

Russia-China Strategic Partnership



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ABSTRACT

Russia and China entered in the new millennium as two friendly powers promoting a relationship of strategic interaction and good neighbourliness. Both the great Asian powers have resolved many historical disputes and irritant with an objective of building and strengthening from their 'constructive partnership' to 'strategic cooperative partnership'. Their leaderships determined to build such relationship in consonance with the vital interests of each of the two nations as well the larger interests of universal peace, security and stability. The present paper unveils the process of friendship, cooperation and strategic partnership between Russia and China that took shape in 1990's. Further, their efforts to establish a deeper understanding of the leaders of both these Asian giants. All these implementation exaggerate and provide new positive encouragement to Russian-Chinese relations, as well as to give a fresh value to Russian-Chinese cooperation.

Keywords: *Russia, China, Asia, strategic, bilateral relations, energy*

Introduction

Russia-China relations have been improving steadily and have taken positive turn. The process of solution of border dispute between the two countries began at the end of 1980's when a joint border commission was set up. In 1994 the two sides agreed on no first use of nuclear weapons against each other. The two countries also detargeted their missiles directed against each other and an agreement to this effect was signed when Chinese President Zemin visited Russia in September 1994. Further, in April 1997 an accord on mutual reduction of forces was signed in Moscow by Russia and China. Moreover the successful conclusion of the border agreement between two sides, during May 1991 on the eastern sector and in September 1994 on the Western Sector removed major irritants. In December 1999, it was announced that the border dispute has been finally settled.

The signing of the China Russia Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation, deepening of political mutual trust and the important steps towards cooperation in the economic, military, security and humanities fields. The joint statement of December 2, 2002 signed by Zemin and Putin in Beijing provided a framework for increasing cooperation and constructing a mu-

tually beneficial relationship. After the December 2002 Beijing visit of Russian President Putin enhanced their relations. It created confidence in building a strong relationship in political, strategic, military and economic fields. This visit also chalked out common strategies on the issues of global concerns such as North Korea, Iraq and terrorism.

On 21 March 2006, Russian President Putin visited Beijing at the invitation of Chinese President Hu Jintao. During this visit, Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing confirmed that there are no major problems and obstacles between China and Russia after the two countries settled their border disputes. China and Russia will sponsor the 'Russia Year' and the 'China Year' respectively in 2006 and 2007. Such events will propel the further development of bilateral relations on all fronts. Over the past decade, the two nations have made significant progress towards building a relationship of strategic cooperation. The 'China threat' fallacy, which was once widely spread in Russia, has now met with more and more rejection.

A long-term problem existing in Sino-Russian relation that the development of economic and trade cooperation between these two countries far poor than that of their political cooperation. In most of the years of the 1990's, trade turnover between the two countries ranged only be-

tween US \$ 5 billion and US \$ 6 billion. Obviously, such a situation did not confirm to the economic potential of the two countries. The leaders of both China and Russia were aware that without a faster development of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, the strategic partnership of the two would have no solid foundation. After Putin took office and especially after the China and Russia signed Good Neighbourly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in July 2001, the two countries began to take more effective measures to boost their economic and trade cooperation.

The heads of both the countries discussed concrete fields of cooperation including the construction of oil pipelines between China and Russia, aviation and aerospace, peaceful use of nuclear energy, joint development of new and high technologies etc. In 2001 bilateral trade between China and Russia hit a record high of US \$ 10.7 billion and the volume in the first eight month of this year totaled US \$ 7.64 billion. Under the meticulous care of the leaders of the two countries, the scope of Sino-Russian economic cooperation had kept expanding. In 2003, two way trade volumes reached US \$ 15.76 billion. The 2004, volume exceeded US \$ 20 billion for the first time, standing at US \$ 21.23 billion while that of 2005 rose to US \$ 29.1 billion. The two governments are aiming at the majestic goal of US \$ 60-80 billion in two-way trade volume by 2010 and investment of US \$ 12 billion by China in Russia before 2020. Now economic and trade cooperation between China and Russia has already entered on the expressway and that economic the trade relations between the two have already entered in a new period in which they are developing in a parallel with the development of political relations between the two countries.

Sino-Russian military technological cooperation has continued to develop. Despite the pressure of the United States, Russia has not only continued to provide China with sophisticated weapon in accordance with the agreements signed in the past years, but has raised its military technological cooperation with China to a new level. China has become Russia's largest arms market accounting for 26 % of the value of total sales from 1992-94. In May 2002, Russian Defence

Minister Sergei paid a visit to Beijing and signed with his counterpart a series of agreement a related to military and military technological cooperation between China and Russia. According to this agreement Russia will supply China with two new 956 EM Sovremenny destroyers, 8 kilo submarines and S-300F Naval Air Defence System. Russia is going to sell some 30 Su-30MK2 fighters equipped with X-31 A supersonic anti-ship missiles to China.

Besides, expansion on Sino-Russian cooperation in the fields of military technology will also envisage a gradual transition from simple export trade to joint scientific research and development of new types of armaments and military hardware. It is clear that Russia's arms sale to China have played an important role in the maintenance and development of Russia's military industrial-complex. For China, Russian arms offer many benefits. They are easier to integrate into a force structure still dominated by weapons of Soviet manufacture or design and the Chinese have head for greater success in reverse engineering and retrofitting with Russian arms then with Western Military Technology.

The second aspect of Sino-Russian bilateral relation is to know their strategic coordination in international affairs. China and Russia have cooperated closely in all the international and regional issues. The two countries have cooperated very well on the issue of terrorism of all forms and insist that there should be no double standard on this issue. The two countries have set up an anti-terrorism working group at the suggestion of President Zemin and President Putin, which has held regular meeting to exchange views on the situation of international struggle against terrorism and on how to strengthen cooperation in the field of anti-terrorism between the two countries. With regard to the Iraq issues, China and Russia have conducted close consultations and co-ordinations in the United Nations Security Council and other international organizations.

The two countries hold identical stand on this issue that is Iraq must implement the relevant resolutions of the UNSC earnestly and comprehensively and the Iraq issue should be settled politically within the framework of the United Nations. Both countries are also opposed to depict

Iran, Iraq and Democratic People's Republic of Korea as the 'axis of evil' by the United States and have continued to develop normal political and economic relations with these countries.

The Shanghi Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a model of Sino-Russian regional cooperation. In June 2001, China and Russia, together with four other countries in Central Asia, founded the SCO. The heads of state of China and Russia and four other member states of the SCO signed the SCO charter and a formal document on setting up a permanent regional anti-terrorism agency. It is clear that the close cooperation between China and Russia played an important role in promoting the multilateral cooperation within the framework of the SCO.

Both China and Russia hope to maintain security and stability in Central Asia and prevent the change of the balance of forces in this region, which has been brought about by the military presence of the United States from harming their own security interests. Both China and Russia hold that the present anti-terrorism action of the United States serves their own security interest. Russia demands that the US military action in Central Asia should be transparent as much as possible and that there should be a time limit for its military presence there. The stand of Russia has been supported by China.

Further, China and Russia have continued their cooperation in maintaining the global strategic balance and stability, on June 27, 2002 the two countries submitted a joint proposal to the arms reduction conference held in Geneva, demanding that a new international treaty be formulated to forbid the deployment of weapons in the outer-space. This is the first joint proposal raised by China and Russia concerning this issue. Another programmatic document elucidated by the two heads of state on the question concerning

future world order following the 'Joint Statement of China and Russia on the Establishment of a Multi-Polar World and a New World Order' of April 1997. Besides it, China and Russia have also resolutely supported each other in their respective efforts to safeguard national unification, sovereignty and territorial integrity. China continued to support Russia in its policy of normalizing the situation in Chechnya, and Russia has continued to support China on the issue of Taiwan, Tibet etc. The two countries have also cooperated well in the United Nations over some regional issues such as the conflict in the Middle East confrontation between India and Pakistan etc. The two countries hold the similar stand on all these issues.

Conclusion

After analyzing all the aspects it is seen that China-Russia bilateral relations have a bright prospect for future growth. But there are still some problems in Sino-Russian relation; the two problems are most prominent. First, economic and trade cooperation between the two countries still is not keeping with the real potential of the economies of the two states. Particularly, cooperation in the field of production and investment between the two countries is still at low level. Secondly, the illegal Chinese migration into Russian territories creating unwanted bitterness in their relations. The leaders of the two countries are fully aware of these problems and have already taken effective measures to solve them. The leaders of both China and Russia have repeatedly emphasized that strategic partnership between the two countries is not aimed at any third country. Relations between the two partners are equal and they try to settle all issues in a spirit of mutual trust. Maintain and advancing a long term and stable China-Russia neighbourliness friendship and cooperation is the common aspiration of the Chinese and Russian governments and peoples.

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