-Russia Cooperation and the “New Triangle”?

Russia and China may not have initially been banded together in discontent with the United States and its view on international order. Moreover, China and Russia had distrust issues in many aspects, which include economic cooperation, military technology transfer, and energy pipelines.

However, the United States and its western allies fueled more dissent, especially in the areas of Human rights issues and international law. The western led international order has been perceived as a fundamental threat to both China and Russia, and the west's effort to emphasize those issues tied China and Russia closer since it touches “the central pillar of their worldview”.⁵⁰ which is the shared insistence on the principle of sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of states. Thus, the desire to counterbalance the U.S.’s global influence is an incentive to enhance the Sino-Russia partnership. These actions have reinforced Russia and China’s readiness to work together and align in some topics when necessary.

China’s growing heft might make it a considerable threat in the far-east for Russia. However, compared with the U.S., which is deemed an immediate threat, China’s rising is more acceptable as it faces the same hostility from the West. In a similar vein, China does acknowledge that Russia is unreliable according to the history of old enmity.

⁴⁹ Andrey Sushentsov. 2021. “The Triangle As Metaphor,” *Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, SUMMER 2021, No. 19, Building Forward Better: After the Rain (SUMMER 2021), pp. 104-113

⁵⁰ Andrea Kendall-Taylor and David Shullman. 2021. “The Future of Russia-China Relations.” *In Navigating the Deepening Russia-China Partnership*. Center for a New American Security (2021)

Nevertheless, Russia is more of external support than an adversary when considering the current international power distribution.

In terms of political cooperation, the Cooperation between two major powers is to achieve the goal that is to make more concrete the risks that U.S. policymakers would confront if current trends in the Russia-China-U.S. triangle persist.⁵¹

Russia and China are unlikely to forge an exclusive alliance in security cooperation. However, it does not mean that the joint military exercises are not a signal of mutual support. Both states have intentions and capabilities to challenge regional balances of power or support each other's regional objectives.⁵²

In terms of economic cooperation, the Russia-China partnership's economic dimensions remain less significant than top-down political interaction. The current U.S. sanction on Russia and trade war with China offers both states a chance to circumvent U.S. current international structural barriers and deepen economic integration to blunt Western global economic arrangement.

In short, the growing alignment of Russian and Chinese cooperation might intensify their national interests, and the shared view of the United States as an adversary may add more unpredictable factors in the “New Triangle” dynamic.

A question must be raised: Is there any similarity between this “New Triangle” and the former in the Cold War era? An important reminder of the history of the “Great Triangle” is that only when another state threatens both states and this threat is usually related to national strategy and security. If the same state does not threaten two states, or if one of the states is not threatened to a severe degree, the state will usually choose to maintain

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid

a certain degree of neutrality in order to keep strategic mobility. In that case, ultimately, joining one side and forming hostility with the other side is not a reasonable option.

Although the possibility of a full-scale military confrontation is very slight, the trend in Sino-Russian-US relations and the international situation is to bind China and Russia closer, not only in politics and economy but also in the field of military cooperation. It may not push China and Russia to build an alliance, but it may enable China and Russia to strengthen the current strategic partnership to gain an advantageous position in the competition with the U.S.

4.3. China's Interests

As China set the mission of national restoration, the request for national interests differs from it once was during the Cold War era. As a communist state, China was reluctant to discuss national interests explicitly. China used to put national interest subordinate to the international communist movement, which caused China heavily. However, the conduction of opening and reform and the disintegration of the Soviet Union made a new dynamic.

In the 21st century, the international system went into transition. China's international status is getting prominent and facing increasing internal and external pressures. At the same time, China's domestic economic and social development has also entered a period of frequent contradictions. Interdependent interaction made it no longer possible to resort simply to domestic policy or foreign policy if to guarantee the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Therefore, the Chinese Communists clearly defined national interests into three categories⁵³: First, China's state political stability, that is, the leadership of the Communist Party must be reassured, the path of Chinese characteristics socialism must be insisted; Second, China's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of the nation; Third, the sustainable development of China's

⁵³ 吴心伯: “论中美战略竞争”, 《世界经济与政治》2020年第5期

economy and society.

Some Chinese scholar brings up China's national interests as follows⁵⁴: First, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the integrity and inviolability of China's territorial must be guaranteed, and the realization of the great reunification of the motherland should be accelerated. Secondly, a stable external environment should be acquired to realize China's national modernization, including economic development and social stability. Third, China is seeking a leading role in significant international interactions, which does not refrain in the Asia-Pacific region but also pushes forward a beneficial international order and institutionalizes international justice.

In short, China's core interests refer to the national sovereignty, security, territorial integrity, and development interests of the People's Republic of China⁵⁵.

(1) On Politics

China's "Holistic Approach to National Security"⁵⁶ is depicted as systematic security and comprehensive political security in the national security system of which the political security is the core. Political security decides and affects national economic security, military security, social security. Moreover, security in other fields will ultimately be reflected in maintaining national political security.

Therefore, political interest is most important. As a party state, China regards the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party as an unshakable principle. In terms of politics, the state and the party are binary. The constitution stipulates that⁵⁷ "the basic political system in China is the Communist Party of China (CPC), as the party in power

⁵⁴ Wang Yizhou. 2002. "Rethinking National Interests." 王逸舟: "国家利益再思考", 中国社会科学 2002 年第 2 期。

⁵⁵ 中华人民共和国国务院新闻办公室. 2011. "《中国的和平发展》", http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/2011/Document/1000032/1000032_1.htm Accessed 6th September 2011.

⁵⁶ 中共中央党校 (国家行政学院) .2018. "政治安全是国家安全的根本", Accessed 20th April 2018 https://www.ccps.gov.cn/xsxxk/xzx/201812/t20181220_126392.shtml.

⁵⁷ 国务院新闻办公室: 《中国的政党制度》, Accessed 15th November 2011 http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/2007/Document/307872/307872_2.htm .

consults all non-Communist parties and representatives of non-party personages to reach a common understanding before policymaking”. Challenge the legitimacy of CPC is an act of infiltration that will not be taken easily.

(2) On Security:

A rising power like China is always concerned about its risk. China has an enormous population and far-flung territory, with considerable risk and concerns. According to the national defense white paper⁵⁸, China is now managing several internal and external interests, and the risk comes with it.

First, China has an interest in the integration of its territory. The fight against separatists and religious extremists is far from over. To the east, Taiwan has become a “pin in the eye” since the closure of China’s Civil War in 1949. During the half-century confrontation, both the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China recognize only one China. The two regimes fight to be the only rightful "mandate of heaven." However, the scenario has shifted dramatically after the Kuo-Ming-Tang (国民党) lost the throne of the presidency. Taiwan seeks independence rather than acknowledge itself as a province straying from the mainland. The determination of the unification of China is resolute, and any state wishes to build diplomatic relations with China⁵⁹ Must formally accept that Taiwan is part of China’s inherent territory and PRC is the legal government of China. In terms of religious extremists, Tibet and Xinjiang are two frontiers where China is forced to face not only the potential riots but also the importune of human right violation from the West.

Second, China’s security interest also lies in homeland security. Land territorial disputes are far from being thoroughly solved. China has been proud of its vast territory,

⁵⁸ The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China. 2019. “*China’s National Defense in the New Era*”. First Edition 2019.

⁵⁹ It also applies to the state who wishes to degrade diplomatic relations with China. For example, this year (2021), Lithuania’s undermined the” one-China principle," and China immediately suspended the issuance of visas to Lithuanian citizens and recalled the ambassador. Besides, the economic sanction is presumably to be expected.

and this is part of China's rightful historical legacy and the solid proof of legitimacy to the "Empire of Heaven." However, neighbors might disagree. Down to the south, China has a territorial dispute with some Southeast Asian states.

Moreover, with American intervention, it could evolve into international conflicts as it is happening. Furthermore, the same scenario takes place in other border disputes. To the east, China faces pressure from Japan regarding maritime demarcation, and the scramble over reefs and islands will continue.

Third, China's security interests reach out of its border. China experienced rapid economic growth, which is driven not only by Foreign Direct Investment but also by overseas investments. Investment Oversea plays a vital role in the implementation of opening and reform policy (改革开放). However, overseas interests are endangered by unpredictable threats such as regional turmoil, terrorism, and piracy.⁶⁰ As of the end of 2020, China's stock of foreign direct investment reached US\$2.58 trillion, ranking third in the world, and its stock accounted for 6.6% of the world's total⁶¹. Still, China is troubled by the lack of overseas military projection, which overseas investment relies on heavily.

(3) On Economics:

"The economic base determines the superstructure,"⁶² as Marx suggested. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China's social productivity and overall national strength have achieved a historic leap. The GDP has rocketed from 67.91 billion yuan (元) in 1952 to 101.6 trillion yuan in 2020, an actual increase of about 189 times. Among them, the average annual growth rate of GDP from 1979 to 2020 is 9.2%,

⁶⁰ The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China. 2019. "China's National Defense in the New Era". First Edition 2019.

⁶¹ 中华人民共和国中央人民政府 .2021. "中国对外投资量质齐升". Accessed 26th October 2021. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2021-10/26/content_5644908.htm

⁶² Karl Marx. 2009. Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy Of Right'. Translated by Annette Jolin and Joseph J. O'malley Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

which is much higher than the 2.7% level of the world economy during the same period.⁶³.

In 2020, in the face of the epidemic, China's starting point for coordinating epidemic prevention and control is that economic and social development is still to take the lead and resume work and production. The annual GDP is estimated to increase by 2.3%, becoming the only positive growth globally while major economies suffer from negative growth.

As Xi Jinping (习近平) commented⁶⁴, the Chinese nation, which since modern times began has endured so much for so long, has achieved a tremendous transformation-it has stood up (站起来), grown rich (富起来), and become firm (强起来), and it now embraces the brilliant prospects of rejuvenation. Therefore, CPC's achievement is sometimes explained in the economic growth data. In the near future, continuous economic growth will remain a priority to China's interests as it is considered CPC's legitimacy.

4.4. China's Threats

The People's Republic is suffering from turbulent outer environments. To the East, Tokyo is complying with Washington to solidify an alliance system in Asia which is targeting China; Seoul, despite its flexible policies it is Washington's ally in nature, and deploying the THAAD system ostensibly manifested a pro-U.S. voice, at least in the area of national security; The regime in Pyongyang is considered an ally that is increasingly becoming a burden.⁶⁵.

⁶³ Data from Official statistics. See 人民网: “党领导经济建设的伟大成就和经验启示 (庆祝中国共产党成立100周年专论)”, Accessed 6th July 2021. <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2021/0706/c1003-32149464.html>

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Christian Becker. “How strong is the partnership between China and Russia?”, *Federal Academy for Security Policy* (2016)

To the South, India takes on its role as a major regional power, and the border conflicts with China are yet not to cease; The territorial disputes in the South China Sea positioned a “time bomb” to China, and China has been troubled with diplomatic issues with ASEAN countries.

To the west, Washington’s failure in Afghanistan left China with a lack of direct military projection and left turmoil in that region, which probably, in turn, destabilizes Beijing’s effort on Xinjiang security.

On top of all that, the U.S. and its western allies play "dark hands" behind all issues China is facing. Notably, Washington processes abilities and wishes in an off-shore balancing tactic. There is no actual mutual trust between the dragon and the eagle, and the 1989 incident is not just a prelude. Since the Trump Administration, the competition between the two major powers has become fierce. Thus, certainty can be predicted that Beijing must be ready to embrace a new tide of hostility from "the West."

4.5. Sino–Russia Relations

4.5.1. Mutual Interests

Demonstrative and symbolically entanglements in the oil and gas sector as well as in the military and security sector are becoming apparent⁶⁶. As Beijing exploits the bewildering situation of the Russian energy sector to barter beneficial agreements, armed forces of both states conducted an annual joint exercise in the Pacific, and middle Asia binds their security trust to go deeper. After several high-level official communication in 2021, both states agree that their relationships should be consolidated.

China is a worthy partner in this bilateral cooperation, and it comes with benefits. Russia’s collaboration, albeit unenthusiastic, in the “One Belt, One Road” (一帶一路)

⁶⁶ Christian Becker. “How strong is the partnership between China and Russia?”, *Federal Academy for Security Policy* (2016)

initiative, allow China to acquire the cheap supply of Russian raw material and military expertise. The benign interactions allow both states to concentrate their political and security efforts competing with the United States.

Moreover, each state's primacy on security and the belief that external and internal threats are closely linked⁶⁷. First, both sides have determined to resist Western democratization, regime transformation, or provoking colored revolutions. Second, they share the point of view that authoritarian regimes have achieved legitimacy domestically and internationally. Third, the two powers are in agreement on non-traditional security issues, which they cooperate via Shanghai Cooperation Organization (上海合作组织) and made considerable progress in the area of cyber security and anti-terrorism. Last, China and Russia have shared consensus that non-interference is one of the main pillars of Russia-China relations that have risen to a level of strategic partnership⁶⁸.

Another factor that needs to be brought up is that China and Russia are dissatisfied with the liberal world order. China and Russia are countering Western preferences. However, that is not to say that cooperation with the West is not vital for resolving transnational challenges. Neither of these states has a global reach that matches the United States. Nevertheless, combined military power, shared geographic key points, and integrated economic volumes may give them considerable leverage to alter the balance of power.⁶⁹

Therefore, China and Russia act as partners with "tacit agreement". For example, in the territorial disputes over the South China Sea islands, Russia agreed with China's rejection of the international court's tribunal, supporting China that The Hague was not

⁶⁷ Paul J. Bolt and Sharyl N. Cross. 2018. *China, Russia, and Twenty-First Century Global Geopolitics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.235

⁶⁸ Andrey Sushentsov. 2021. "The Triangle As Metaphor," *Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, SUMMER 2021, No. 19, Building Forward Better: After the Rain (SUMMER 2021), pp. 104-113

⁶⁹ Paul J. Bolt and Sharyl N. Cross. 2018. *China, Russia, and Twenty-First Century Global Geopolitics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.212

the appropriate venue to resolve territorial disputes and later conducted joint naval exercises with China in the South China Sea.⁷⁰ In Asia-Pacific, China and Russia agree that the U.S. and its' allies are damaging the peace and development by threats and boycotts. In Central Asia and the Middle East, China and Russia recognize that the West-led invasion is the cause of all the turmoil and chaos. Such tacit cooperation could be found in abundant cases. Russia and China have shown their dissatisfaction with Western influence within existing international structures, and both states call for movements that will provide alternative regional and global orders.

4.5.2. Divergent Interests

Though China and Russia have multiple layers of shared interests, the divergences between the two sides still cannot be neglected.

The first layer of the divergent interests lies in recognition of identities. Both states view themselves as having a proud history and significant international prestige that the restoration of glorious nation rise must be done. Therefore, none of them is willing to submit themselves to the other's power. Moreover, the cooperation between two powers is just part of the national restoration and modernization.

The second layer of the divergent interests is the different opinions on regional arrangements. Two states believe the current international order is unfair and welcome its revision. However, "metaphorically, these countries stand back-to-back, looking in opposite directions"⁷¹: About 80 percent of China's GDP and population are located in a coastal region along the Pacific, while 75 percent of Russia's GDP and the population rely on its European territory. That is to say, Russia values its European part, and China values its East coastal areas. Not to mention, for instance, Central Asia remains a region of a potential arena for Beijing and Moscow to compete with their power and influence.

⁷⁰ Ibid. pp.292.

⁷¹ Andrey Sushentsov. 2021. "The Triangle as Metaphor", *Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, SUMMER 2021, No. 19, Building Forward Better: After the Rain (SUMMER 2021), pp. 104-113

Plus, Beijing's OBOR initiative seeks to reshape the Eurasian eco-political landscape, while Moscow concerns that OBOR would weaken its traditional sphere of influence.

The third layer of such divergence is that both powers seek beneficial relations with the West based on "mutual respect" and "equality" and their terms.⁷² China and Russia want a benign relationship with the United States and the West to protect significant interests and advance priority objectives. In China's case, western technology and FDI are of vital importance for its economic development. Although both states publicly criticize the West, there are still aspects of Western culture and society that hold a certain appeal for Russian and Chinese citizens.⁷³ Some criticize that China and Russia's efforts to denounce western influence are just a tactic to grab political prestige and recognition.

The fourth layer is the danger that one country might be drawn into the conflicts of the other, which is against its interests. Russian Federation has shown a greater willingness than ever to support the People's Republic of China by its diplomatic statements. The motivation of such a change comes with both economic drives, to appeal to China to invest in upstream energy industries, and political drives, to build more robust linkages. However, both states have no intention no interest, for now, to intervene in each other's dispute. For China, Russia is having a close confrontation near the Eastern Ukraine area with NATO forces. Moreover, Russia has no intention to change the status quo for China in the South China Sea, not to mention deteriorating its relationships with India and Vietnam who has continued business connection on the arms trade.

At the same time, the close partnership with Russia may be mere leverage for China to bring about a stable and smooth outer environment. Beijing put economic development at utmost importance and will not be damaged. Thus, coping with Moscow grants China

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Paul J. Bolt and Sharyl N. Cross. 2018. *China, Russia, and Twenty-First Century Global Geopolitics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.294

a larger share of global prestige and provides China with a card to better balance the new triangle with Washington. Furthermore, Russia is not comparable with China's new economic and conventional military force development. Even though China's economy is slowing down, it still outperforms Russia, which remains too dependent on hydrocarbons.⁷⁴ Albeit Russian still holds advantages over China regarding militaries capabilities, China is not keeping its hands in its pockets. For an instance⁷⁵The PLA's size is getting more extensive, and defense spending has soared and equipped with more modernized weapons. To view the overall capability of military power, China is taking over the advantage by years, and the need for Russian military support is dwindling. Thus, China relies less on Russia than vice versa⁷⁶.

4.5.3. A burgeoning comprehensive partnership

Beijing and Moscow may achieve a deeper level of cooperation in the future, not even to exclude a full-scale alliance relationship from within the realm of possibilities. The scope and level of future ties will depend, perhaps to a significant extent, on how much political pressure the United States exerts on China and Russia over various issues of disagreement.

The strategic relationship between China, Russia, and the United States forms a complex triangle. Beijing and Moscow are politically closest, while Washington and Moscow are most distant—what Fu Ying, chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of China's National People's Congress, describes as a scalene triangle.

Although China is not a straightforward rule-taker content to preserve the existing order, it is not yet a revolutionary power that is discontent with and willing to undermine it.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ibid. pp.297.

⁷⁵ ISSI. The Military Balance, 121:1, 5-6, DOI: 10.1080/04597222.2020.1868788 Accessed 24th February 2021.

⁷⁶ Andrey Sushentsov. 2021. "The Triangle As Metaphor", *Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, SUMMER 2021, No. 19, Building Forward Better: After the Rain (SUMMER 2021), pp. 104-113

⁷⁷ Suisheng Zhao, "China and the Evolving World Order: A Stakeholder or a Revolutionary Power?," Asan Forum, Accessed 22nd June 2016, <http://www.theasanforum.org/chinaand-the-evolving-world-order-a-stakeholder-or-a-revolutionary-power/>.

Not only is China far from the position to overtake US power, but it also has not articulated distinctive values to underwrite the world order⁷⁸.

On 4th June 2021, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated in the northern Russian city of St. Petersburg that the development of Russia-China relations has reached "an unprecedented high level." Both sides have extensive common interests, and Russia is willing to cooperate with China in more extensive areas. In a similar vein, Xinhua News Agency⁷⁹ addressed that Sino-Russia relations are a model for relations between major powers in the new era. Yang Jiechi (杨洁篪)⁸⁰ Emphasized that "the two sides firmly support each other on issues concerning each other's core interests and establish mutual respect, fairness and justice"⁸¹ when attending the 16th round of China-Russia strategic security consultations in Russia in May this year. To conclude, both sides expect a new international relations model featuring win-win cooperation, injecting valuable stability and positive energy into the turbulent and changing world.

However, China has not always been "sided with" Russia. The early relations can be traced back to the nascent of the People's Republic of China. A communist China sought alliance to consolidate its domestic regime and free from the threat from the capitalist states. The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance⁸² signed on 14th February 1950 is supposed to be valid for 30 years. This alliance broke up for different perceptions of national interests and international communist movement, and China sought protection and assistance from the Socialist camp. In contrast, the Soviet Union sought absolute dominance in the camp, which, considered a "Crude interference in internal affairs and infringement of sovereignty."⁸³ The alliance went through

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ 新华社，中俄关系稳定发展 达到“前所未有的高水平” Accessed 6th May 2021 http://www.xinhuanet.com/2021-06/05/c_1127534013.htm

⁸⁰ Yang Jiechi (杨洁篪), member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and director of the Office of the Central Committee for Foreign Affairs, Former Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs.

⁸¹ 中国共产党新闻网. 2021. 俄罗斯总统普京同杨洁篪通电话. <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2021/0526/c64094-32113541.html> Accessed 26th May 2021.

⁸² 牛军，中华人民共和国对外关系史概论(1949-2000)，北京：北京大学出版社，2010年版。

⁸³ Why the Sino-Soviet alliance went into clash has been debated in various explanations. However, from the

Korean War together and coordinated against U.S. expansion in Asia, but eventually walked into confrontation against each other after the ZhenBao island incident in 1969.

After the overt confrontation with the Soviet Union, China had no choice but sought counterbalance with the north's pressure with the United States and its alliance in Asia and Europe, which led to the first wave of China's diplomatic establishment with western states order to cast of international isolation. Consequently, China went into a "honeymoon" period with the United States regarding the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Russia has been a northern threat since the Qing (清) dynasty for its rake on China's territory⁸⁴. There is a strong trend in Chinese society that shows no favor to Russia because of the notorious record of taking advantage of another's the perilous state.

It is fair to say that China's humiliating history is most remarkable from the Russian invasion. Even a communist China, a party state that represents nationalism and holds restoration of the old mandate of heaven as its responsibility, could not bear the historical resentment easily. Here comes the question, why would China seek an alliance with Russia since it is widely perceived as a state that has been ashamed of China in history?

First, the international system left China no Choice but to forge a closer relationship with those capable of supporting China in its rightful pursuits. The formation of a revisionist state can also be voluntary or forced. In this case, a rising China has been

Chinese perspective, Soviet interference in China's domestic affairs buried the seed of resentment since the very beginning of the contact between the two parties. Moreover, infringing China's sovereignty brings this clash to the climax.

⁸⁴ Tsarist Russia invaded and occupied China's approximately 1.61 million square kilometers of history. In 1858, the Sino-Russian "Aihui Treaty" ceded about 600,000 square kilometers of land south of Waixinganling (外兴安岭) and north of Heilongjiang (黑龙江). In 1860, the Sino-Russian "Beijing Treaty" ceded about 400,000 square kilometers of land east of the Ussuri River, including Sakhalin Island. In 1864, the Sino-Russian treaty "Regarding the Divide of the Northwestern Boundary" ceded about 440,000 square kilometers of land to the east and south of Lake Balkhash. After the fall of the Qing Dynasty, the area of Tangnu Wulianghai (唐努乌梁海) in northwestern Mongolia was about 170,000 square kilometers. From 1858 to 1946, there was Tsarist Russia before and the Soviet Union afterward. Through armed aggression and diplomatic deception, 1.7 million square kilometers of land were directly taken from China. Together with the independence of Outer Mongolia that it instigated, the total amounted to nearly 3.3 million square meters. Kilometers of land broke away from China and accounted for a quarter of the territory's total area in the heyday of the Qing Dynasty.

perceived as a revisionist state for its growing economic power and military capabilities. If the hegemonic power in the system publicly threatens a state's right to exist or threatens a state's core interests, then a status quo state may also become a revisionist country.

Since 2018 the break of Sino- U.S trade war, the deterioration of Sino-US relations caused an unprecedented crisis for China. Looking into Russia's situation, similar loneliness has occurred since the 2008 Georgia incident. Both states face threats and rivalry from hegemonic power regionally, not to mention the global competition in various fields. Furthermore, there is no possible access for China and Russia being adapted into U.S. global order. The West European states would never accept Russia as part of their collective security arrangement, nor would America's Asian partner accept China as a significant security guarantor.

The logic for both China and Russia tightening their relations, as well as regional coordination, is, if the strategic pressure exerted by the dominant power is too great, making the rising power believe that the containment from the United States, act solo or coordinate with an alliance, is imminent.⁸⁵ Then the alliance of major powers to deal with the dominant power and its ally system will become an attractive choice.

Second, China and Russia have shared strategic interests in many areas, which boost both states' in-depth cooperation, especially military cooperation. In 2019, a reprinted article from the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China published claims that Sino-Russian military relations have entered a new era.⁸⁶ The article points out that the Chinese military has participated in large-scale strategic exercises organized by the Russian for several consecutive years. Moreover, the Chinese and Russian militaries have implemented a joint air strategic cruise. The two

⁸⁵ Yan Xuetong, "Is Russia Reliable?" *International Economic Review*, 2012(03):21-25+4.

⁸⁶ 解放军报: "中俄军事关系进入新时代," Accessed 13th December 2019.
http://www.mod.gov.cn/jmsd/2019-12/13/content_4856707.htm

sides have more consensus on major international security issues and are more willing to support international security forums or conferences hosted by each other.

Still, the Information Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense, on March 2021, stated that “the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership in the new era is a model of a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation”⁸⁷. The two sides adhere to the principle of non-alliance, non-confrontation, and non-targeting of third countries, completely different from the military alliance relationship between some countries.⁸⁸

The continued high-level operation of Sino-Russian military relations is an essential indicator of the high level and particularity of the relations between the two countries and is an essential support for strategic cooperation. However, is it necessary for China to find an alliance to safeguard its national interests? Currently, China has established worldwide partnership relations with over 70 states. "Our friends are all over the world" (我们的朋友遍天下) has been used to describe China's diplomatic success. In contrast, China has been overtly criticized the U.S. alliance system as the Cold War relic, which "Caused serious threats and damage to the international system with the United Nations as the core and the international order based on international law."⁸⁹ This is interpreted as an attempt to pull gangs to implement strategic containment and suppression of China, and to act unilaterally in the name of a collective is an out-and-out pseudo-multilateralism.

Will an alliance be of China's benefit? That is the question this article tries to explain.

⁸⁷ 新华网: “国防部: 中俄两军关系是战略合作的亮点和重要支撑, ” Accessed 2021-21st March http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2021-03/01/c_1127154943.htm

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ 新华网: “美国同盟体系“七宗罪”” Accessed 3rd Aug http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2021-08/04/c_1127727194.htm

4.6. Will China ally with Russia in Alliance Theories

4.6.1. The explanation under the Balance of Power theory

Does China need allies? The most prevalent explanation comes from the Realism domain. Realism theorists argue that the current international system is nothing but a natural-select and self-help dynamic. States in the system fight each other for limited resources. In short, they seek to survive and thrive and sometimes need outside help, encouraging them to form certain norms and conformity.⁹⁰ The fear of being selected makes states check their counterpart, thus balancing their potential rival.

The United States has the world's largest economy, and it possesses by far the most potent military forces whose expenditures exceed those of the rest of the world combined.⁹¹ Though its current debacle in Afghanistan and the recent depression in the economy, the U.S. retains “a comfortable margin of superiority over the other major powers.”⁹² Although China has been perceived as the most considerable rising power and the most like challenger state, the gap is still substantial. China's per capita GDP is only 16% of the United States. There is considerable room for development compared with the United States in terms of poor production efficiency, industrial structure, financial development, urbanization, corporate competitiveness, science and technology, education, and culture. It is acknowledged that “the richness and robustness of the US-led world order, make it unlikely that China will ever unseat the United States as the world's technological, cultural, and political leader.”⁹³

China may have to lay its eyesight to the north to change the international power equilibrium. At present, despite Russia being a relatively weak power to China, Russia is still the world's second-largest military power, and there is still a way to go for China's

⁹⁰ Schweller. 1998. *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest*. New York: Columbia University Press. (1-91)

⁹¹ Walt, Stephen M. “Alliances in a Unipolar World.” *World Politics*, vol. 61, no. 1, [Cambridge University Press, Trustees of Princeton University], 2009, pp. 86–120

⁹² *Ibid*

⁹³ Kroeber, Arthur R. 2020. *China's Economy: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 13. Conclusion: China and the World.

military power catching the remnant of the former Soviet Union.

According to the Balance of power theory, a conclusion can be made that allying with Russia matches most of the criteria.

(1) Balance against potential threats

China needs Russia to balance against U.S. presence in East Asia and the security threats from U.S. containment and competition policy. The fact is, as the only hegemonic power in the world, the U.S. views China as a rising challenge and tries to balance China everywhere. Not to mention China has had no amicable feelings towards the U.S. since 1989, incidents such as military plane collide above the South China Sea⁹⁴, the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia⁹⁵ Interference in China's internal affairs, including Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang. Moreover, the "Blood debts" U.S. owed to Chinese people to support the Kuomintang regime during the Chinese Civil War. The unignored hostility and its immense military volume make the U.S. a credible threat to China, but the reality is that China is still the low power compared with the U.S., the pursuit to balance hostile hegemonic power will be a mission impossible for a rising but not leading China.

(2) Enhance national interests

China needs Russian military power to support its current unipolar international system. In terms of preventing the U.S. from launching a war against Iran, maintaining peace on the Korean peninsula, and solving the mass in Afghanistan left by the United States, the common strategic interests of China and Russia are on the rise. As the global power balance shifts to Asia, Russia will inevitably strengthen its presence, ameliorating

⁹⁴ The Hainan Island incident occurred on 1st April 2001, when a United States Navy EP-3E ARIES II signals intelligence aircraft and a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) J-8II interceptor fighter jet collided in mid-air, resulting in an international dispute between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC).
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hainan_Island_incident

⁹⁵ On 7th May 1999, during the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia (Operation Allied Force), five US Joint Direct Attack Munition guided bombs hit the People's Republic of China embassy in the Belgrade district of New Belgrade, killing three Chinese journalists and outraging the Chinese public.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_bombing_of_the_Chinese_embassy_in_Belgrade

China's strategic pressure.

(3) Control of allies

If China and Russia ally, the balance of strength between the two states will tilt toward China.⁹⁶ Therefore, the reliability of the China-Russia alliance will be more affected by China than by Russia. Furthermore, this will give China a feasible stand through restricting Russia and influence Russia's policy to maintain international equilibrium.

However, Russia's diplomatic style is perceived as brutal, and it often makes unexpected moves.⁹⁷ At the same time, it can easily lead to confrontation and tension. Compared with China, Russia is more aggressive in politics, military affairs, and even relatively weak economic policies. Moreover, both China and Russia have great power complexes and great national pride. To what extent will China refrain from its alliance if Russia is unknown. Moreover, there is a good possibility that China will be entrapped by its commitment.

(4) Obtaining international recognition

Russian support may strengthen China's designs to promote a new international order and increase cooperation and participation. Since the establishment of the "China-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership in the New Era," China and Russia have always supported each other on core issues and have supported each other's efforts to build a new order in addition to the existing US-led world order. Examples are apparent. Both sides play active roles in Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, BRICS Development Bank, and the One belt and One Road Initiative. In 2015, two states jointly signed the "China-Russia Joint Statement on Docking and Cooperation in the Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Eurasian Economic Union." Which, beyond all doubt, will strengthen the international

⁹⁶ Yan Xuetong, "Is Russia Reliable?" *International Economic Review*, 2012(03):21-25+4.

⁹⁷ Fu Ying: "Are China and Russia Partnering to Create an Axis?". *Contemporary International Relations*. 2016(04):1-10+48+63.

recognition for both sides' design for an international order.

4.6.2. The explanation under the Balance of threats theory

From Trump to Biden, the U.S. government's China policy has been consistent. One mainline is not to avoid competition and not to fear confrontation. Brinken put forward this idea in his first foreign policy speech⁹⁸ Competition is the central theme and will involve politics, diplomacy, military, economics, high technology, and ideology. The United States will be "backed by strength" to compete and cooperate with China; cooperation with China cannot give up the sphere of influence of the United States in Asia and must not move the world's most valuable industries to China to cause harm to American companies.

(1) Balance

China and Russia ally against US threats. The United States defines China as a "threat" brought about by "adventurism," strengthening military deterrence and providing diplomatic and military defense to allies. It also targets and suppresses China's economic behavior in every aspect of the economy, weakening China's emerging technologies. The advantages and achievements of the above eroded China's strategic advantages and launched confrontation.

(2) Bandwagon

States ally with foreign threats is not shared and especially does not apply to China's case. Bandwagon is not an adequate reason for China to ally with Russia. First, the Chinese national pride will not allow China to submit itself to a foreign threat. The overarching project for the communist party has been "to restore China to its historical position as a significant political and economic power."⁹⁹ Moreover, wash down the "a

⁹⁸ Antony J. Blinken, Reaffirming and Reimagining America's Alliances, Accessed 24th March, 2021 <https://www.state.gov/reaffirming-and-reimagining-americas-alliances/>

⁹⁹ Zhang, Ketian. 2019. "Cautious Bully: Reputation, Resolve, and Beijing's Use of Coercion in the South China Sea." *International Security* 44(1): 117-159.

hundred year of humiliation"(百年国耻). The political legitimacy lies in the project. Thus, bandwagoning with foreign threats collapses the ruling party's position and will not be considered an option. Second, neither China nor Russia regards each other as a threat that is too hard to balance that the state has no choice but to bandwagon. On the contrary, the United States' containment policy poses more significant and more independent threats to both of them. To conclude, the bandwagon is not a motivation for China to ally with Russia.

(3) Ideology

Questions need to be raised here——Does China share the same ideology with Russia? Furthermore, do their political structures share a certain degree of similarity?

Both states have a certain similarity in the political system. Russia's political system attempts Westernization, taking a path of comprehensive and open multi-party competitive elections. China is taking the road of socialist democratic political development with Chinese characteristics and promoting economic democracy. Democratization of the country is driven by democratization within the party. At present, Russia has broken through the old, highly centralized political system and initially built the framework of a new democratic political system, but it has shown authoritarian solid political characteristics. China's democratization reforms have achieved specific results, but the shortcomings of the high concentration of power have not been wholly resolved¹⁰⁰.

As a socialist state, China used to be an essential member of the international communist bloc. However, even the Soviet Union had ideologic divergence with China, contributing to the collapse of the alliance. The Russian Federation now is no more the Soviet Union and has denied the ruling states of its communist party. The communist

¹⁰⁰衡子.比较政治学研究领域的新探索——评《30年来中俄政治改革与政治发展比较研究》.俄罗斯东欧中亚研究, *Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies*,2014(02):84-85.

or socialist ideology has also been removed from its national pursuits.

In short, the two states do not share a similar ideology, not to mention the ideological affinity which contributes to the alliance behavior.

(4) Assistance

States form alliances with states that offer "assistance." China has have satisfied its needs in the early years of development from the Soviet Union, and that assistance is customarily viewed as beneficial but costly. The Soviets enhanced its national interest by reinforcing China's industrialization and securing its leading state among socialist states.

In this case, China has a larger gross GDP than Russia and expects no assistance from Russia. Then, it is not relevant to discuss the assistance gained from Russia, which contributes to China's motivation to ally with Russia. Then, what China expects from Russia will be the overarching question regarding ally with it.

According to the trade data of China's imports from Russia, it is evident that what China imports from Russia is mainly about agricultural and industrial raw materials.¹⁰¹ China has a rigid demand for natural resources due to rapid economic growth. Moreover, advanced military equipment and technology are also welcomed for the military modernization of the People's Liberation Army.

The Soviet Union is long gone, and Russia is not the same. All those are far from irreplaceable, and China, even competing with the U.S., can get from other states. Therefore, China will not ally with Russia simply for its "assistance."

¹⁰¹ According to Country Reports of the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China 2019 figures, China's top 3 imported categories from Russia are mineral products (including fuels, oils, distillation), wood and wood articles, charcoal, and electronics. Those three categories contributed to 85% of China's annual imports. 俄罗斯对中国出口主要商品构成 (类)
https://countryreport.mofcom.gov.cn/record/view110209.asp?news_id=67337

(5) Domestic Politics

States are allied with those that successfully infiltrate them and manipulate their domestic politics. Currently, no evidence shows that China has been infiltrated and manipulated by Russia. As a result, this will not be discussed in this article due to the contentious factor and the reference restriction.

4.6.3. The Alliance dilemma Theory

The Security Dilemma and “Chain-ganging” and “Buck-passing”

(1) States in an alliance fear being abandoned by allies and sometimes evade responsibility in conflicts.

Is Russia a reliable ally? China experienced a profound experience back in history. The first Sino-Russia alliance was formed during the Qing dynasty. In 1896, Li Hongzhang(李鸿章), as foreign affairs representative, signed the “Treaty of Mutual Assistance for Defending the Enemy” (《御敌互相援助条约》) with Tsarist Russia, stipulating that if Japan invades, China and Russia should assist each other. Although this alliance objectively restrained the momentum of Japanese aggression against China, there is not much benefit for China. On the contrary, Tsarist Russia coveted China, pillaged China’s North-East provinces and forcibly occupied China's port Dalian (大连). Even more, a few years later, Russia joined the "eight-nations-alliance" (八国联军) invade Beijing, committed raping, looting and murdering.

The second Sino-Russia alliance is considered detrimental and unequal for China. In order to secure the total victory against Japan, the Republic of China (中华民国) government signed the “Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance” (中苏友好同盟条约), and later during the Yalta Conference, Russia separated outer Mongolia (外

蒙古) from China while seized the control of northeast China railway system and Lvshun port (旅顺港).

The third alliance was the “Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance” (中苏友好同盟互助条约). This alliance did help China built-up its industrial infrastructure and China's national defense power. However, owing to the divergent opinion on the international communist movement ¹⁰² Furthermore, expectations for the alliance, this unequal alliance officially broke down in 1964, after which two states went into armed confrontation for almost 20 years.

Russia has a notorious reputation for back-stabbing its alliance, and China has been suffered from it several times in history. Will Russia abandon China when facing fierce conflict with the U.S.?

(2) Be dragged into the conflict, to link oneself to the reckless allies

In addition to the reasons for honesty, two other reasons believe that the alliance with Russia is unreliable¹⁰³: On the one hand, is that it will form a Cold War confrontation between China and the United States, and on the other hand, is that it is possible to be dragged into war by Russia.

The most important feature of Russian diplomacy is that it treats the West as its opponent, and its diplomatic style is widely considered "tough.". Two features support the opinion.¹⁰⁴ that Russia will drag China into a confrontation if ally with it. First, High-profile foreign intervention. In the Middle East, combating terrorists and safeguarding the Bashar regime in Syria. Grievances with Georgia are still unclear in the surrounding areas, and conflicts with Ukraine continue. Because of historical and

¹⁰² 牛军,《中华人民共和国对外关系史概论(1949-2000)》,北京:北京大学出版社,2010年版。

¹⁰³ Yan Xuetong, “Is Russia Reliable?” *International Economic Review*,2012(03):21-25+4.

¹⁰⁴ Zuo Fengrong (左凤荣). 2015年俄罗斯:经济疲软、外交强硬. 学习时报,2016-01-11(002).

practical factors, the relationship between Russia and neighboring countries is turbulent. Second, Russia has been seeking “Old Glory” and resolutely counteracts the US's containment actions against it. The military expenditure is sometimes reckless despite its flagging economy. President Putin's statements are often full of gunpowder, which stirs the nerves of relevant interested countries.

Can China in the alliance effectively restrict Russia? Will China become a tool for Russia to implement foreign policy?

Chapter 5. Conclusion

5.1. China's strategic pivot

Regarding whether China should choose to ally with Russia, there are voices of support and opposition.

The supporting view is that both China and Russia face tremendous pressure from the United States and its allies. Not to mention both views the United States as the main threat. Forming an anti-U.S. alliance is an inevitable choice for both states expect to construct new world order.

The opposing view is that Sino-Russian relations are fragile and complex, and the future is full of uncertainties. As the gap between the two countries' strengths widens, mutual suspicion will rise, and both states are unwilling to be entrapped by each other. Allying with Russia is not a rational choice for China. Moreover, the current rapid rise of China has triggered people's expectations of changes in the international order. However, before the final changes in the international pattern are realized, at least until the strength of China and the United States reaches the same level of magnitude, the strength of the United States still has an absolute advantage over the Sino-Russian alliance. Therefore, the reality of the foundation is not solid.

Tracing back China's foreign policy strategy underlines that from the very beginning of PRC to now, China evolved its policy from "Leaning one side"(一边倒) to the "Common Line and large area" strategy ("一条线一大片"战略), and finally to the contemporary "Partnership of Non-confrontation, non-alignment, and non-hostile state foreign policy" ("不对抗、不结盟, 无敌国外交"政策). Out of rational consideration, China had a brief period in which it chose to form a formal alliance with the Soviet Union. The Alliance does not turn out as expected, only to make China rethink the

Alliance relation prudently. Moreover, later in the 80s, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, China established an "Anti-Soviet International United Front" (反苏国际统一战线), thus forming the widely acknowledged quasi-alliance with the U.S. which is merely considered a temporary move to balance Soviet expansion along China's border. Thus, China has been maintaining a non-alliance policy to the extent that some scholars describe it as a "lonely power."¹⁰⁵ with no close friends and possess no allies.

5.2. Pros and Cons of allying with Russia

5.2.1. The Advantages of allying with Russia

China-Russia relations have developed rapidly under the United States' containment policy and are currently in the best period in history. It is reflected in the close coordination in the political field, the deepening of strategic coordination on international issues, and the increasingly close economic and trade relations, but also in the cultural field, the sense of friendship and identity between the two peoples has generally been improved. Therefore, the Sino-Russian alliance has a realistic basis, and the cooperation between the two countries on significant world issues goes beyond the scope of the partnership.

In the foreseeable future, China and Russia will continue to cooperate in various fields, and the degree of cooperation will expand regardless of the depth and breadth. However, the two sides will not move towards an alliance unless it is a last resort. The Sino-Russian relationship has not yet undergone a qualitative change, and the current framework of the relationship between the two countries has left enough room for the development of the relationship between the two sides.

According to the alliance theoretical frameworks, China should seek an alliance with Russia for the following reasons:

¹⁰⁵ Shambaugh, D. (2014), *The Illusion of Chinese Power*, op-ed., Brookings Institute, Washington, DC, available at: www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-illusion-of-chinese-power/

- (1) To balance U.S threats
- (2) To enhance China's national interest (From Russia, Natural resources, and military technologies)
- (3) To obtain solid support and recognitions
- (4) To promote a favorable international order

5.2.2. The Disadvantages of allying with Russia

Since allying with Russia might deteriorate the relations with East European states and provoke the confrontation with the West. Therefore, forging a regional power bloc might enhance the view of China's neighbors who already possess "a degree of mistrust and are busy with hedging balancing strategies to constrain China's influence."¹⁰⁶In recent years, China's growing economic power and military capability have projected a terrifying image to surrounding middle or small states; cases can be easily found from territorial disputes and trade frictions. The Chinese territory claim to the South China Sea frightens the South East Asia states, and the asymmetric economic interdependence provides neighboring states with the credibility of China's coercive actions.¹⁰⁷Which China practices as leverage to influence the regional order. Therefore, the Sino-Russia alliance may serve the opposite effect of gaining international recognition.

The reason China should not ally with Russia based on the theoretical frameworks are listed as:

- (1)Russia is unreliable for its reputation of back-stabbing its allies, and it is uncertain whether Russia will abandon China or evade its responsibility confronting the U.S.
- (2)Russia is reckless, and the likelihood of a geopolitical backlash is high if allies with Russia, China will offend a dozen states in both Europe and Asia, not to mention the possibility of walking into a war that does not benefit China.

¹⁰⁶ Kroeber, Arthur R. 2020. *China's Economy: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 13. Conclusion: China and the World.

¹⁰⁷ Zhang, Ketian. 2019. "Cautious Bully: Reputation, Resolve, and Beijing's Use of Coercion in the South China Sea." *International Security* 44(1): 117-159.

5.2.3. Summary

China and Russia have much inconsistency regarding restricting US hegemony and improving the current international order. Whether to ally or not involves many aspects of China and Russia's calculations. The alliance should not be the goal for the two states but perhaps the result of some future event.

The United States is the reason for the leap-forward development of Sino-Russian relations. It can be expected that if the United States continues to put pressure on China and Russia, China and Russia will only expand the current areas of cooperation. These areas mainly include ¹⁰⁸: The cooperative development of Arctic resources, the construction of the Northern Sea Route; the cooperative development of the Far East; Restart the construction of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Free Trade Zone; Further deepen cooperation in the fields of military-industrial technology such as large aircraft and nuclear industry; Adopt More joint military operations;

To sum up, the China-Russia cooperation is more of an ad hoc situation for the time being. Though there are divergent interests within the current partnership, China and Russia reinforced it to work around western influence. From the balance of power theory, the policy starting point is to cooperate against the U.S. in the international order and other minor issues. Given the current situation, the determinant of such partnership is decided by U.S. containment policy to China and Russia. If China finds Russia's utility diminishing, the policy alignment will fade. The nature of such an arrangement is rooted in the national interest and rational calculation. The logic to establish a practical connection prevents the United States from disturbing their domestic politics and global interests. Therefore, reaching an alliance with Russia is a risky move for China, and it is not of the rational calculation of the alliance theories.

¹⁰⁸ Yang Lei: U.S. containment and development of China Russia-Relations, *Journal of North-East Asia Studies*, 2021 July Vol.4.

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Appendix

This article concentrates on the following theoretical frameworks:

Theories of Alliance Formation		
Theory	Category	Main Context
Balance of Power	Realism	The function of the alliance is to increase the state's power to respond to threats and that allies provide military assistance to each other to deter threats.
Balance of Threat	Neo-Realism	the purpose of alliances between states is to check and balance the state that poses the most threat to it
The Dilemma in Alliance Politics	Realism	Two related dilemmas within the alliance: abandonment and entrapment
“Chain-ganging” and “Buck-passing”	Neo-Realism	“Chain-ganging” as being dragged into war and “Buck-passing” as evading responsibility

Theory Applied for Analysis	
Theory	Main Context
Balance of Power	To Balance against potential threats
	To control allies
	To enhance national interests.
	To obtain international recognition through alliances.
Balance of Threat	To against foreign threats
	To align with foreign threats.
	To align with nations that share a common ideology.
	To acquire assistance
	To stabilize domestic politics.
The Security Dilemma	Be abandoned by allies.
	Be dragged into a conflict.

Abstract in Korean

서문

중국은 러시아와 동맹을 맺을 것인가? 이 근본적인 질문에 대한 해답을 찾기 위해 본 논문은 현실주의와 신현실주의 이론의 관점을 활용하여 동맹이론(Alliance Theory)로 가능한 시나리오를 설명하고자 한다. 동맹이론은 발생 가능한 위협으로부터 균형을 맞추기 위해 다른 국가들과 동맹을 맺는 현상을 일컫는다. 현재, 중-미 관계는 2018년 이후로 악화되고 있으며 양측은 서로에게 피할 수 없는 위협으로 인식하고 있다. 그리고 미국은 중국의 증가하는 영향력의 균형을 맞추기 위해 현재의 "허브 앤 스포크"(Hub and Spoke) 구조에 의존하고 있다. 이로 인해 중국은 국제사회로부터 상대적으로 고립되어 있다. 현 상황을 위해 이 논문의 시사점은 두 가지 현실에 바탕을 두고 있다. 첫째, 중국이 동맹을 맺기 위해 선택할 수 있는 국가는 한정되어 있다. 이것은 많은 요인들에 의해 야기된다. 그들 중 "가장 가능성 있는" 나라는 러시아이다. 둘째, 공간적인 한계로 인해 본 논문은 가능한 모든 상황을 분석할 수 없다. 따라서 이 논문은 최근 몇 년 동안 중국과 교차점이 증가하고 있는 러시아에 대한 관점을 분석하고자 한다. 본 연구를 통해 동맹 이론 (Alliance theory)를 활용하여 중국과 러시아의 동맹 수립 가능성의 여부를 나열한다.