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Russia–China Dialogue: The 2021 Model

Alexey Maslov
Andrey Kortunov
Andrey Karneev
Vladimir Petrovsky
Vasily Kashin
Alexander Larionov
Yury Kulintsev
Ksenia Kuzmina

Zhao Huasheng
Liu Huaqin
Xing Guangcheng
Feng Yujun
Yang Cheng
Yu Bin
Zhang Guihong
Lin Minwang
Jian Junbo

**RUSSIAN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
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ISNTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AT FUDAN UNIVERSITY**

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Russian International Affairs Council

Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Institute of International Studies at Fudan University

Authors:

From Russia:

Alexey Maslov, Dr. of History (Head); **Andrey Kortunov**, Ph.D. in History (Head); **Andrey Karneev**, Ph.D. in History; **Vladimir Petrovsky**, Dr. of Political Science; **Vasily Kashin**, Ph.D. in Political Science; **Alexander Larionov**, Ph.D. in Public Administration; **Yury Kulintsev**; **Ksenia Kuzmina**

From China:

Prof. **Zhao Huasheng** (Head); Prof. **Liu Huaqin**, Ph.D. in Economics; **Xing Guangcheng**, Dr. of Law; **Feng Yujun**, Dr. of Law; Prof. **Yang Cheng**, Dr. of Law; Prof. **Yu Bin**, Dr. of Political Science; Prof. **Zhang Guihong**, Dr. of Law; Prof. **Lin Minwang**, Dr. of Law; Prof. **Jian Junbo**, Dr. of Law

Copy Editors:

Ivan Timofeev, Ph.D. in Political Science; **Elena Karpinskaya**; **Ksenia Kuzmina**; **Julia Melnikova**; **Polina Bakulina**; **Alevtina Larionova**; **Nikita Panin**

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The seventh annual report by the Russian International Affairs Council, the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University presents the common views of leading Russian and Chinese international affairs experts on the development of Russia–China cooperation in 2020 and the first quarter of 2021.

Taking into account the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China, the authors assess the state of the changing external environment in which bilateral relations are currently developing and analyze the approaches of Moscow and Beijing to key international issues in search of points of convergence. Attention is also paid to the dynamics of bilateral economic, scientific and educational interaction during this period. Practical recommendations are formulated in order to correct possible negative trends and bring the partnership to a new level.

The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of RIAC.

The full text is published on RIAC’s website. You can download the report or leave a comment via this direct link: russiancouncil.ru/en/report70

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Summary

The annual “Russia–China Dialogue” report is aimed at monitoring and assessing the dynamics of Russia–China relations across a comprehensive range of areas as well as providing expert recommendations on encouraging interaction between Moscow and Beijing. This report summarizes the results of bilateral cooperation in the 2nd–4th quarters of 2020 and the 1st quarter of 2021.

2021 marks the 20th anniversary of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China. In the intervening years, the two countries have succeeded in creating a close strategic partnership and launching flexible and effective formats of interaction. The issue of establishing a formal union is not on the agenda, as doing so would result in additional demarcation lines in world politics rather than cement ties between the two countries. In terms of bilateral relations, it is important that Russia and China arrive at a common vision of priorities for cooperation, having their agendas heard at the regional and global levels.

Moscow and Beijing share similar stances on key issues of the world order, which is particularly important today against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic, escalating conflicts as well as the erosion of global governance and devaluation of international law. The two countries should focus their joint efforts on restoring the manageability of the international system, making it more balanced and representative while upholding the principle of national sovereignty and preserving the integral role of the United Nations in global affairs. In addition, Moscow and Beijing need to turn their attention to the issue of reforming the United Nations and the UN Security Council, keeping in mind that these reforms need to be comprehensive and that any decisions must be taken on the basis of a broad consensus.

The global crisis of 2020 led to a sharp exacerbation of political and economic animosities among global actors. This affected all facets of Russia and China’s relations with the United States. As for cooperation with the European Union, we saw a combination of confrontation and mutually beneficial and meaningful cooperation. The restrictive impact of political controversy was laid bare for all to see when the signing of the EU–China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment was suspended after a number of sanctions were levied by both sides in May 2021. In addition, attempts to blame China for the pandemic and bring charges against it in connection with the so-called Xinjiang issue have become a defining feature of the country’s relations with the United States and the European Union.

Russia’s relations with the West remained at a low ebb in 2020–2021 and experienced a number of new crises. Under these conditions, Moscow and Beijing continued to provide each other mutual support. Russia maintains close and friendly ties with India, despite the blossoming partnership between Washington and New Delhi. The tensions between China and India are not in Moscow’s interests.

Mutual trade between Russia and China has remained stable despite the coronavirus-related restrictions, totaling from \$104 billion to \$108 billion, depending on the source. China’s share in Russian foreign trade exceeded 18 per cent for

the first time ever, although this was largely due to the increase in supplies from China, as Russian exports to China fell.

The dynamics of cooperation is expected to resume once the lockdown measures are lifted. However, the poorly developed transport, logistics and customs infrastructure, as well as the difficulties in establishing ties between small and medium-sized businesses, still require careful attention from Russia and China.

Moscow and Beijing still have much to do in the way of investment and finance. While a number of large-scale projects are under way, mutual investments continue to be low. What is more, the global crisis forced Chinese investors to pull money from investment projects in Russia in 2020. The sides are slowly working towards increasing the share of settlements in national currencies, although it has yet to break the 15-per cent threshold.

Technology and innovation have the potential to become a new driver for the development of practical interaction. Years 2020 and 2021 were declared the Years of Scientific, Technical and Innovative Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. However, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that a number of events had to be postponed or held online. In recent years, a number of plans in this area have been laid out, joint projects have been launched, and the sides have transitioned to more applied forms of interaction, especially in the hi-tech industries. Allocation of joint grants has helped increase the number and quality of research projects carried out by Russian and Chinese scientific teams. Cooperation between universities, including within the framework of specialized university associations and at the venue of Shenzhen MSU-BIT University, remains an important track.

Tangible scientific cooperation covers mega-science projects and space industry. In particular, the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation for the Construction of an International Lunar Research Station was signed to support the latter. Year 2020 was also marked by stronger ties in the field of medicine and pharmaceuticals. It is in the interests of both Moscow and Beijing to foster joint R&D and hi-tech production, especially given the increased demand for digital products amid the pandemic.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has limited opportunities for face-to-face contacts, Moscow and Beijing have managed to successfully leverage online tools to continue educational and cultural interactions. Tourism has been hit the hardest, and, once the restrictions are no longer needed, Moscow and Beijing will need to introduce special measures to ensure that the sector recovers as quickly as possible. While the Russian and Chinese people may not see eye to eye on everything, they remain more or less favorably disposed towards one another. Cooperation among the Russian and Chinese media is particularly important given the information campaign launched against both countries in the West, including in the context of the politicization of the pandemic and “vaccine diplomacy.”

Introduction

Russia–China interaction in 2020–2021 developed against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and growing confrontational trends on a global scale, including Russia and China’s relations with the United States. The Russian and Chinese partnership successfully withstood the test of time. The countries preserved and even bolstered trust at the political level, continued to closely coordinate their positions on the international stage and jointly resisted attempts by foreign states to exert pressure on them. The mutual support that Moscow and Beijing have given each other was especially evident in the context of the politicization of the pandemic and attempts by individual countries to blame China for the spread of the coronavirus.

Importantly, meaningful interaction between Russia and China has also proven stable: despite the wide range of counter-epidemic measures taken in both countries, bilateral trade in 2020 dropped only slightly to be, according to Chinese data, greater than all the “pre-pandemic” years, with the exception of the record-breaking 2019. Moscow and Beijing were able to quickly establish cooperation in medicine and the supply of personal protective equipment. The countries successfully moved a number of joint activities online, ensuring that interaction was not suspended in any area. Russians continued to see China as one of the friendliest countries.

All that notwithstanding, the long-standing difficulties and “bottlenecks” in Russia–China cooperation concerning the interaction framework, the transport and customs infrastructure, and mutual trust between the peoples of the two countries have become more pronounced. The fight against the spread of coronavirus in both countries has meant significant restrictions on interregional and interpersonal contacts. It has become significantly more difficult to establish and foster business ties and launch joint projects. To a large degree, this has affected the implementation of ambitious tasks that formed the basis of the Years of Scientific, Technical and Innovative Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China in 2020–2021.

Hopes that humanity would find a quick way out of the pandemic never panned out, and Russia–China relations are likely to continue to develop for a long time to come with due account of the special requirements and restrictions that were introduced in 2020. It is therefore important to fully adapt mechanisms of interaction to the current formats so that pressing issues are dealt with as soon as possible – not after the normal course of cooperation has been restored.

In 2021, Russia and China celebrate the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China. In a special joint statement Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping highly evaluated the historic and practical role of the document and stressed their joint commitment to developing bilateral relations in the new era in the spirit of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation.

During this time, Moscow and Beijing have made a real breakthrough in terms of mutual understanding at the political level and the scope of economic and humanitarian interaction. The period of explosive growth on all tracks is behind us, and both sides need to work hard and together to build on these common successes. The only way to achieve new and equally impressive results is through systemic efforts on both sides to find new points of growth and optimal formats of cooperation, eliminate the existing barriers and allay mutual concerns. At the same time, a transition from coordinating positions on the international stage to promoting joint Russia–China initiatives on global and regional problems that have unifying potential even amid the growing chaos in the world is long overdue.

These tasks cannot be accomplished without an open dialogue between Russian and Chinese societies, accompanied by a thorough study at the expert level. The seventh annual Russia–China Dialogue report prepared by the Russian International Affairs Council, the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University aims to address these issues. The paper presents the results of an analysis of the Russia–China cooperation in the 2nd–4th quarters of 2020 and the 1st quarter of 2021.

1. Prospects for the Development of the Russia–China Strategic Partnership: A New Interaction Format rather than a New Union

As the international environment undergoes rapid changes, it is especially important for Moscow and Beijing to maintain the stable development of their bilateral relations, follow the strategic path they have set out for themselves and prevent any attempts by external forces to interfere with these developments. Russia and China are drawing closer together not so much because they face common challenges and threats, but because they share similar views on the most important issues of the world order and are prepared to stand together when it comes to addressing the dramatic changes that have taken place on the international arena. Both countries have indicated, directly or indirectly, that the current trends of the world order do not meet their interests and are not in line with what that order should be. It is no coincidence that there have been repeated calls not to destroy the current system completely, but to return it to its roots – in terms of the perceived role of the United Nations and other international organizations and an uninterrupted dialogue on all the principal issues of the global agenda – and hold a summit of the permanent members of the UN Security Council with the aim of establishing a dialogue on how to tackle the problems facing humankind as a whole and maintain global stability. The sides could also be brought closer together through collective efforts to preserve the international legal system in its current form.

When it comes to upholding international law, Russia and China have a common “rival” in the United States. This was one of the main issues raised at the meeting between Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in March 2021.¹ While the U.S. factor does have a significant influence on Russia–China relations, it is not decisive as the Moscow–Beijing partnership is based on common interests that transcend their rivalry with Washington. Forming a strategic partnership exclusively around a negative agenda will do nothing to promote this partnership in the long term, as it would be based on the current state of affairs, no matter how long that might last. It is crucial to build upon a positive agenda, one that could lead to a new international reality that serves the interests not only of Russia and China, but of other countries as well.

Many observers, including analysts from leading Western think tanks, are concerned about Russia and China possibly establishing a formal alliance and whether this should be allowed to happen – hence the current situation and the measures taken by the West to try and isolate Moscow and Beijing. At the same time, a number of experts argue that a “tacit military alliance” has already taken

¹ Lavrov: Russia and China Should Stand up Together for the Principles of the UN Charter // RIA Novosti, February 23, 2021. URL: <https://ria.ru/20210323/oon-1602416356.html>

shape, while a similar level of interaction is emerging in other areas, such as tech and innovation and the financial sector.² According to the Chinese side, this issue has been cooked up by Western analysts and the media, since it is not even on Moscow's and Beijing's common agenda. While Russia and China should not pay too much attention to all this, there is no reason to give the West guarantees that they will not become part of a military alliance wither.

Paradoxically, a formal Russia–China alliance could serve as justification for the creation of new military coalitions and the strengthening of existing alliances, potentially leading to a binary opposition of the two blocs and the launch of a Cold War 2.0. The emergence of a new threat in the form of such an alliance could stimulate a massive transfer of (mostly security-related) technologies between the United States, Canada, Australia and Japan as well as give additional impetus to the U.S. demands to increase the transparency of technology and infrastructure investments between the European Union and China. At the same time, a number of Western experts, pointing to deep civilizational incompatibilities, believe that a formal Russia–China alliance could adversely affect the partnership between the two countries. The Chinese side has stressed that any such alliance would be the result of pressure and threats from the West, and not the cause of a possible escalation. According to China, the belief in the West that a budding partnership between Moscow and Beijing would undermine its security is fundamentally wrong, and Russia and China should not think within this paradigm.

If we take into account all the nuances of Russia–China relations as they evolved over recent decades, we can conclude that bilateral interaction between the two has not led to a formal military, political and strategic alliance. And this, in turn, allows for more flexible forms of partnership. Calling it an alliance would even seem to be a throwback to an outdated verbiage, given that Russia–China interaction is not based on allied obligations but rather on their interests coinciding on key issues. It is unlikely that a formal alliance – be it strategic, military-strategic or economic – would reinforce the already constructive interaction between the two countries. Rather, it would likely create a number of additional demarcation lines in world politics and generate new frictions and animosities in bilateral relations. That said, some level-headed politicians, diplomats and experts point out that Russia–China are already *de facto* in an allied relationship, even though this is formally not the case. Moreover, the alliance is expanding to new spheres, which suggests that there is really no need to *de jure* formalize this process of constant transformation and expansion. The sides have gone beyond a union. As Andrey Denisov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the People's Republic of China, stated in October 2019, “Russia and China are not allies. We do not have allied obligations to one other. But what we do have is a clear and explicit understanding of each other's positions and interests as well as a readiness to respect these positions and assist each other in putting them into practice.”³

² Carlotta Sericelli. The West Watches for a Sino-Russian Military Alliance // Global Risk Insight, January 11, 2021. URL: <https://globalriskinsights.com/2021/01/the-west-watches-for-a-sino-russian-military-alliance/>.

³ Andrey Denisov: Russia and China are Not Allies, but We Understand Each Other's Interests // RIA Novosti, October 2, 2019. URL: <https://ria.ru/20191002/1559312820.html>

We should also take into account the fact that Russia and China have, politically speaking, always championed sovereignty and independence. Annual meetings between heads of state have been taking place for several decades now. An effective multi-stage mechanism exists for coordinating the positions of the two countries through working groups, sub-commissions and intergovernmental commissions. These contacts were not broken off during the 2020–2021 pandemic, with meetings held remotely. The countries have learned to put insignificant disagreements and disingenuous motives “aside” in their bilateral relations, and there are currently no obvious problems that could have a serious detrimental effect on them.

Developing over recent years, a number of interesting paradoxes in the strategic model of Russia–China interaction revealed themselves in 2020. If we take the dynamics of mutual trade as a criterion for the progress in bilateral relations, it should be noted that Russia–China trade has demonstrated noticeable stress resistance, reaching \$107 billion last year (as compared to \$110 billion in 2019). That said, trade between the United States and China increased from \$558 billion to \$560 billion – despite their rapidly deteriorating relations – while trade between the European Union and China reached an all-time high of €587 billion (up from €559.6 billion in 2019). China was the European Union’s third largest merchandise export partner (10.5 per cent) and its largest merchandise importer (22.4 per cent) in 2020.⁴ Trade can thus be considered an objective indicator of commodity dependence and the interest in each other’s goods and services only; and not of strategic or good-neighborly relations. China also appears to have limited interest in direct investment in Russia. Despite China being one of the largest investors in the Russian economy and Russia’s main foreign trade partner, total direct investments as of the beginning stood at \$3.7 billion, according to the Russian side – or \$12.8 billion, according to China’s data.⁵ What is more, the Central Bank of the Russian Federation reported that Chinese direct investments into Russia fell by 52 per cent during the first to the third quarters of 2020, from \$3.74 billion to \$1.83 billion.⁶ We can thus state that trade and investment relations between Russia and China have exhausted their potential for explosive growth, and the strategic nature of the partnership should be measured by other parameters.

Despite Moscow and Beijing making every effort to reduce tensions with the United States and the European Union at large, as the two countries have no interest in seeing the international community become split in two, negative trends show no signs of abating. Year 2020 proved that neither Russia nor China is capable of redefining the international agenda by themselves. This includes banking and the financial sector, global trade and, most importantly, culture and international relations. Any country that attempts to put forward a new paradigm of interaction amid the context of deglobalization and the deterioration of inter-

⁴ China – EU – International Trade in Goods Statistics // European Commission, March 2021. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/China-EU_-_international_trade_in_goods_statistics

⁵ Russia and China Approve List of Significant Investment Cooperation Projects Worth \$107 Billion // Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, December 10, 2021. URL: https://www.economy.gov.ru/material/news/rossiya_i_kitay_utverdili_perechen_znachimyh_proektov_investicionnogo_sotrudnichestva_na_107_mld_dollarov.html

⁶ External Sector Statistics // Bank of Russia. URL: http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/macro_itm/svs/

national contacts is inevitably seen as a “spoiler” on the international stage, and its initiatives are not taken as a reasonable alternative. Formalizing Russia–China relations through a new alliance could make the situation even worse. Organizational form is not important; what is important is that the two countries have similar stances on all the key issues as well as the ability to put forward and assert their respective agendas on a regional scale. Russia and China need to proceed with formulating concepts for the future political, economic, financial, technological and regional architecture on a global scale as well as the world’s future security architecture, inviting other potential partners to join these initiatives. In terms of cooperation on global governance with the West, we should not expect the chaos in the world to become more ordered, as the chaos will not disappear until a new order is established. The global initiatives of the Russia–China tandem are not intended to provoke a confrontation with the West. Rather, they are aimed at creating a polycentric world order.

That Russia and China share similar visions of global development and their respective capabilities is extremely important. Moscow and Beijing are each implementing their own integration projects – the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – which in many ways converge, although different in nature. While the BRI is – due to its organizational structure far from fully formalized – an economic (and in some cases a political and cultural) initiative, with individual projects financed in different parts of the world, the EAEU seeks to streamline the forms of economic interaction between a large number of countries. The number of joint projects carried out as part of the project to align the EAEU and the BRI is still rather low, and they could be implemented without any formal agreements in any case, as bilateral and commercially profitable transactions.

China has its own vision of the world, which is expressed, among other things, in its concept of a “community with a shared future for mankind” and in building infrastructure connectivity through the Belt and Road Initiative. China’s vision is also enfolded through such technological initiatives as the active use of its sovereign digital currency in settlements between partners, the introduction of Chinese technologies to store and transfer information and its readiness to help improve regional platforms for technological development around the world. Russia’s policy is mainly aimed at gradually shifting its political and economic aspirations from the West to the East, including the development of Russia’s Far East, while, to a lesser extent, it concerns new global ideas.

It is important that Russia and China formulate joint positions on issues of the international agenda where they can set the tone. These include, first and foremost, the environment and environmental safety, preserving marine biodiversity, reducing pollution of the world ocean, the rational (from an environmental perspective) development of the Arctic, preserving the world forest area, etc. The environmental agenda, which is totally positive, can be contrasted with the isolationist, offensive and thoroughly destructive agenda of other countries. Another area of interaction is high technologies, where Russia and China could play an important role in multilateral initiatives. These, in particular, refer to new cryp-

to currencies and high-speed data transfer technologies that preserve the safety of Internet communications and the content transferred. These projects should be promoted as a new global initiative rather than an agreement between the two countries.

Russia and China should continue to focus on achieving practical results in various areas of bilateral relations: trade and economy, finance, energy, technology, communications, artificial intelligence and the development of the Arctic. Working on these areas should help cement economic ties. The benefits of practical cooperation are more pronounced amid difficult international political and economic contexts. The Russian and Chinese leadership also need to pay greater attention to ensuring stability and security in the neighboring regions, maintaining the viability of regional mechanisms of cooperation involving both countries and strengthening ties in areas such as healthcare, epidemic prevention, environmental protection, disaster prevention and relief assistance.

Russia and China could also develop interaction on the basis of common values, which would help strengthen mutual understanding better than a formal military, strategic and political alliance. This does not imply assimilating each other's values, rather, it is about searching for coinciding points of view in relation to fundamental, indigenous values that have formed as part of national identity over the course of history. These issues could include: family values; mutual respect and the search for compromise between power and the state; the paternalistic role of the state and the level of its social responsibilities; the priority of state values over religious and nationalistic values; the important role of moral and ethical imperatives, which is characteristic of both Confucian and Christian consciousness; the interest of society in education; the desire for stability; historical memory, and so on. This can be used as a basis for creating joint associations to promote ideas.

Thus, establishing a formal Russia–China union or a separate military-strategic alliance does not offer the same promise as searching for new and more effective forms of interaction that tackle modern challenges as part both of new initiatives and technologies and of unifying, progressive cultural ideas.

2. Russian and Chinese Visions of a Changing World

2.1. The Evolution of International Relations in the 21st Century: Russian and Chinese Assessments

The COVID-19 pandemic tested not only the readiness of countries to respond to crises but the validity of global governance as well. The major changes taking place in the world and the accumulated contradictions among countries mean that it is high time this system underwent reforms. The processes taking place in the system of international relations today and the prospects for their development – once the novel coronavirus pandemic is over – are of concern to both Moscow and Beijing. Russia and China have adopted similar approaches to dealing with the current international situation and to observing international norms, although there are differences in a number of aspects.

Looking at the public statements, press conferences and media interviews of top Russian officials, it would be fair to say that Moscow regards the modern international system as one in a deep crisis. In this system, rivalry dominates cooperation, security issues dominate development objectives, and the foreign policy objective is increasingly to survive rather than prosper. As far as the Russian leadership sees it, international relations have entered an unprecedentedly long period of instability, uncertainty, numerous regional crises – and, in a broader sense, a period of sharp decline in global and regional manageability.

China's foreign policy vision is determined by specific domestic conditions and international contexts. The prevailing opinion in China is that the world is going through a period of great upheavals, which can be figuratively called in Chinese "the kind of changes that have not been seen in a hundred years." On the one hand, the old political and economic order is crumbling, competition between major powers is heating up, economic crises are hitting with increasing frequency, regional conflicts persist, the arms race is back on, globalization has not fully been restored, global problems are aggravating, etc. On the other hand, some developing nations are gaining a foothold to threaten the hegemony of the West, intensifying the transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world. Multilateral political and economic institutions are evolving in a more balanced way, the inequalities and injustices of the past are being eliminated, and opportunities are emerging for the international community to develop in a more intelligent manner. China, in the meantime, is becoming the main driver of globalization in this process.

China may have certain concerns about the "changes unseen in 100 years", but the national government is not pessimistic and is not resting on its laurels. This is an important feature of today's Chinese diplomacy. Beijing is fully aware of the complexity of the international situation, especially amid the increasing pressure from the West, but it is looking for opportunities for strategic development under these conditions. China believes that time is on its hands as, being the second largest economy in the world, it has almost caught up with the United

States, maintaining relatively high economic growth rates in the context of both the new technological revolution and the coronavirus pandemic. What is more, China has made real progress in fighting the pandemic, developing vaccines, fostering international cooperation and maintaining economic growth, while having significantly improved its international standing.

However, as Chinese observers point out, the United States continues to be the most powerful nation, and the existing international order is based on the superiority of one superpower over multiple other poles. Beijing believes that China will be the “largest developing country” in the medium term rather than the most powerful developed country. Accordingly, it will not compete with the United States for world domination and will instead continue to work with other countries to resolve international issues in line with the five principles of peaceful co-existence.

Symptoms of the Crisis

According to the Russian vision, one of the most obvious symptoms of the current strife in global politics is the deepening crisis of statehood, which is manifested especially clearly in the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and some former Soviet countries. The crisis has manifested itself across developed countries, too, including in Europe and the United States, albeit in a less pronounced form. States are surrendering their sovereignty, in whole or in part. They are no longer able to ensure law and order in their territories, nor can they guarantee basic social services to the population. The number of “failed” or “semi-failed” states is on the rise. Various “power vacuums” are emerging, acting as steppingstones for domestic and international conflicts that can drag on for decades with no prospects for a stable peace.

Another manifestation of the crisis is the growing mobility and unpredictability of regional and global economic and financial markets. These processes entail new risks both for the international system as a whole and for individual nation states. Societies and individuals can no longer control their economic situation or even influence it to any meaningful degree. As the United States and the West increasingly pursue a policy of “decoupling” and the use of politically motivated sanctions, trade and financial flows tend to become segmented, different technical standards co-exist, and countries become isolated from the rest of the world. Accelerated social and economic polarization is taking place both between and within states. Such polarization, in turn, engenders various forms of political populism, radicalism and extremism. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic is a further confirmation of the deep crisis in statehood, as many countries – including the United States – were unable to cope with the problem.

The third manifestation of the crisis is the emboldening of irresponsible non-state players in world politics who are essentially accountable to no one, which significantly alters the development trajectories of many global processes. These actors – ranging from international terrorist and radical religious networks to transnational corporations and cross-border criminal organizations – pursue self-serving goals on the international stage that are incompatible with peace,

stability and economic prosperity around the world. This situation is made worse by some states trying to use these actors as instruments of their foreign policies, a practice that is both counterproductive and dangerous.

The fourth symptom of the crisis is climate change which, if left unchecked, could turn out to be catastrophic for the entire world – something coupled with threats to biodiversity, environmental stability and resource sufficiency. Today's world stands witness to deepening inequality in terms of access to vital resources for individual countries and social groups. Although we are able to meet the demand for basic resources (energy, water and food), global shortages loom, which, in turn, increases instability and the threat of conflict.

The fifth indicator of growing problems is the increasing regional, continental and global migration flows. It turned out that humanity was completely unprepared for the sharp increase in geographic mobility in the 21st century, which has led to all manner of negative economic, political and cultural consequences. COVID-19 may have somewhat halted this trend – but this is for a while only – and the world is on the verge of a new revolution in migration.

The sixth and final symptom of the current crisis is the relative decline of several international organizations at the global and regional levels when it comes to development and security issues. Of particular concern is the erosion of many institutions under the auspices of the United Nations, including the Security Council. At the same time, many fundamental norms of international law are disintegrating, being replaced by arbitrary “rules” introduced by individual states or groups of states at their own discretion and in their narrow interests. Double standards in the application of certain international legal norms, which are apparently open to almost any interpretation, abound.

Tracing the Origins of the Current Problems

As far as the Russian leadership sees it, the liberal paradigm of economic and political development as a whole has run its course. Liberalism is no longer able to ensure stable economic growth, equitable distribution of wealth within and between countries, and political representation. The limits of market mechanisms and political competition in the 21st century have been reached and need significant correction.

According to Russian assessments, the West's triumphalism following the Cold War has led Western institutions to venture beyond their “natural” geographic boundaries, which has done great harm to their integrity. The widespread hopes in the West for a unipolar world have crippled the search for new models of global development. The overconfidence of both the United States and Europe has led to numerous conflicts that could otherwise have been avoided or at least mitigated.

The selective application of international law, the abundant double standards and the (deliberate or otherwise) destruction of the previously unshakable international norms have all served to deepen the crisis. Legal and moral relativism have become more and more pronounced in global politics, incompatible historical narratives have appeared, while cynical, opportunistic and transactional approaches to foreign

policy have come to dominate. This had led to a degradation of diplomacy and a shift in the emphasis to unilateral foreign policy instruments.

The United States essentially promotes a one-sided approach to problem-solving by intimidating weaker actors, which continues to undermine the effectiveness of global governance, making it less fair. Washington and its allies are looking to gain a decisive advantage in the military and military-technical spheres, which would allow them to pursue their own interests through threats and the unhindered use of force in international affairs. They brazenly ignore the fundamental principle of not jeopardizing the security of other states as they attempt to ensure their own security by infringing on the security of other nations.

A number of crises helped shape the model of globalization that emerged in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. While overall prosperity did increase as a result, the model first and foremost served the transnational capital, ignoring the interests of others involved in globalization, including the production sector and, more importantly, the large segments of society across developed and developing nations. With this model of globalization proliferating, a number of negative consequences ensued, including the rapid decline of traditional values, ever growing expectations, social and cultural polarization, and the increasing vulnerability of certain social groups with respect to populism, extremism and political radicalism.

The struggle between globalization and deglobalization is an important factor influencing the dynamics of today's global balance of power. Some countries are trying to hamstring global supply, production and logistics chains by promoting industrial and technological disruption, which negatively impacts the already fragile global economy.

Both Russia and China call for a fair and balanced model of globalization and do not approve of some of the methods used by a number of international actors to serve their selfish needs. The United States is guided by the principles of universalism, protectionism and strategic confrontation, while France and Germany do not have sufficient resources to maintain the current system of global governance. It is against this background that China's role in promoting globalization, much like that of other developing countries, has significantly grown.

The fourth industrial revolution – the transition to a new technological order – has already begun, having created fundamentally new opportunities for state and non-state actors to undermine international and domestic stability such as advances in information and communications technologies, next-generation weapons, new tools of political mobilization, etc. The international community has proven unable to properly regulate technological progress and failed to bring the potentially dangerous and destabilizing technologies under control.

Most Western political systems do not allow for long-term foreign policy planning. Politicians want results straight away and are constantly seeking ways for their political investments to pay off as soon as possible. This feature of modern liberal democracy contradicts the obvious need for large-scale and long-term political projects, including cost-intensive initiatives.

Solutions

Moscow and Beijing need to focus on revamping global governance to bring it in line with global political and economic trends. Humanity's prime concern today is to restore and improve the manageability of the international system at the global and regional levels. Until this has been done, it will be incredibly difficult to achieve any kind of success in related areas. The main dividing line in today's global politics does not run between East and West, North and South, liberals and conservatives; rather, it runs between the forces of order and the forces of chaos. Russia and China have always advocated for the latter, supporting multilateralism and condemning unilateralism.

Nation states have always been the bricks of the international system, and this will never change. It is for this reason that national sovereignty remains the most important principle of the international legal system, and it must be strictly observed. International interdependence, multilateralism and integration should be welcomed, as they do not contradict the principle of sovereignty.

The emerging international system must fully reflect the changing balance of power in the world today, and it has to be inclusive. The existing (mostly Western) international financial, development and security institutions need to be overhauled or replaced by organizations whose nature is more universal, inclusive and representative.

The idea of Western (liberal) universalism needs to be once and for all rejected in favor of pluralistic models of development. The new concept of modernization should allow for countries to preserve national traditions, culture, and economic, social and political characteristics that are different from Western models. Contrary to popular belief, Russia and China are not against liberal concepts related to the promotion of values such as democracy and human rights. The Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Russia and China on Certain Aspects of Global Governance in Modern Conditions dated March 23, 2021 confirmed this.⁷ However, Russia and China have a different understanding of democracy and human rights than the West – and their approaches may differ from each other, too. Moscow and Beijing are against the West imposing its ideas and value systems onto other nations, and their pursuit of personal gain under the pretext of protecting democracy and human rights, using them as instruments of geopolitical competition. Accordingly, the practice of exporting liberal democracy, as well as other models of political and social development, needs to be abandoned.

Countries with different political systems, values, religions and cultures should be able to co-exist and interact without interfering in each other's domestic affairs, cooperating on equal terms. Beijing calls this world order a "community with a shared future for mankind." China hopes to prevent the world from being divided once again, believing that it is its responsibility to establish a new type of relationship between the great powers. As far as China is concerned, the rise

⁷ Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of China and Russia on Certain Aspects of Global Governance in Modern Conditions // The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. March 23, 2021.
URL: https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4647776

of new great powers does not have to lead to confrontation, with China hoping to become a great power without the need for conflict, including with the United States. At the same time, the United States believes that China, like Russia, is a revisionist power. Some believe that the Belt and Road Initiative is essentially China's vision of a new international order. Beijing is not among such powers, though, as it wants to improve the balance, fairness and efficiency of the world order and prevent anarchy.

As the most authoritative and representative international organization in the world, the United Nations plays the key role in international affairs and, as such, is an integral part of what Russia and China believe to be an equitable world order. Moscow and Beijing should support the leading role of the United Nations and that of the Security Council in ensuring peace and security around the world as well as strive to strengthen the organization's positions, especially when it comes to peace and development. Multilateral mechanisms, including the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), should remain the foundation of the world order. For Beijing, the Belt and Road Initiative is not a replacement for the current international order. Rather, it is an integral part of the future international political and economic system.

Additional steps should be taken to ensure global strategic stability and security, which should be seen as the baseline for international relations. Joint efforts are needed to improve the multilateral regime of strategic arms control in areas such as missile defense, space, the Internet, hypersonic weapons and artificial intelligence, which will help prevent a new arms race and the negative effects on international security and strategic stability.

Disarmament and arms control mechanisms must work in a fair and balanced manner to help improve security of every country. Nuclear-weapon states need to take greater responsibility for international security and global strategic stability. They need to abandon the Cold War and zero-sum mentality, and address problems through dialogue and consultation, avoiding strategic misunderstandings. Work is required to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime further and actively promote the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT): disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The international community needs to work together to prevent an arms race in outer space, including through the relevant legal regulation. Russia and China believe that a potential arms race in outer space as well as the possibility of outer space turning into a theatre of military conflict pose a threat to strategic stability.⁸

The natural market mechanisms that determine how the global economic and financial system work should, where necessary, be supplemented by a regulatory framework – a framework that, in turn, is seen as a result of an agreement between nation states. Non-state actors (for example, transnational corporations) need to strengthen their social responsibility both within states and on the international stage.

⁸ UN General Assembly Committee Approves Russian Resolution to Combat Arms Race in Space // Interfax, November 5, 2019. URL: <https://www.interfax.ru/world/683075>

Promoting the principles of free trade and supporting the multilateral trading system are needed. Russia and China face two important tasks in this respect: 1) to preserve the status of the WTO as the main regulator of the global trading system; and 2) to promote more balanced and rational mechanisms of global and regional trade and investment. The Chinese leadership will continue to promote economic globalization. The country has developed a “double circulation” strategy for the international and domestic markets as a way to adapt to the current fragmentation of the global economy.

In terms of energy and environmental protection, particular attention should be paid to the changes that will inevitably come out of alternative energy sources, while not ignoring the traditional energy. In addition, the countries should aim to balance the interests of producers, transit countries and customers, as well as improve the functioning of international energy organizations such as OPEC+, the International Energy Agency and the International Gas Union, pooling their efforts to harmonize transformations to jointly respond to climate change and complex geopolitical energy challenges.

The future international system will look like a pyramid with a number of levels that interact with one another. The first (top) level of the pyramid will be taken up by the United Nations, along with the Security Council, the General Assembly and other specialized bodies. It will be followed on the second level by regional security and development organizations that act in accordance with, and on the instructions of, the UN Charter. The third level will be occupied by *ad hoc* coalitions formed to address specific international issues (they will need to receive legitimacy from the United Nations). The fourth level will consist of many bilateral and multilateral agreements, treaties and other documents regulating relations between individual states and formalizing international regimes in specific areas. The fifth level will be made up of a dense network of contacts, partnerships and alliances between non-state actors, including businesses and civil society.

China stresses that multilateralism forms the basis of international relations. As such, it must be seen not only as a method but also as a principle of interaction in the international community, carrying values and political aspirations. Multilateralism is based on openness and the principles of universal political equality and the balance of interests, and it is implemented through consultations and negotiations. By adhering to the principles of multilateralism, China both denies hegemony and unipolarity and, which is equally important, observes the principles of equal relations with all countries.

2.2. UN Reform and Russia–China Cooperation

The Tasks of UN Reform

Russia and China have consistently called for preserving the central role of the United Nations in international affairs.⁹ As large emerging economies, major Eur-

⁹ Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on the Development of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Collaboration in the New Era // President of Russia, June 6, 2019.
URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/5413>

asian states and members of the UN Security Council, they stress the need to uphold the goals and principles of the UN Charter and oppose any action that would harm the organization's status or weaken its influence. As part of their strategy to counter these trends, Russia and China emphasize the key role of the Security Council's in maintaining peace and security around the world.

The 75th anniversary of the United Nations in 2020 gave a new impetus to the discussion about the prospects for reform. In the decades since its establishment, the scope of the UN's activities and its overall mission have undergone significant changes that go way beyond the intentions of its founders. The history of the United Nations is one of continuous reform and innovation – it adopted measures that had never been seen before in international relations to tackle such issues as maintaining peace during the Cold War, recognizing new independent states, ensuring development and improving the international system for the protection of human rights. The problems facing the United Nations today permeate the entire system and cannot be resolved through the existing mechanisms and within the current agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic has, on the one hand, proved to be an unprecedented challenge for the United Nations and, on the other hand, highlighted the need to improve its functioning.

It would be a good idea to consider shifting the focus of the United Nations from preventing wars to responding to global threats. Since the beginning of the 21st century, transnational challenges have taken over as the most serious threats to the global community. An effective response to these universal challenges should include prioritizing those actors who have the ability and resources to influence international processes and make a special contribution to solving global issues.

Given the current climate, the United Nations should focus on serving the peoples of the world, and not on coordinating actions between sovereign states. While the member states all have their own national interests, the United Nations has a separate global mission, which is to ensure the well-being of people in all countries, protect fundamental human rights and preserve human values.

The United Nations could become more than a platform for international cooperation that relies on sovereign states to solve common problems but also a mechanism of global governance. Experts in China believe that the United Nations should mobilize and unite the forces of non-state actors and promote their role in global politics, thereby creating a new structure of global governance. They point out that the demands of responding to global threats, promoting global governance and serving the “peoples of the United Nations” in accordance with the UN Charter demonstrate a clear need for radical changes.¹⁰

Possible Areas of UN Reform

Moscow and Beijing believe that UN reform should be comprehensive, carried out gradually and agreed on by member states. The Russian side has stressed that any changes must be the result of careful consideration, as forcing them through

¹⁰ UN Charter // United Nations. URL: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>

would be dangerous for the entire system.¹¹ Russia and China have stated that UN reform should be democratic and carried out on the basis of a broad consensus following extensive consultations. During the expert discussions and debates at the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly, the countries put forward a number of proposals for reform. These proposals were similar in terms of their principled foundations and areas of focus, although the approaches of the two countries may slightly differ.¹²

At the center of the discussions on UN reform is the issue of reforming the Security Council. This is an extremely difficult task, even though it is long overdue. Moscow sees the goal of reforming the UN Security Council – without prejudice to its effectiveness and operational efficiency – in expanding the representation of developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Russia believes that a more representative Security Council, but with a limited number of members, could work effectively.¹³ At the same time, the current prerogatives of the permanent members of the Security Council, including the right of veto, must be preserved. Beijing is also interested in strengthening the “right to vote,” giving developing countries more say, establishing a more balanced and representative Security Council, and increasing its effectiveness and clout.

According to the Russian position, efforts to identify the best reform model – one that would enjoy the broadest support – should continue in the format of inter-governmental negotiations.¹⁴ As Chinese experts have pointed out, if reforming the UN Security Council consists solely of expanding its membership without a broad political consensus, then the forced promotion of reform programs put forward by various actors with a view to the redistribution of power will cause disagreements among the member states, and among the major powers in particular. This will undermine the authority of the Security Council, which clearly falls short of Russia’s and China’s interests and does not serve the goals of UN reform.

UN reform is not only about making changes to the Security Council. China believes that a number of UN agencies are outdated or simply not up to the task. For example, the Trusteeship Council completed its mission over 20 years ago, yet it still exists as one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. At the same time, the Human Rights Council is only a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly, unlike the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council,

¹¹ Russia’s Position at the Seventy-Fifth Session of the UN General Assembly // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, July 23, 2020.

URL: https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4252717

¹² Russia’s Position at the Seventy-Fifth Session of the UN General Assembly // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, July 23, 2020.

URL: https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4252717;
Position Paper of the People’s Republic of China on the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, September 10, 2020.

URL: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1813751.shtml

¹³ Russia Will Not Support Expanding the UN Security Council // Rossiyskaya gazeta, April 5, 2020.

URL: <https://rg.ru/2019/04/05/rossiia-ne-podderzhit-rasshirenje-sostava-sovbeza-oon.html>

¹⁴ Russia’s Position at the Seventy-Fifth Session of the UN General Assembly // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, July 23, 2020.

URL: https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4252717

even though its mission is no less important. According to Chinese experts, the status of the Human Rights Council clearly fails to correspond to the significance of its activities. Russia does not support the idea of changing the status of the Human Rights Council or linking its activities with those of the UN Security Council or its comprehensive reform.

As the largest developing country in the world and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has a unique stake in UN reform and can play a special role in this process. Beijing ranks second in terms of UN membership fees¹⁵ and contributions to its peacekeeping operations,¹⁶ but the country is – for historical and political reasons – under-represented in various components of the UN system. In this regard, Beijing also sees UN reform as an opportunity to increase the number of representatives and open institutions in the country.

China has put forward a number of new ideas and initiatives on UN reform in recent years. First is the need to contribute to the inauguration of a new type of international relations and the community with a shared future for mankind. The second aims to strengthen inclusive multilateralism and promote global partnerships. The third calls for improving the ability to respond to global challenges. The fourth has to do with supporting the United Nations in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, sustainable development and South–South cooperation. Finally, the fifth initiative concerns strengthening cooperation among international organizations and improving the global health system.

Other common objectives include ensuring the impartial consideration of human rights issues and creating a united global counter-terrorism front under the auspices of the United Nations.

China's position involves paying increased attention to the sustainable development activities of the United Nations. It is actively pursuing international partnership initiatives in this area. Two specialized funds have been set up – the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund¹⁷ and the United Nations Fund for South–South Cooperation¹⁸ – to support the United Nations and developing countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promote multilateralism.¹⁹ President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping announced that China was ready to contribute \$50 million to the UN COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, allocate another \$50 million to the China–FAO South–South Cooperation Trust Fund (Phase III), extend the validity of the Peace and Development Trust Fund between the UN and China by five years after it expires in 2025, and establish a UN Global Geospatial Knowledge

¹⁵ Assessment of Member States' Advances to the Working Capital Fund for 2021 and Contributions to the United Nations Regular Budget for 2021 // The United Nations Secretariat, December 30, 2020.
URL: <http://undocs.org/en/ST/ADM/SER.B/1023>

¹⁶ Implementation of General Assembly Resolutions 55/235 and 55/236 // The UN Secretariat, December 24, 2018.
URL: <https://undocs.org/A/73/350/ADD.1>

¹⁷ United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund // United Nations website.
URL: <https://www.un.org/ru/unpdf/index.shtml>

¹⁸ South–South Cooperation Assistance Fund // CIDCA. URL: <http://en.cidca.gov.cn/southsouthcooperationfund.html>

¹⁹ M. Yurchenko. UN Reform: Main Areas and Approaches. Bulletin of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. *Russia and the World.*, No. 3 (25), 2020, pp. 19–20.

and Innovation Center and an International Research Center of Big Data for Sustainable Development Goals to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.²⁰

The Special Role of Moscow and Beijing in Reforming the United Nations

To function effectively, the UN machine relies on coordination among major powers. The Russia–China relations are a successful example of such interaction. Not only have the two countries formed a bilateral strategic partnership, but they also cooperate strategically in such multilateral formats as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), and the Belt and Road Initiative. Russia–China cooperation in the United Nations and on UN reform is especially important.

First, Russia and China coordinate their stances and work together to advance their vision of fair global governance. For instance, Moscow and Beijing jointly proposed a draft treaty banning the placement of arms in outer space and the use or threat of force against space objects, to facilitate demilitarization and joint space exploration under the auspices of the United Nations. According to the Chinese side, the two countries could continue to push for the creation, within the framework of the United Nations, of rules and systems for governing common areas in outer space, the polar regions, the sea-bed and ocean floor, and the Internet, promoting the leading role of the United Nations in managing the global space of world development and building a united community with a shared future for mankind.

Second, Russia and China coordinate their actions to combat non-traditional security threats, including terrorism and transnational crime, within such platforms as the SCO. This cooperation could be expanded within the framework of the United Nations, in particular with regard to tackling global health challenges. Interaction in the Organization on combating non-traditional threats is developing slowly and, as permanent members of the Security Council, Russia and China bear a special responsibility for maintaining the UN's leading positions in matters of cooperation and governance in this area.

Third, Russia and China are fostering cooperation to resolve security issues in regional hot spots within the context of the leading role of the United Nations. Moscow and Beijing have played a constructive role in resolving crises in those countries and regions where they have traditionally enjoyed political and strategic influence. That notwithstanding, the United Nations is the main platform for responding to such challenges through conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

Russia and China often vote together on issues on the UN agenda. Russia's proposal to host a summit of leaders of the permanent members of the UN Security

²⁰ Statement by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People's Republic of China at the General Debate of the 75th Session of The United Nations General Assembly // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, September 22, 2020. URL: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1817098.shtml

Council, which has been supported by China, is still of great interest.²¹ In this context, it would be a good idea for the Russian and Chinese ministries of foreign affairs to hold a series of consultations to agree on the agenda for the upcoming summit of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council by comparing the new Russian and Chinese proposals on the topics that should be up for discussion and drawing up a “compliance matrix” of these proposals.

²¹ Putin Proposes Holding Summit of five Permanent UNSC Members in 2020. TASS, January 23, 2020.
URL: <https://tass.com/world/1112339>

3. Russian and Chinese Interaction with Third Parties in 2020–2021

3.1. General Trends

The 2020 global crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic has led to a sharp deterioration of political and economic relations among a number of actors in global politics. This has had a profound impact on China's relations with the United States and India. Many experts believe that the European Union has remained relatively passive during this time, rather being an object of the struggle for influence between China and the United States. Trends in Russia's relations with its American, European and Indian partners that had begun to take shape before the pandemic continued to develop.

The negative trends in China's relations with the West aggravated against the backdrop of the 2020 election campaign in the United States and the arrival of the Democratic administration headed by Joe Biden in the White House. Its relations with India have largely been shaped by the fallout between the militaries of the two countries in the disputed Galwan Valley on June 15, 2020, the bloodiest incident in bilateral relations since 1967.

The new stage of China's relations with the United States – and, to a certain extent, the European Union, has been characterized by the attempts of the United States in 2020–2021 to bring serious charges against China in connection with the so-called Xinjian issue and China's role in the COVID-19 pandemic. These accusations could be fraught with significant international legal consequences for China, potentially involving various sanctions and legal demands under the laws of a number of countries.

Russia and China continued to support each other during this period, coordinating efforts on the main issues of the international agenda. Russia condemned and rejected attempts to blame China for the pandemic,²² while China, in turn, supported Russia's concerns about the U.S. Army maintaining a network of military biological laboratories in various countries.²³

3.2. Russia, China and the United States

U.S.–China and U.S.–Russia Relations in 2020–2021

The U.S.–Russia relations find themselves at an incredibly low ebb. Washington has accused Moscow of interfering in the U.S. elections and carrying out cyber-attacks, human rights violations and other destructive actions. And, as experts predicted, the Biden administration continued on path. A new crisis in bilateral relations came in early 2021, when the United States decided to introduce a fresh package of sanctions against Russia, in response to which Moscow imposed sig-

²² Russian Foreign Ministry Condemns Attempts to Blame China and WHO for COVID-19 // *Izvestia*, April 23, 2020.
URL: <https://iz.ru/1003634/2020-04-23/mid-osudil-popytki-vozlozhit-na-kitai-i-voz-otvetstvennost-za-covid-19>

²³ American Biolabs in Ukraine: Why Russia and China Are Worried // *Gazeta.ru*, April 9, 2021.
URL: https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2021/04/09_a_13552772.shtml

nificant restrictions on the activities of the U.S. diplomatic mission in Russia. The tougher rhetoric from the American side formed the backdrop for ambassadors from both countries being recalled for consultations.²⁴

Limited success has been achieved in strategic stability, specifically the extension of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START).²⁵ Experts lauded the June 16 U.S.–Russia summit in terms of the prospects for restoring the dialogue on arms control and strategic stability and launching consultations on cybersecurity issues.²⁶ The agreement on the return of ambassadors appears to be another constructive step.²⁷ However, the results of the summit can only be properly assessed once these agreements have been put into practice and a constructive dialogue between the two countries has been launched. At the same time, selective cooperation in specific areas should not be expected to change the confrontational nature of bilateral relations.

The U.S.–China relations continued their rapid descent throughout most of 2020. March–April 2020 saw a sharp increase in anti-Chinese rhetoric on the part of U.S. officials amid the explosion in COVID-19 cases in the United States. China was initially accused of failing to report the emergence of the virus and then faced accusations that it had been synthesized in a Chinese laboratory and made its way into the outside world as a result of negligence.

Representatives of the Trump administration made a number of policy statements regarding the confrontation with China. These included Mike Pompeo’s speech at the Nixon Library on July 23, 2020, where the Secretary of State claimed that the very nature of the Chinese “Marxist-Leninist regime,” which allegedly has “designs for hegemony” and likes to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, was largely responsible for the contradictions between China and the United States. Pompeo effectively stated that one of the conditions for normalizing relations was a change of regime in China.²⁸ On the last day of the Trump administration, the Secretary of State made an official statement that China was pursuing a policy of genocide against the Uyghur people in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. This accusation could have far-reaching legal and diplomatic consequences under the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the national legislation of a number of countries.²⁹

²⁴ Russia Announces Response to U.S. Sanctions // RIA Novosti, April 16, 2020.
URL: <https://ria.ru/20210416/otvet-1728646888.html>

²⁵ A. Kortunov. The Positive Aspects of Negotiations // Izvestia, May 26, 2021.
URL: <https://iz.ru/1169474/andrei-kortunov/tolk-peregovorov>

²⁶ U.S.–Russia Presidential Joint Statement on Strategic Stability // President of Russia, June 16, 2021.
URL: <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/5658>

²⁷ News Conference Following Russia–U.S. Talks // President of Russia, June 16, 2021.
URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65870>

²⁸ Communist China and the Free World’s Future // U.S. Embassy and Consulates in China, July 23, 2020.
URL: <https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/communist-china-and-the-free-worlds-future/>

²⁹ Pompeo Accuses China Of Genocide, Experts Say that Term is Complicated // NPR, January 21, 2021.
URL: <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/21/959134663/pompeo-accused-china-of-genocide-experts-say-that-term-is-complicated>

The declassified U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific published in January 2021 – but drawn up and launched long before – demonstrated that the statements made by U.S. officials reflected real political priorities. Washington had been implementing a comprehensive strategy of foreign political and economic isolation of China, undermining its industrial potential and putting pressure on the country through propaganda tactics.³⁰

The United States started to step up the sanctions pressure on China in May 2020, with the country being subjected to more restrictive measures by the second half of the year than Russia. Hundreds of Chinese companies suffered directly. Before this, such sanctions had mostly targeted the military-industrial complex and tech firms; now, however, they had been expanded to include companies in various sectors, from construction to textiles.³¹ China also started to form its own sanctions mechanisms. These included a list of unreliable entities introduced in September 2020 which effectively blacklisted foreign companies that refused to provide goods and services to Chinese citizens due to U.S. sanctions or otherwise acted in a way that could damage Chinese interests.³² In June 2021, China adopted a bill that would allow Beijing to impose sanctions against countries that had previously taken similar measures against China. Many saw the bill as a direct response to U.S. sanctions.³³

The hopes that had existed in the run-up to the November 2020 elections that a victory for the Democrats could lead to a stabilization of the U.S.–China relations soon faded. In his first foreign policy speech on February 4, 2021, Joe Biden said that China was America’s “most serious competitor.”³⁴ Chinese observers noted that the newly elected president had started to implement a policy of “strategic patience,” which does not imply that Washington will attempt in the short term to repair the damage done to the U.S.–China relations, although it will help avoid a build-up of anti-Chinese activity right now.³⁵ The relations between China and the United States are unlikely to undergo any major changes, nor are they likely to stay the same. This is largely due to the domestic political situation in the United States. Democrats and Republicans alike have adopted a hardline stance on China. This, combined with the numerous obstacles created by the Trump administration to positive developments in U.S.–China cooperation, significantly limits the room for maneuver for Biden and his team. “Strategic patience” seems

³⁰ U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific.

URL: <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IPS-Final-Declass.pdf>

³¹ Ivan Timofeev and Vasily Kashin. U.S.–China Relations: Moving Towards a New Cold War? // Valdai Discussion Club, January, 2021. URL: <https://valdaiclub.com/files/34458/>

³² MOFCOM Order No. 4 of 2020 on Provisions on the Unreliable Entity List // Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, September 19, 2020.

URL: <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/article/policyrelease/questions/202009/20200903002580.shtml>

³³ China Moves Forward with Law Aimed at Countering U.S. Sanctions // Bloomberg, June 8, 2021.

URL: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-08/china-moves-forward-with-law-aimed-at-countering-u-s-sanctions>

³⁴ Remarks by President Biden on America’s Place in the World // The White House, February 4, 2021.

URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/04/remarks-by-president-biden-on-americas-place-in-the-world/>

³⁵ Mark Perry, Biden’s Eisenhower Strategy for China // Foreign Policy, February 18, 2021.

URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/02/18/bidens-eisenhower-strategy-for-china/>

to be a necessary measure given the difficulties the United States is facing in its foreign and domestic politics.

On February 10, 2021, Biden announced the establishment of a special strategic task force on China in the Department of Defense to comprehensively analyze its policy and devise its own strategy.³⁶ The task force officially started its work on March 1, while a report was expected to be presented in mid-June.³⁷ Chinese experts have pointed out that even during the Cold War, the U.S. Department of Defense did not set up such interagency groups to coordinate policy towards specific countries.

The attempt to hold political consultations between the foreign secretaries of the two countries in Anchorage on March 18–19, 2021 ended in a diplomatic scandal. At the meeting, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan accused China of expansionist policies and human rights violations, raising the ire of the Chinese side. The Biden administration reiterated the accusations of genocide that had been levied against China by Trump and pushed on with work to have official charges brought against Beijing. Besides, the administration criticized the World Health Organization for supporting the theory that the coronavirus had appeared naturally rather than in a laboratory. China faces continued restrictions from the United States at all levels, including trade, technology, finance, the Internet, IT and even scientific and educational activities.

The United States has successfully been building up anti-China alliances around the world. Biden has set about creating a kind of “alliance of values” among democratic countries and started preparations for a “Summit for Democracy.”³⁸ The Democrats have adopted the Indo-Pacific strategy of the previous administration in full, and the Chinese side believes that the U.S. is attempting to create an organization similar to NATO in the region alongside Japan, Australia and India. The first summit of the Quad involving the leaders of these countries took place on March 12, 2021.³⁹ A meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Ministers of Defense was held via teleconference shortly before that, on February 17–18, 2021, to soften the centrifugal tendencies within the alliance.⁴⁰ The Five (FVEY) alliance comprising the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand went from strength to strength. Significant progress has been made in intelligence exchanges with Japan. Chinese experts expect South Korea to join the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue.

³⁶ Remarks by President Biden to Department of Defense Personnel // The White House, February 10, 2021.
URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/10/remarks-by-president-biden-to-department-of-defense-personnel/>

³⁷ China Task Force Begins Work; DOD Makes Progress on COVID-19 // U.S. Department of Defense, March 1, 2021.
URL: <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2519254/china-task-force-begins-work-dod-makes-progress-on-covid-19/>

³⁸ The Power of America's Example: The Biden Plan for Leading the Democratic World to Meet the Challenges of the 21st Century // Biden Campaign Website. URL: <https://joebiden.com/americanleadership/>

³⁹ Abhijan Rej. In 'Historic' Summit Quad Commits to Meeting Key Indo-Pacific Challenges // The Diplomat, March 13, 2021.
URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/in-historic-summit-quad-commits-to-meeting-key-indo-pacific-challenges/>

⁴⁰ Meetings of NATO Ministers of Defence // NATO, February 17, 2021.
URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/events_181298.htm

The United States continued its policy of rapidly developing military and military-technical ties with Taiwan. U.S. ships have carried out several freedom of navigation missions in the South China and Sea and the passages through the Taiwan Strait.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing global economic crisis made it impossible to implement the U.S.–China Phase 1 trade deal, although some its provisions had been judged to be unrealistic from the outset. U.S. exports to China grew from \$106.63 billion in 2019 to just \$124.6 billion in 2020, while imports from China fell from \$452 billion to \$435 billion.⁴¹ Chinese imports of American products in 2020 made up approximately 60 per cent of the planned volume under the agreement. What is more, many U.S. companies still faced demands of technology transfer, breaking the terms of the agreement.⁴² The Trump administration made contradictory statements regarding the implementation of the agreements, while the president himself did not hide his dissatisfaction with the Chinese side and threatened to cut economic ties with the country.⁴³

That said, the Biden administration made it clear during the first months of its work in 2021 that it was generally pleased with the course of the agreement's implementation. In June 2021, it was reported that negotiations on trade issues had resumed.⁴⁴ The change in the U.S.'s stance could be due to the fact that the data on tariffs indicates that they are futile from an economic point of view. The monopolization by Chinese companies of a number of spheres of production, coupled with the impossibility of quickly pulling production facilities from China and setting them up in other countries, especially those in hi-tech industries, meant that Chinese exports to the United States did not drop sharply. At the same time, Moody's reports that U.S. importers absorbed over 90 per cent of the costs caused by the tariff hike, with Chinese exporters covering the remaining 10 per cent.⁴⁵ In this case, the tariffs increase the tax burden on the U.S. economy, which may force Washington into an early "exchange" of tariffs for additional, albeit symbolic, concessions from the Chinese side.

It has not escaped the attention of Russian and Chinese observers that the United States has started to give top priority to China. While Washington regards Beijing as a long-term strategic threat, Moscow is more of a fleeting problem. On February 24, 2021, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency William J. Burns said that the "hostile and predatory" Chinese leadership poses the greatest geopolitical threat for the United States, while Russia is nothing more than a big country

⁴¹ Total Value of U.S. Trade in Goods with China (Export and Import) from 2010 to 2020 // Statista, February 9, 2021.
URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/277679/total-value-of-us-trade-in-goods-with-china-since-2006/#:~:text=In%2020%2C%20the%20total%20value,billion%20U.S.%20dollar%20import%20value>

⁴² The U.S.–China Phase One Trade Deal: On to Phase Two, or Time to Phase It Out? // Cato Institute, March 22, 2021.
URL: <https://www.cato.org/blog/us-china-phase-one-deal-phase-two-or-time-phase-it-out>

⁴³ Trump Renews Threat to Cut Ties with Beijing, a Day after High-Level U.S.–China Talks // Reuters, June 18, 2020.
URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-china-trump-idUSKBN23P3JS>

⁴⁴ U.S. and China Trade Officials Hold 'Candid' First Talks of Biden Era // BBC, May 27, 2021.
URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-57264346>

⁴⁵ U.S. Companies are Bearing the Brunt of Trump's China Tariffs, Says Moody's // CNBC, May 18, 2020.
URL: <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/05/18/us-companies-bearing-the-brunt-of-trumps-china-tariffs-says-moodys.html>

that continues to be “destructive” and is “in decline.”⁴⁶ In this context, many experts, including Western observers, see the Biden administration’s proposal to hold a U.S.–Russia summit as a way for the United States to stabilize relations with the Russian Federation in order to free up resources to contain China.⁴⁷ According to Chinese scholars, the new administration has revised Trump’s strategy, which posited both Russia and China as rivals, and its actions go against Biden’s oft-repeated claim during the election campaign that Russia represented a threat to the U.S. democracy.

The Significance of Joe Biden’s Course for Russia–China Relations

The Russia–China partnership continues to grow from strength to strength against the backdrop of the degradation of the U.S.–Russia relations and the strategic confrontation between China and the United States. While Russia and China do not premise their cooperation on the confrontation with Washington or aim their efforts at containing third countries, the fact that Moscow and Beijing have adopted similar positions on key international problems in the face of growing external pressure helps to bring strategic coordination between the two to new heights.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China Wang Yi said in 2020 that Russia–China relations reached unprecedented levels in all areas. He believes strategic cooperation between Russia and China “has no end, no restricted areas and no upper limits.”⁴⁸ Moscow and Beijing continue to promote engagement at the global level, especially during such turbulent times.⁴⁹ On March 1, 2021, the Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China expressed its readiness to cooperate with Russia, including in the field of military equipment, technology and joint exercises.⁵⁰

On March 23, 2021, shortly after the U.S.–China talks in Alaska, Sergey Lavrov, Russia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, paid his first visit to China since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was during this trip that the Russian and Chinese foreign ministers signed a Joint Statement on Certain Aspects of Global Governance in Modern Conditions, which defined and clarified human rights, the concepts of democracy and multilateralism, and the principles of international law as understood by Russia and

⁴⁶ Ambassador William Burns. Hearings // Intelligence Committee. U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, February 24, 2021. URL: <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/hearings/open-hearing-nomination-ambassador-william-burns-be-director-central-intelligence-agency>

⁴⁷ Sergey Stokan. Included in the Old Triangle // Kommersant, April 29, 2021. URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4793588>

⁴⁸ “No Limits”: China’s Assessment of its Cooperation with Russia // RIA Novosti, January 2, 2021. URL: <https://ria.ru/20210102/sotrudnichestvo-1591798891.html>

⁴⁹ Wang Yi: The More Turbulent the World Is, the More Confidently China–Russia Cooperation Should Develop (in Chinese: 王毅：世界越是动荡不宁，中俄合作越要坚定前行) // Xinhua, July 7, 2021. URL: http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2021-03/07/c_1127180013.htm

⁵⁰ China Ministry of Defense: China–Russia Military Relations Are an Important Pillar of Bilateral Strategic Cooperation (in Chinese: 国防部：中俄两军关系是战略合作的亮点和重要支撑) // Xinhua, March 1, 2021. URL: http://www.xinhuanet.com/2021-03/01/c_1127154943.htm

China.⁵¹ The two countries have thus officially aligned their ideas and concepts of global governance. Regular contacts at all levels, especially at the higher and summit levels, serve to constantly improve the partnership model in order to effectively resist external pressure in the context of the geopolitical confrontation.⁵²

The Western foreign policy community continues to warn of the dangers of a rapprochement between Russia and China, stressing the need to pull Moscow into its orbit in order to reduce China's strategic room for maneuver. However, as Russian observers have noted, the U.S.–Russia confrontation and complete absence of trust between the two means that such a scenario is unlikely in the foreseeable future.

At the same time, the Chinese side believes that the U.S. policy is aimed at preventing Russia from becoming an ally of China in the Asia Pacific and stopping the two countries from further technological cooperation, the line of reasoning being that developing ties with the West will help Moscow avoid becoming dependent on Beijing. However, the United States does not expect Russia to change course overnight; instead, it tends to play the long game in the hope that the new Russian elite will distance itself from China. U.S. foreign policymakers have spent years observing Russia–China relations and have thus developed an understanding of their close strategic nature. “Strategic patience” means waiting for the changes in Russia and China to gradually unfold.

Russia and China need to respond to the changing U.S. policy. However, the abrupt return of the Biden administration to a multilateral foreign policy is, to a large extent, an attempt to correct the excesses of Donald Trump's unilateralist policies. Despite the direct and indirect statements of Biden's team, Chinese observers believe that the United States is still in the process of defining its policy towards Russia, China, regional security and global governance.

3.3. Russia, China and the European Union

EU–Russia and EU–China Relations

The relations between Russia and Europe have been at a low ebb since 2014, with various crises cropping up every year. The relations soured further in 2020–2021 in connection with the so-called “Navalny case” and a number of spy scandals, with the Russian intelligence agencies being accused of illegal actions in the Czech Republic and other EU countries. Moscow sees the constant criticism from Brussels and European capitals over alleged human rights violations in Russia as interference in its internal affairs.⁵³

⁵¹ Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of China and Russia on Certain Aspects of Global Governance in Modern Conditions // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, March 23, 2021.
URL: https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4647776

⁵² Andrey Kortunov. Growing U.S. Pressure Incentive to Make China–Russia Ties More Diverse // Russian International Affairs Council, March 23, 2021. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytcs-and-comments/analytcs/growing-us-pressure-incentive-to-make-china-russia-ties-more-diverse/>

⁵³ Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's Remarks at a Conference on Relations Between Russia and the European Union, Moscow, May 31, 2021 // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, May 31, 2021.
URL: https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4759042?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_ckNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_ckNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB

Despite all this, the European Union continues to be Russia's largest trading partner, accounting for 38.5 per cent of its total foreign trade (33.8 per cent excluding the United Kingdom). Trade reached \$218.8 billion in 2020 (\$192.2 billion excluding the United Kingdom).⁵⁴ In addition, EU countries are traditionally among the leaders in foreign direct investments in the Russian economy.⁵⁵ The lack of mutual trust, political tensions and sanctions certainly have a negative impact on the economic ties. The European Union's share in Russian foreign trade has significantly dropped as compared to 2013. The flagship EU–Russia project Nord Stream 2 is under constant threat of cancellation thanks to the lobbying of those who have taken a hardline stance against Russia and the sanctions of the European Union's main partner, the United States.⁵⁶

The EU–China relations are also characterized by a combination of deep contradictions at the political and ideological level and mutually beneficial economic cooperation. According to various sources, EU–China trade reached \$649.5 or \$709 billion in 2020.⁵⁷ For the first time ever, China is the European Union's largest commodities trading partner.⁵⁸ EU direct investments into China reached \$5.7 billion, while Chinese direct investments into the European Union totaled \$4.7 billion.⁵⁹ The year 2020 saw the signing of the EU–China Agreement on the Protection of Geographical Indications. China plays an important role in the European economy, as highlighted by the significant supplies of medical and personal protective equipment during the coronavirus pandemic. The sides have also signed agreements on vaccines, with Hungary taking delivery of a China-produced COVID-19 vaccine.⁶⁰

Work continued in 2020 on the EU–China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, which was supposed to replace a number of bilateral agreements signed between China and 25 EU countries and make it significantly easier for European companies to invest in various sectors of the Chinese economy. On December 30, EU and Chinese leaders announced that they had concluded negotiations in principle on the agreement and its timeframe. Given the strong resistance from

⁵⁴ Foreign Trade with Major Countries // Federal Customs Service. URL: <https://customs.gov.ru/folder/511>

⁵⁵ Russia Ranked 11th Most Attractive Country for Investments in Europe // TASS, December 3, 2021. URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/11545731>

⁵⁶ Vladislav Belov. Russia–Europe: Nothing New on the Western Economic Front? // Russian International Affairs Council, March 11, 2021. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytiks-and-comments/analytiks/rossiya-evrosoyuz-na-zapadnom-ekonomicheskoy-fronte-bez-peremen/>

⁵⁷ China Overtakes U.S. as EU's Biggest Trading Partner // BBC, February 17, 2021. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-56093378>

⁵⁸ Total Imports and Exports with Major Countries and Territories for December 2020 (billion dollars) (in Chinese: 2020年12月进出口商品主要国别(地区)总值表(美元值)) // General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, January 14, 2021. URL: <http://www.customs.gov.cn/customs/302249/zfxxgk/2799825/302274/302275/3511695/index.html>

⁵⁹ Euro Area International Trade in Goods Surplus €29.2 bn // Eurostat, February 15, 2021. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/portlet_file_entry/2995521/6-15022021-BP-EN.pdf/e8b971dd-7b51-752b-2253-7fdb1786f4d9

⁶⁰ EU–China Trade Hits \$649.5 Billion in 2020. China Becomes EU's Largest Trading Partner for First Time (in Chinese: 去年贸易额达6495亿美元, 中国首次成欧盟第一大贸易伙伴) // Sina, February 24, 2021. URL: <https://finance.sina.com.cn/tech/2021-02-24/doc-ikftssap8505790.shtml>

⁶⁰ Hungary Becomes First EU Country to Use Chinese COVID-19 Vaccine // Interfax, February 24, 2021. URL: <https://www.interfax.ru/world/752311>

the United States, this was an important success for Chinese economic diplomacy. The Chinese side has high hopes for the agreement in terms of creating a reliable investment protection mechanism for both parties, which will satisfy the European Union's long-standing demands with regard to China and lay the foundations for negotiations on a free trade area to be launched. However, negotiations on the further signing and ratification ground to a halt in May 2021 after the European Union introduced a package of sanctions against China in connection with its alleged human rights violations in Xinjiang and China hit back with sanctions of its own.⁶¹

The European side stepped up its criticism of China's policy on human rights and national minorities in 2020, raising the issue of Hong Kong and Xinjiang at every opportunity in bilateral and multilateral formats. Beijing considers these moves to be interference in its internal affairs.

Several European countries have spoken out in favor of looking into the issue of placing the blame for the coronavirus pandemic on China. During the early days of the crisis, the European Parliament criticized the anti-epidemic measures taken by the Chinese government, and China was accused of using the pandemic to expand its influence. All this has led to calls to reconsider relations with Beijing. In June 2021, the European Commission denounced China (like Russia) for allegedly spreading false information about the novel coronavirus on the Internet.⁶² A number of EU countries, most notably France, are unhappy with the way China conducts its foreign policy of late, in particular lauding its apparent success in the fight against COVID-19 compared to the failures of developed countries.

This dissatisfaction of European nations with their Chinese counterparts, coupled with the active efforts of American diplomacy, led to China's Huawei being excluded (formally or otherwise) from tenders to set up 5G networks in a number of European countries, including Germany and France.⁶³

It is the Central and Eastern European countries that are most critical of Europe's relations with China. These include Poland, Lithuania and the Czech Republic. Chinese commentators have noted that the attitudes of some Central and Eastern European countries towards China started to sour at around the same time that the U.S.–Russia relations took a nosedive and the Ukrainian crisis was in full swing. This has led to a widening of the differences in the positions of EU member states on issues of interaction with China, which explains why some European countries only sent their foreign ministers to the 17+1 meeting between the leaders of China and Central and Eastern Europe countries in 2021. In May 2021, Lithuania announced that it would be pulling out of the

⁶¹ European Parliament Votes to "Freeze" Investment Deal until China Lifts Sanctions // Politico, May 20, 2020.
URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/european-parliament-freezes-china-investment-deal-vote/>

⁶² Tackling COVID-19 Disinformation – Getting the Facts Right. Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions // European Commission, June 10, 2020. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020JC0008>

⁶³ Germany Tightens 5G Security, May Informally Exclude Huawei // Engineering and Technology, September 30, 2020.
URL: <https://eandt.theiet.org/content/articles/2020/09/germany-tightens-5g-network-security-may-informally-exclude-huawei/#:~:text=France%20has%20informally%20excluded%20Huawei,%5Bas%20a%20ban%5D>

format entirely. The European Union has traditionally been extremely cautious about the mechanism, seeing it as an attempt on the part of Beijing to “drive a wedge” between EU countries.⁶⁴

Economic ties between China and Europe have been under increasing pressure as a result of the deteriorating political climate. At the same time, Russian experts believe that the EU and Chinese economies are so intricately intertwined that Europe simply cannot take any drastic steps towards China. Several EU documents stress the importance of developing cooperation with China, including the main provisions of the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific adopted in April 2021.⁶⁵

Opportunities for Developing Trilateral Cooperation between Russia, China and the EU

Moving forward, Russia and China’s relations with the European Union are expected to combine elements of cooperation and confrontation, although political tensions will mean that the room for practical interaction will shrink. At the same time, joint initiatives on issues of mutual interest that are particularly important for the world community could help ensure global prosperity and regional synergy. Promising areas for the development of practical cooperation between Russia, China and the European Union currently include issues of climate change, infrastructure connectivity and cooperation in the Arctic.

Russia, China and the European Union actively support the Paris Agreement on climate change. While issues of reducing carbon emissions and the “green transition” are sensitive for the respective industries given the significant share of energy resources in Russian exports, the relevance of the country’s “green agenda” is largely determined by the predicted negative impact of global warming on Russia, including the threat to the ecosystems of the Arctic and the tundra and the possible soil desertification and drop-off in food production. The parties could cooperate on emission reductions, energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, new energy technologies, energy subsidies and other areas of energy policy.

Russia’s geographical position between China and the European Union is key to unlocking the significant potential of trilateral cooperation in the development of a network of infrastructure links. As Chinese experts point out, the 2018 Strategy for Connecting Europe and Asia⁶⁶ states that Brussels will seek to attract international financing for large infrastructure projects as part of the 2014 Investment

⁶⁴ Lithuania Pulls Out of China’s “17+1” Bloc in Eastern Europe // Politico, May 21, 2021. URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/lithuania-pulls-out-china-17-1-bloc-eastern-central-europe-foreign-minister-gabriellus-landsbergis/>

⁶⁵ EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific // EEAS, April 19, 2021. URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/96741/EU%20Strategy%20for%20Cooperation%20in%20the%20Indo-Pacific

⁶⁶ Connecting Europe and Asia. Building Blocks for an EU Strategy. Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank // European Commission, September 19, 2018. URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_-_connecting_europe_and_asia_-_building_blocks_for_an_eu_strategy_2018-09-19.pdf

Plan for Europe (the so-called Juncker Plan)⁶⁷ and the EU External Investment Plan.⁶⁸ In this context, cooperation between Europe and Asia in the construction of transport corridors looks particularly promising.

The co-development of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, the Eurasian Economic Union and the EU strategy for connecting Europe and Asia, as well as the joint development of multilateral initiatives in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Western Balkans, would meet the interests of all three actors. The complementarity of human resources, technology and capital, as well as the introduction of the best management practices of the three parties in various fields, could be harnessed to help smooth political differences and contribute to the development of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Eurasian continent with unbroken transport links, the free movement of personnel, positive political dialogue and active financial ties. At the same time, given the growing concern of EU countries towards the Belt and Road Initiative and its doubts about cooperating with the EAEU, it would appear unlikely that these ambitious goals will be implemented in full any time soon.

The three actors are also especially interested in the peaceful development and future prosperity of the Arctic region. The sides could open a dialogue on climate change mitigation, scientific research, shipping and the development of Arctic resources, relying on each other's technological advantages without touching on military and security issues. The Arctic Council could act as a platform for such multilateral interaction: Russia is a founding member of the Council; China has been given observer status; and the European Union includes both members and observer states and is allowed to observe its activities before a decision is made on whether to grant it observer status.

It is also vitally important during the pandemic to work together to combat the coronavirus infection, including through scientific cooperation and the joint development and exchange of vaccines and drugs. At the same time, the politicization of COVID-19 and the so-called “vaccine diplomacy” of the European Union complicate interaction on this track.

3.4. Russia, China and India

Russia and India enjoy close and friendly relations. The countries have developed a particularly privileged strategic partnership based on the concordance of views of Moscow and New Delhi on the fundamental issues of the world order and the traditionally positive attitude of the peoples of the two countries towards each other. In practical terms, Russia–India cooperation is premised on stable ties in the military-technical and energy spheres. That said, economic interaction between the two countries is underdeveloped: bilateral trade hit just \$9.26 billion in 2020, down 17.6% since the pandemic began, which is significantly lower than both Russia–China and India–China trade.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Investment Plan for Europe // European Commission. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/investment-plan-europe_en

⁶⁸ EU External Investment Plan // European Commission. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/eu-external-investment-plan/home_en#:~:text=Prosperity,offer%20people%20a%20brighter%20future

⁶⁹ Foreign Trade with Major Countries // Federal Customs Service. URL: <https://customs.gov.ru/folder/511>

Concerns have been voiced in recent years that the bilateral partnership between Russia and India is losing significance amid the strengthening of the U.S.–India ties and an increasingly intense confrontation between Moscow and Washington. In addition, Russia and India disagree on a number of important regional development issues. These include, first and foremost, India's participation in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and its promotion of the concept of the Indo-Pacific region, which Russia sees as a U.S. initiative aimed at containing other actors, primarily China, and limiting Russia's potential participation in regional affairs. That notwithstanding, the parties are working to smooth out the existing contradictions and, despite pressure from Washington on a number of issues, New Delhi is not shying away from close cooperation with Moscow. This much was made clear on April 28, 2021, when the sides announced the launch of the 2+2 dialogue mechanism involving the foreign and defense ministers of the two countries.⁷⁰

Chinese commentators believe that Russia is losing importance for India, and that the Indian elites are increasingly focused on the United States. For example, Minister of External Affairs of the Government of India Subrahmanyam Jaisankar's book *The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World* all but ignores Russia in favor of the United States and Japan. As the Chinese side has predicted, India will not infringe on Russia's interests. However, it will not follow Moscow's strategic line and will limit itself in the future to supporting Russia on a number of foreign policy issues while at the same time continuing its close cooperation with the United States. At the same time, New Delhi is interested in maintaining strategic relations with Russia through large-scale arms purchases in order to prevent Russia and Pakistan from becoming friendlier.

Unlike Russia–India interaction, relations between China and India are extremely rocky. Tensions between Beijing and New Delhi grew throughout 2020 on a number of issues, primarily due to the complicated situation on the border.

This is not the first time that the border issue has caused problems in China–India relations. Tensions have flared up annually over the past few years but have successfully been resolved through diplomatic means. The June 2020 clash in Galwan Valley was the bloodiest since 1967. Frictions would continue in other disputed territories, including near Pangong Lake. The conflict brought about a serious increase in anti-Chinese sentiments in Indian politics and led to large-scale restrictions on practical interaction. China refrained from taking any retaliatory steps and avoided publishing detailed reports on the events in the media. At the same time, in the aftermath of the clash, the sides made it clear that they did not want relations to spiral out of control. It took several rounds of negotiations before the withdrawal of troops from the *de facto* line of control began on February 10, 2021, and the situation on the western section of the China–India border gradually started to return to normal, although the border issues remain frozen for the time being.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Russia and India to Establish New Dialogue Format // Vedomosti, April 28, 2021.

URL: <https://www.vedomosti.ru/society/news/2021/04/28/868089-rossiya-i-indiya-ustanovyat-novii-format-dialoga>

⁷¹ India and China Agree to Regulate Border Issues Quickly // RIA Novosti, April 10, 2021.

URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/11114741>

The year 2020 was marked by the desire on the part of India to “decouple” from China in the economic sphere. New Delhi has traditionally been less than pleased with the trade deficit in China–India relations (the largest in its foreign trade). The Indian side has stated on more than one occasion that large imports from China have “bled” some branches of its industry “dry” and weakened domestic production capacities, thus handicapping industrial development. At the same time, as Chinese experts have noted, India is interested in increasing Chinese imports of components for its pharmaceuticals and IT services industries. In the context of the U.S. policy of the “desinicization” of production chains, India sees the potential to create an alternative to China in the manufacturing industry and is actively trying to get U.S. and Japanese companies to open facilities in its territory.⁷²

New Delhi has introduced restrictions on economic and technological interaction with China. Investment restrictions were announced on April 18, 2020, for reasons of national security.⁷³ Following the clashes in Galwan Valley, India made a number of high-profile and, as far as the Chinese side sees it, irrational decisions to reduce economic dependence on China. These included a ban on Chinese companies and joint ventures participating in infrastructure projects in India,⁷⁴ a boycott of Chinese goods,⁷⁵ and the cancellation of commercial contracts with Chinese companies.⁷⁶ One June 29, 2020, the Indian government cited “national security” as a reason to ban 59 Chinese mobile apps from being used in the country.⁷⁷ That number has since grown to 200.⁷⁸

Despite all this, India continues to be economically dependent on China. In 2020, bilateral trade amounted to \$87.6 or \$77.7 billion, depending on the source.⁷⁹ China thus replaced the United States as India’s biggest trading partner.⁸⁰

China–India contradictions have continued to grow in terms of their regional and global strategies. China is concerned about the blossoming U.S.–India relationship, and finds New Delhi’s involvement in Washington’s Indo-Pacific project particularly troubling. India’s greatest concern at the regional level is the deve-

⁷² Coronavirus: Can India replace China as World’s Factory? // BBC News, May 18, 2020.
URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-52672510>

⁷³ Keeping an Eye on Chinese FDI // The Economic Times, April 19, 2020.
URL: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/keeping-a-check-on-the-chinese/articleshow/75223704.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

⁷⁴ India to Ban Chinese Companies from Highway Projects, Says Nitin Gadkari // The Times of India, July 1, 2020.
URL: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-to-ban-chinese-companies-from-highway-projects-says-gadkari/articleshow/76728462.cms>

⁷⁵ Indians Call for Boycott of Chinese Goods After Fatal Border Clashes // The Guardian.
URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/18/indians-call-for-boycott-of-chinese-goods-after-fatal-border-clashes>

⁷⁶ See, for example: Indian Railways to Terminate \$60-Million Contract with Chinese Contractor // Mintrans, June 30, 2020.
URL: <https://mintrans.news/zhd/zheleznye-dorogi-indii-razorvut-kontrakt-na-60-mln-s-kitayskim-podryadchikom>

⁷⁷ Indian Authorities Permanently Ban 59 Chinese Apps, Including TikTok // TASS, January 26, 2021.
URL: <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/10544881>

⁷⁸ India Blocks Over 200 Chinese Apps // D-Russia, November 25, 2020.
URL: <https://d-russia.ru/indija-blokirovala-uzhe-200-kitajskih-prilozhenij.html>

⁷⁹ GT Voice: Resilience in China–India Trade Difficult to Dismiss // GT Times, June 7, 2021.
URL: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202106/1225621.shtml>

⁸⁰ China Back as Top India Trade Partner Even as Relations Sour // Business Today, February 23, 2021.
URL: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-02-22/china-returns-as-top-india-trade-partner-even-as-relations-sour>

lopment of relations between China and Pakistan and China's growing influence in South Asia.

India significantly stepped up its strategic defense cooperation with the United States in 2020. On February 24–25, 2020, Donald Trump made his first official visit to India with the goal of transforming relations into a comprehensive global strategic partnership. An agreement was reached on the purchase of weapons for \$3 billion, including MH-60R and AH-64E helicopters.⁸¹ The breakthrough came with the signing of the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement on defense during a 2+2 meeting of foreign and defense ministers on October 27, 2020.⁸² Prior to that, a Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement was signed in 2016,⁸³ and in 2018, the sides concluded a Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)⁸⁴ which allowed the armed forces of the two countries to jointly use each other's military bases and intelligence and communications systems. As far as Chinese experts are concerned, this step makes New Delhi a quasi-ally of Washington.

India has also stepped up its strategic coordination with the United States on regional affairs. On October 6, 2020, the foreign ministers of the United States, Japan, India and Australia met as part of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue.⁸⁵ The first Quad Leaders' Summit was subsequently held on March 12, 2021. In addition, India and Japan signed an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement on September 10, 2020, that would allow the militaries of the two countries to exchange supplies and logistical support.⁸⁶ And on June 4, 2020, India and Australia concluded an agreement of mutual logistics support.⁸⁷ November 2020 saw four countries participate in the Malabar naval exercise for the first time in 13 years.⁸⁸

China, in turn, is pursuing its own independent policy in South Asia. As part of efforts to combat the pandemic, China maintained contacts with the countries in the region and provided substantial support to Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Maldives. Its relations with Pakistan have also improved: the “Warrior” joint army exercise has been taking place since 2012, and the joint air exercise Shaheen (“Eagle”) was inaugurated in 2011; the “Sea Guardians” naval exercises

⁸¹ Russia Knocked out of Tenders as India Plans to Buy Weapons from U.S // *Gazeta.ru*, February 27, 2020.
URL: <https://www.gazeta.ru/army/2020/02/27/12978691.shtml>

⁸² China is Not Our Friend: U.S. and India Rally Against India // *Gazeta.ru*, October 28, 2020.
URL: https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2020/10/28_a_13336711.shtml

⁸³ U.S. and India Agree on Final Text of Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement // *RIA Novosti*, June 7, 2016.
URL: <https://ria.ru/20160607/1444201300.html>

⁸⁴ India and U.S. Sign Security and Communications Agreement // *RIA Novosti*, September 6, 2018.
URL: <https://ria.ru/20180906/1527957275.html>

⁸⁵ Japan's Foreign Minister Praises Four-Way Dialogue with U.S., India and Australia // *TASS*, October 7, 2020.
URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/9647449>

⁸⁶ Japan and India Sign Defence Logistics Cooperation Agreement // *Russia–Japan Society*, September 11, 2020.
URL: <https://russijapansociety.ru/?p=22342>

⁸⁷ India and Australia Sign Agreement on Military Bases // *Russian Planet*, June 4, 2020.
URL: <https://rusplt.ru/policy/indiya-i-avstraliya-podpisali-5ed91.html>

⁸⁸ Friends Squared. Can the QUAD Become Asia's NATO? // *TASS*, November 30, 2020.
URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/10116857>

have since been added,⁸⁹ and on November 30, 2020, the parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance defense cooperation.⁹⁰

The China–India relations are thus at an extremely low ebb. Their immediate strategic underpinnings have been destroyed, and it will be difficult to rebuild them in the short term. Public opinion towards the other state is generally negative in the two countries. These tendencies have further exacerbated in the context of the pandemic, the lack of personal contacts between leaders and the restrictions on the development of trade and economic interaction.

The Chinese side stresses that it continues to attach strategic importance to its relations with India. In 2021, Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China Wang Yi noted that the border dispute is a legacy of the past that does not reflect the current status of China–India relations.⁹¹ India, according to Chinese experts, does not agree: the elites are calling on New Delhi to change the status quo in bilateral relations and join forces with the United States to stand against China. Meanwhile, Minister of External Affairs of the Government of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar insists that the only way for China–India relations to move forward is if the border is stable and calm,⁹² and the restoration of the border between the two countries in its previous form (i.e. as it was until April 2020), which Subrahmanyam demands, is an important part of this.⁹³

Russian experts believe that the rise in anti-Chinese sentiment following the clashes in Galwan Valley will have long-term repercussions for China–India relations, although this will not result in any significant changes in India's foreign policy: while New Delhi is stepping its interaction with the United States on security issues, it still will not be willing to sacrifice its strategic autonomy in foreign policy issues.

It is in Moscow's long-term interests to reduce tensions between Beijing and New Delhi. In September 2020, Russia helped set up meetings between the Chinese and Indian ministers of defense and foreign affairs in Moscow to address the border conflict.⁹⁴ Of course, Russia, like other powers, has limited influence on Chinese and Indian politics, but it could help create incentives for them to work together to find compromises in trilateral or multilateral formats, including BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Areas of trilateral coopera-

⁸⁹ China–Pakistan Naval Drills: More than Just Symbolism // Observer Research Foundation, January 11, 2020.
URL: <https://www.orfonline.org/research/china-pakistan-naval-drills-more-than-just-symbolism-60138/>

⁹⁰ Pakistan, China Ink Pact on Defence Cooperation // The Express Tribune, November 30, 2020.
URL: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2274130/pakistan-china-ink-pact-on-defence-cooperation>

⁹¹ Q & A with State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi at a Media Conference on China's Foreign Policy and International Relations // Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Russian Federation, March 8, 2021.
URL: <http://ru.china-embassy.org/rus/zgxw/t1859896.htm>

⁹² China Shouldn't View us through U.S. lens. That Would Be a Great Disservice, Says S Jaishankar // The Times of India, April 2, 2020. URL: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/77307398.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

⁹³ China Should Restore Status Quo Ante of April in Ladakh: Jaishankar to Wang Yi // The Economic Times, September 11, 2020. URL: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/china-should-restore-status-quo-ante-of-april-in-ladakh-jaishankar-to-wang/articleshow/78047812.cms?from=mdr>

⁹⁴ India and China Agree to De-Escalate Following Talks in Moscow // RBC, September 11, 2020.
URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/11/09/2020/5f5b20549a7947db7b47c2a7>

tion, according to the Russian side, could include projects in the Russian Arctic and Far East, as well as in technology, medicine, food production and other areas.⁹⁵ However, as far as the Chinese side sees it, animosities with Beijing and the declining importance of Moscow for New Delhi as it develops partnerships with other major powers call into question the real prospects for cooperation within such a trilateral format.

⁹⁵ Andrey Kortunov. Russia Moves East, India West, Straining Ties // Russian International Affairs Council, December 28, 2012. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/russia-moves-east-india-west-straining-ties/>

4. Russia–China Trade and Economic Cooperation: What the Pandemic Has Taught Us

4.1. Russia–China Trade in 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that, despite the current positive dynamics in economic relations between Russia and China, the external environment can negatively impact the development of cooperation between countries.⁹⁶ Russia–China interaction has slowed down as a result of the pandemic. For example, according to the General Administration of Customs of the People’s Republic of China, Russia–China trade turnover decreased to \$107.8 billion in 2020, after growing consistently since 2015 before then (*Fig. 1*). This was due to the decrease in Russian exports to China, which amounted to \$57.2 billion (–6.6 per cent). Meanwhile, Chinese exports to Russia increased by 1.7 per cent during this period, to \$50.6 billion.⁹⁷ Federal Customs Service of Russia statistics suggest that the drop-off was even more pronounced, with mutual trade topping out at \$103.97 billion, and Russian exports falling by 14.4 per cent.⁹⁸

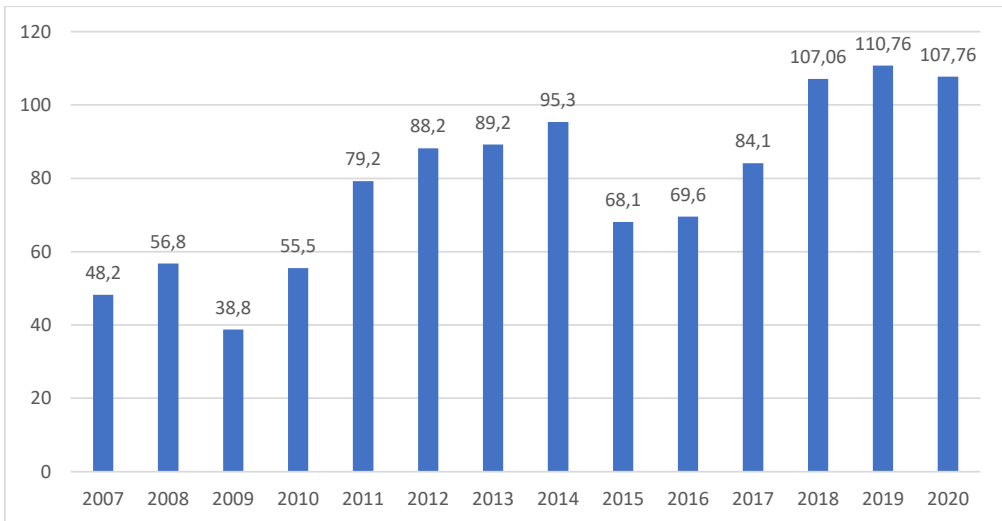


Figure 1. Russia–China Trade Turnover 2007–2020, billion dollars.

Source: Compiled by A. Larionov based on: “Developing Russia–China Economic Cooperation” in *Russia–China Dialogue: The 2020 Model: Report No. 58/2020 / Sergey Luzyanin, Zhao Huasheng, Andrey Kortunov et al. Moscow, NPMP RIAC, 2021.*

⁹⁶ RIAC and Embassy of China in Russia Discuss Russia–China Bilateral Priorities // Russian International Affairs Council, January 28, 2021. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/news/riac-and-embassy-of-china-in-russia-discuss-russia-china-bilateral-priorities/>

⁹⁷ Analysis Report and Statistical Data on Russia–China Foreign Trade in 2020 // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People’s Republic of China. URL: http://www.russchinatrade.ru/ru-cn-cooperation/trade_ru_cn

⁹⁸ Foreign Trade with Major Countries // Federal Customs Service. URL: <https://customs.gov.ru/folder/511>

However, given the downturn in the global economy and the potential economic losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the decline in bilateral trade appears to be relatively small and could even be considered a good result, especially given the fact that trade turnover exceeded \$100 billion for the third year in a row in 2020. What is more, trade with China accounted for 18.3 per cent of Russia's total foreign trade (+1.7 per cent), higher than at any other point in the history of Russia–China interaction.⁹⁹ China has been Russia's biggest trading partner for the past 11 years, while Russia was China's 11th biggest trading partner as of year-end 2020.¹⁰⁰

The pandemic also impacted mutual trade in 2021. However, a recovery is to be expected if quarantine measures are lifted and current trends continue. According to Chinese data, Russia–China trade increased by 15.4 per cent in the first quarter of 2021 year-on-year. Russian exports to China fell by 0.1 per cent, while Chinese exports to Russia grew by 42.7 per cent.¹⁰¹

The decline in bilateral trade in 2020 can be put down, among other things, to logistical difficulties caused by the anti-epidemic measures. For instance, China introduced restrictions at border crossings, meaning that goods were prevented from entering the country. Upwards of 200 vehicles would routinely be backed up at the borders – this is precisely what happened in the middle of December, when a queue of 265 trucks stood at the border crossing points in Primorsky Territory.¹⁰² The increased freight transit time is a direct consequence of the new requirements put in place for testing frozen foods for the presence of the virus on their surface and the disinfection of imported containers.¹⁰³ The restrictions have had a significant impact, for example, on the export of Russian fish products. Coronavirus outbreaks at Chinese ports meant that Russian ships carrying seafood were not allowed to unload their products (Qingdao Port was closed in September and the Port of Dalian in December), leading to significant losses for seafood producers, as storage capacity and domestic demand are both insufficient.¹⁰⁴

The decrease in trade turnover is probably also due in large part to the slowdown in the growth rate of the Chinese economy, which hit a 45-year low¹⁰⁵ of 2.3 per cent in 2020.¹⁰⁶ This slowdown has negatively impacted the demand for Russia's

⁹⁹ Foreign Trade with Major Countries // Federal Customs Service. URL: <https://customs.gov.ru/folder/511>

¹⁰⁰ Analysis Report and Statistical Data on Russia–China Foreign Trade in 2020 // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People's Republic of China. URL: http://www.russchinatrade.ru/ru/ru-cn-cooperation/trade_ru_cn

¹⁰¹ China Publishes Q1 2021 Foreign Trade Statistics // Prime Business News Agency, April 13, 2021. URL: https://1prime.ru/state_regulation/20210413/833449312.html

¹⁰² 265 Trucks Backed Up at Chinese Border in Primorsky Territory Due to Chinese Lockdown Measures // Kommersant, December 14, 2020. URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4614224>

¹⁰³ Analysis Report and Statistical Data on Russia–China Foreign Trade in 2020 // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People's Republic of China. URL: http://www.russchinatrade.ru/ru/ru-cn-cooperation/trade_ru_cn

¹⁰⁴ Anatoly Komrakov. It Will be Difficult for Moscow to Return to the Chinese Seafood Market // Nezavisimaya gazeta, December 27, 2020. URL: https://www.ng.ru/economics/2020-12-27/1_8050_seafood.html

¹⁰⁵ GDP Growth in China Lowest in 45 Years // RBC, January 18, 2021. URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/18/01/2021/600503c09a79470549f19781>

¹⁰⁶ China Economic News Digest, January 27, 2021 // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People's Republic of China. URL: [http://www.russchinatrade.ru/assets/files/ru-news/SMI/%D0%94%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%B4%D0%B6%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%20%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B9%20%D0%BE%20%D0%9A%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B5%20%D0%BE%D1%82%2027.01.2021\).pdf](http://www.russchinatrade.ru/assets/files/ru-news/SMI/%D0%94%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%B4%D0%B6%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%20%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B9%20%D0%BE%20%D0%9A%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B5%20%D0%BE%D1%82%2027.01.2021).pdf)

main exports to China, namely, mineral fuel, oil and oil products (*Table 1*). Exports of this commodity groups amounted to \$33.4 billion in 2020, down 21.6% from the previous year. Some positive trends could nevertheless be traced in Russia's energy exports to China. As of late 2020, Russia was the second biggest supplier of crude oil to China, having delivered 3.8 billion cubic meters via the Power of Siberia pipeline by mid-December – 25 per cent more than planned.¹⁰⁷

Russian exports of the following product groups suffered significantly: timber and timber products (–14 per cent); paper pulp and cellulose (–7.1 per cent); fertilizers (–13.5 per cent); and machinery and equipment (–9.3 per cent). Meanwhile, exports of non-ferrous metals (+42.1 per cent), ferrous metals (+314.5 per cent), precious stones and metals (+136.1 per cent), etc., grew in 2020. The increase in exports of metals can be put down to the gradual recovery of the Chinese economy following the introduction of the coronavirus-related restrictions, as well as to the rise in prices.¹⁰⁸ Metal prices in particular soared in 2020 against the background of the pandemic (with the cost of one ton of hot-rolled steel reaching \$700 in December).¹⁰⁹

Agricultural and food exports continued to grow in 2020 (up 13.9 per cent), which is a testament to the interaction mechanisms that had been set up before COVID-19 hit to increase supplies. Trade in agricultural products reached between \$5.4 and \$5.55 billion, depending on the source.¹¹⁰ China has become the largest importer of Russian agricultural products and meat. Russian food exports to China are expected to grow in 2021. Active government assistance in organizing trial deliveries of samples of Russian agricultural products to China should be continued. This practice yielded positive results in 2019, with the list of suppliers permitted to export poultry meat to China being expanded.¹¹¹ It was reported in December 2020 that Rusagro Group of Companies had delivered the first batch of Russian freeze-dried dairy products to Shandong province in China.¹¹² Cooperation in this area should continue in 2021.

Chinese exports to Russia, on the other hand, demonstrated positive dynamics (*Table 2*). One export sector that posted significant growth was that of machinery and equipment. Given the current trends, this product category may account for over 50 per cent of all exports in 2021. The coronavirus pandemic has led to an

¹⁰⁷ Gazprom Supplied Almost 3.8 Billion Cubic Metres of Gas to China via Power of Siberia Pipeline // *Finanz.ru*, December 22, 2020.

URL: <https://www.finanz.ru/novosti/aktzii/gazprom-postavil-v-kitay-po-sile-sibiri-pochti-3-8-mlrd-kub-m-gaza-1029914944>

¹⁰⁸ Analysis Report and Statistical Data on Russia–China Foreign Trade in 2020 // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People's Republic of China. URL: http://www.russchinatrade.ru/ru/ru-cn-cooperation/trade_ru_cn

¹⁰⁹ Kristina Rudich. An Iron Record. How the Rise in Metal Prices Hit Russian Business // *Sekret firmy*, December 25, 2020. URL: <https://secretmag.ru/news/zheleznyi-rekord-kak-rost-cen-na-metally-udaril-po-rossiiskomu-biznesu.htm>

¹¹⁰ Real Gold is not Afraid of Fire: On Russia–China Trade and Economic Cooperation // *Russian.china*, February 3, 2021. URL: http://russian.china.org.cn/china/txt/2021-02/03/content_77183441.htm

¹¹¹ Russia–China Dialogue: The 2020 Model: Report No. 58. Sergey Luzyanin (head), Zhao Huasheng (head) et al., Moscow, NPMP RIAC, 2021. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/papers/Russia-China-2020-Report58-En.pdf>

¹¹² China Economic News Digest, January 27, 2021 // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People's Republic of China.

URL: [http://www.russchinatrade.ru/assets/files/ru-news/SMI/%D0%94%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%B4%D0%B6%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%20%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B9%20%D0%BE%20%D0%9A%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B5%20\(%D0%BE%D1%82%2027.01.2021\).pdf](http://www.russchinatrade.ru/assets/files/ru-news/SMI/%D0%94%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%B4%D0%B6%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%20%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B9%20%D0%BE%20%D0%9A%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B5%20(%D0%BE%D1%82%2027.01.2021).pdf)

Table 1. Commodity Structure of Russian Exports to China in 2020

Commodity group	Export volume (million dollars)	Share in total exports (%)	Year-on year changes (%)
Mineral fuel, oil and oil products	33,385.39	58.4	–21.6
Non-ferrous metals	4454.49	7.8	42.1
Agricultural and food products	4082.45	7.1	13.9
Timber and timber products	3709.69	6.5	–14
Ores, slag and ash	3427.55	6	53.7
Ferrous metals	2171.9	3.7	314.5
Chemicals and related products	1616.9	2.8	27.9
Precious stones and metals	1512.04	2.6	136.1
Paper pulp and cellulose	806.38	1.4	–7.1
Fertilizers	660.76	1.2	–13.5
Machinery and equipment	518.06	0.9	–9.3
Paper, paperboard and articles thereof	368.92	0.6	102.6

Source: Compiled by A. Larionov based on: Analysis Report and Statistical Data on Russia–China Foreign Trade in 2020 // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People’s Republic of China.

URL: http://www.russchinatrade.ru/ru/ru-cn-cooperation/trade_ru_cn.

increased demand for laptops and tablets – exports of these products to Russia have increased by 39 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively. In addition, Chinese-made smartphones rank first in sales on the Russian market.¹¹³ Exports of the following commodity groups also increased in 2020: textile products and materials (+13.2 per cent); miscellaneous industrial goods (+27.8 per cent); paper, paperboard and articles thereof (+17.2 per cent), etc. Personal protective equipment has become an important article of mutual trade in the current epidemiological situation.

At the same time, there was a drop-off in supplies of several commodity groups, including: agricultural and food products (–23.7 per cent); raw hides and skins, furskins and articles thereof (–37.8 per cent).

The dynamics and structure of trade interaction in 2020 retained the trends of previous years. In order to encourage the quantitative and qualitative improvement of trade indicators, it would be a good idea to intensify interaction at the level of individual Russian and Chinese businesses, as well as to develop infrastructure.

¹¹³ Real Gold is not Afraid of Fire: On Russia–China Trade and Economic Cooperation // Russian.china, February 3, 2021. URL: http://russian.china.org.cn/china/txt/2021-02/03/content_77183441.htm.

Table 2. Commodity Structure of Chinese Exports to Russia in 2020

Commodity group	Export volume (million dollars)	Share in total exports (%)	Year-on year changes (%)
Machinery and equipment	25,063.06	49.5	10.8
Textile products and materials	5403.3	10.7	13.2
Chemicals and related products	4947.79	9.8	7.7
Base metals and articles thereof	3701.62	7.3	–4.5
Miscellaneous industrial goods	3594.457	7.1	27.8
Raw hides and skins, furskins and articles thereof	2304.459	4.6	–37.8
Shoes, hats, umbrellas, walking sticks	1770.45	3.5	–20.4
Optical, photographic, cinematographic, checking, musical instruments	1498.33	3	22.4
Agricultural and food products	1392.82	2.8	–23.7
Articles made of stone, plaster, cement, asbestos, mica or similar materials; ceramic products; glass and glassware	992,296	2	15.6
Paper, paperboard and articles thereof	319,345	0.6	17.2

Source: Compiled by A. Larionov based on: Analysis Report and Statistical Data on Russia–China Foreign Trade in 2020 // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People’s Republic of China.

URL: http://www.russchinatrade.ru/ru/ru-cn-cooperation/trade_ru_cn.

A number of measures were implemented in these areas in 2020 through cross-border e-commerce. Online shopping has opened up significant opportunities for product exchange, particularly during the pandemic. According to Chinese statistics, 10,000 Russian companies are registered on AliExpress. Additionally, 35,000 Russian sellers are on AliExpress Russia, a platform run jointly by AlibabaGroup, Mail.ru Group, Megafon and the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), a seven-fold increase from the previous year.¹¹⁴ Russian goods have great potential on the Chinese market. This much is clear from the sales figures on the Taobao online shopping platform following a special promotion for Russian products.¹¹⁵ The sales agreement reached between Russian mobile operator MTS and the Chinese company Xiaomi in February 2021 can be cited as another example of successful

¹¹⁴ Russian Sellers Account for Approximately 25% of AliExpress’ Turnover // TASS, February 17, 2021.
URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/10717165>

¹¹⁵ \$1.8 Million in 30 Minutes – That’s How Much Was Made in Sales of Russian Goods in Online Promotion on Trend-Setting Chinese Retailer’s Website // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People’s Republic of China.
URL: <http://www.russchinatrade.ru/ru/news/2020-11-08>

bilateral cooperation.¹¹⁶ Under the agreement, MTS will provide its services at Xiaomi sales points, and Xiaomi products will be available in MTS stores.

Cooperation could be intensified through the introduction of new institutional mechanisms for planning such interaction, which could be done on the basis of existing regional and international experience, as well as by setting new targets – for example, achieving \$200 billion in trade turnover (the plan is to achieve this by 2024 through the implementation of the Roadmap that has been developed¹¹⁷) – which will allow the countries to coordinate the relevant measures.

As far as the Chinese side sees it, realizing the potential of mutual trade is linked to an increase in market openness. This applies, in particular, to agriculture: China continues to reduce barriers for Russian food products, increasing imports for such commodity groups as frozen poultry, dairy products, barley, feed, milk powder, soybeans, and other products. At the same time, China is concerned about the phytosanitary measures introduced by the Russian Federation in 2019 with respect to Chinese products, including pears and stone fruits.¹¹⁸ For Russia, however, these restrictions are a response to cases where products contaminated with dangerous quarantined objects were delivered to the country. What is more, since 2019, China has been increasing imports of Russian soybeans, allowing supplies from all Russian regions. However, in early January 2021, Russia introduced a 30-per cent duty (at least 165 euros per ton) on the export of Russian soybeans outside the EAEU for the period February 1 to June 30.¹¹⁹ In these conditions, there is an imbalance in bilateral trade in agricultural products. To illustrate, as of late 2020, Chinese agricultural exports to Russia amounted, according to various estimates, to a five-year low of between \$1.39¹²⁰ and \$1.46 billion. Meanwhile, Russian agricultural exports to China reached \$4.09 billion.¹²¹

Trade liberalization needs promoting and, with this in mind, the Chinese side recommends taking a cue from its own cooperation with other countries. On November 15, 2020, China, along with 14 other East Asian countries, signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which will enter into force in late 2021¹²² and will abolish or significantly reduce tariffs on more than 90 per cent of goods within 20 years and facilitate trade.¹²³ The Agreement on

¹¹⁶ MTS and Xiaomi Agree to Open Joint Stores // banki.ru, February 25, 2021.
URL: <https://www.banki.ru/news/lenta/?id=10942140>

¹¹⁷ Russia and China Set to Agree on Roadmap for Reaching Trade Turnover of \$200 Billion // Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, August 25, 2020. URL: https://www.economy.gov.ru/material/news/rossiya_i_kitay_v_blizhayshee_vremya_soglasuyut_dorozhnuyu_kartu_dlya_dostizheniya_tovarooborota_200_mldr.html

¹¹⁸ Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Suspends Imports of Pome and Stone Fruits from China // Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (Rosselkhoznadzor), July 31, 2019.
URL: <https://fsvps.gov.ru/fsvps/news/31321.html>

¹¹⁹ Ministry of Agriculture and Federal Antimonopoly Service to Monitor Soybean Prices to Prevent Spike // TASS, January 4, 2021. URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/10405065>

¹²⁰ Analysis Report and Statistical Data on Russia–China Foreign Trade in 2020 // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People's Republic of China. URL: http://www.russchinatrade.ru/ru/ru-cn-cooperation/trade_ru_cn.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² World's Largest Free-Trade Area Created in Asia // RBC, November 15, 2020.
URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/15/11/2020/5fb0bdb69a7947d5289e28e9>

¹²³ For example, under the agreement, customs inspections of goods should not exceed 48 hours, six hours for perishable goods and express shipments.

Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EAEU and the People's Republic of China also liberalizes trade procedures, although on a much smaller scale. In addition, on January 26, 2021, China and New Zealand signed a protocol to update the Free Trade Agreement with a clause stipulating the phasing out of duties on 99 per cent of New Zealand timber and paper products entering China over the course of ten years, and another stating that duties on milk powder will be abolished completely within three years.¹²⁴ Timber, paper products and milk powder are commodities that China imports from Russia, and Russian companies are set to face even greater competition on the Chinese market. At the same time, signing such agreements calls for a careful assessment of what each party stands to gain, especially considering the scale of Russia–China interaction and the size of the countries' markets.

The two sides should also pay attention to trade facilitation in order to reduce trade costs, taking the best regional practices into account. For example, the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific initiated by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific entered into force on February 21, 2021. The agreement will help create mechanisms for the cross-border mutual recognition of e-commerce data and documents, increase the effectiveness and transparency of online commerce in the region, and significantly reduce customs clearance times and costs. As a full member of ESCAP, Russia took part in the negotiations on this agreement, although it has not completed the internal review process.

4.2. Cross-Border Shipping

While the pandemic has negatively impacted aviation and maritime traffic, rail transit has actually benefited. The number of freight trains travelling between China and Europe exceeded 12,400 in 2020, up 50 per cent from 2019. A total of 3548 freight trains passed through the Manzhouli checkpoint on the border between Russia and China – more than 20 per cent of the total number of trans-continental trains.¹²⁵ To speed up deliveries of goods purchased online, a train containing Chinese e-commerce products was launched in July 2020, delivering goods primarily to European companies.¹²⁶ Building new routes through the Trans-Siberian Railway will help save both time and money.

At the same time, growing cross-border traffic highlights infrastructural problems. According to the Chinese side, congestion at checkpoints on the Russia–China border is due not only to control measures and restrictions put in place to combat COVID-19, but also to the shortage of railway containers (because mutual use is impossible) and freight trains in Russia, as well as the red tape at border

¹²⁴ China and New Zealand Sign Protocol on Updating Free Trade Agreement // Ministry of Commerce People's Republic of China, February 2, 2021. URL: <http://russian.mofcom.gov.cn/article/tpxwru/202102/20210203036042.shtml>

¹²⁵ A Record Number of Trains Have Passed through China's Largest Land Border Crossing as Part of China–Europe Rail Freight Routes // Xinhua News Agency, January 7, 2021. URL: http://russian.news.cn/2021-01/07/c_139649155.htm

¹²⁶ China–Europe Train on Suzhou–Manzhouli–Europe Route Delivers Cross-Border E-Commerce Goods Overseas for First Time // RZD-Partner, July 10, 2020. URL: <https://www.rzd-partner.ru/zhd-transport/news/poezd-kitay-evropa-sleduyushchiy-po-marshrutu-suchzhou-manchzhouli-evropa-vpervye-vezet-za-rubezh-to/>

crossing points in Russia. In order to take full advantage of the opportunities that are opening up as a result of the increase in freight traffic between China and Europe, it is important for the Russian side to set about the rapid modernization of rail transport and shipment capacities, as well as to improve the efficiency of transportation and customs clearance at border crossings.

4.3. Mutual Investments and Cooperation in the Financial Sphere

Investment cooperation showed improvement from early 2019, with Chinese direct investments into the Russian economy totaling \$3.74 billion at the beginning of 2020 (Fig. 2). The Bank of Russia reported that that number had fallen to \$2.17 billion as of January 1, 2021. According to the Chinese side, \$340 million of direct non-financial investments was pumped into the Russian economy in 2020 (up 41.7 per cent from the previous year). In addition, agreements for contract work totaled \$5.87 billion, making up approximately 30 per cent of all new contracts signed with European businesses.¹²⁷

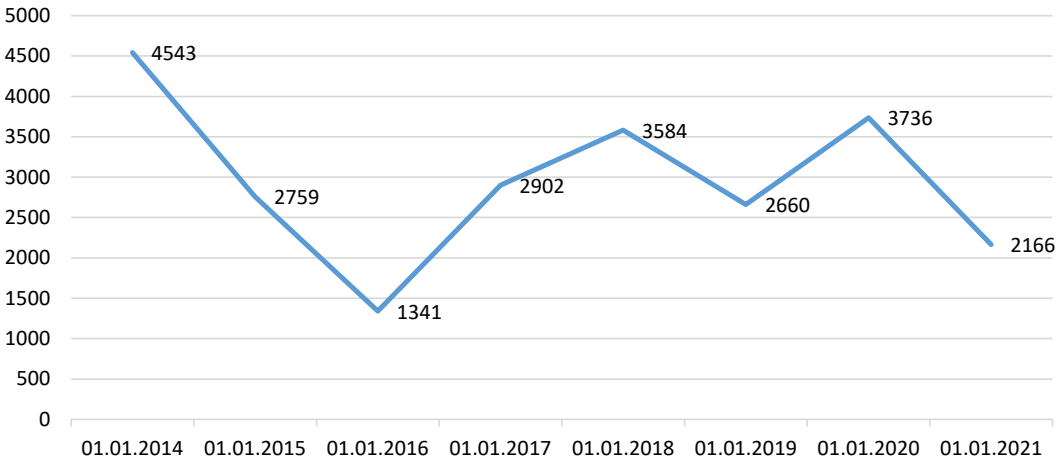


Figure 2. Chinese Direct Investments into Russia, opening balances, million dollars
 Source: Compiled by A. Larionov based on: External Sector Statistics. Bank of Russia.
 URL: https://www.cbr.ru/eng/statistics/macro_itm/svs/

A big part of Russia’s focus on developing financial and investment cooperation with China is policy of phasing out the U.S. dollar in mutual transactions. In February 2021, it was announced that the share of the euro and the dollar in the structure of the National Wealth Fund had been reduced to 35 per cent, while the Chinese Yuan (15 per cent) and Japanese Yen (5 per cent) had been added.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Real Gold is not Afraid of Fire: On Russia–China Trade and Economic Cooperation // Russian.china, February 3, 2021. URL: http://russian.china.org.cn/china/txt/2021-02/03/content_77183441.htm.

¹²⁸ Ministry of Finance Includes Yuan and Yen in National Wealth Fund Structure // banki.ru, February 24, 2021. URL: <https://www.banki.ru/news/lenta/?id=10942047>

That said, mutual settlements in national currencies remain low, which is largely due to the volatility of the ruble. For example, less than 15 per cent of transactions between the EAEU and China are settled in rubles or yuan.¹²⁹ The development of the payment infrastructure will help increase the share of mutual settlements in national currencies. Chinese and Russian consumers need to have access to this infrastructure, provided that transaction costs are reduced. Some Russian banks are pursuing this strategy, including VTB Bank, which reportedly opened a representative office in Shanghai in 2020.¹³⁰

The development of investment potential is linked to an increase in the institutionalization of bilateral cooperation and the development of new channels of interaction. For example, according to Russian observers, the absence of an institutional structure to the Belt and Road Initiative limits the potential for the development of joint projects with Russia.¹³¹ One example of the institutionalization of interaction is the Extended Tumangan Initiative.¹³²

4.4. Interregional Cooperation

The potential for the development of investment and trade cooperation is also linked to interregional ties. In 2020, China reclaimed its position as the biggest foreign trade partner of Russia's Far Eastern, Siberian, Ural and Northwestern federal districts. China's trade with the Volga Federal District grew by 7.3 per cent in 2020.¹³³

Large-scale interaction continues to develop between the regions in the Russian Far East and Northeast China. Moscow and Beijing have made changes to the Russia–China Cooperation and Development Plan in Russia's Far East Region in 2018–2024, adding Buryatia and Zabaykalsky Krai to the list of regions. Priority areas of interaction in the Russian Far East include energy, agriculture (including soybean processing) and investment cooperation, with an emphasis on the principles of sustainable development and infrastructure – particularly in the context of increasing the interconnectedness of Russia and China, and Northeast Asia in particular. Contacts on issues of special economic zones continue to show promise.¹³⁴

One of Russia's competitive advantages is that it shares borders with China, which makes it possible to reduce transactions costs associated with transporta-

¹²⁹ Glazhev. EAEU Countries May Create Their Own Monetary and Financial System // *finanz.ru*, October 26, 2020.
URL: <https://www.finanz.ru/novosti/aktsii/strany-eeas-mogut-sozdat-svoyu-valyutno-finansovuyu-sistemu-glazhev-1029722321>

¹³⁰ VTB Expands Presence in China // VTB, June 25, 2020.
URL: <https://www.vtb.ru/o-banke/press-centr/novosti-i-press-relezy/2020/06/2020-06-25-vtb-rasshiryaet-prisutstvie-v-kitae/>

¹³¹ Alexander Lesnykh. Don't Stand on the Rails: Russia is Moving Away from the "Silk Road" // *Gazeta.ru*, July 21, 2020.
URL: <https://www.gazeta.ru/business/2020/07/21/13161061.shtml>

¹³² Extended Tumangan Initiative (ETI) // Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation.
URL: <https://mintrans.gov.ru/activities/69/265>

¹³³ Development of the Global Economy and Cooperation with Tatarstan: What Are China's Plans for the Next 5 Years // *Sobytiya*, March 16, 2021. URL: <https://sntat.ru/news/society/16-03-2021/razvitiye-mirovoy-ekonomiki-i-sotrudnichestvo-s-tatarstanom-kakie-plany-u-kitaya-na-blizhayschie-5-let-5812422>

¹³⁴ More than Neighbours. China–Russia Relations Developing Successfully // *Rossiystaya gazeta*, February 11, 2021.
URL: <https://rg.ru/2021/02/11/rukovodstva-rf-i-knr-nametili-plan-dvustoronnego-razvitiia-otnoshenij.html>

tion (which is in line with the gravity model of international trade). Interaction with Heilongjiang province, where the EPINDUO store operates, is a good example of how interregional cooperation is developing.¹³⁵ The priority area here is the sale of Russian-made products, demand for which has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. The impressive results can also be put down to the simplified customs procedures at border crossings, namely the decrease in non-tariff restrictions, which makes the participants even more eager to develop cooperation.

Interregional ties between Russia and China have suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the Russian Far East. Commentators note that the hospitality and tourism industries in Vladivostok and Blagoveshchensk have been hit particularly hard, and the lack of new Chinese laborers and the withdrawal of Chinese agricultural and construction companies from the Russian market may become a serious problem for the region as a whole.¹³⁶

At the same time, regional cooperation often develops with the support of government agencies. For example, on September 25, 2020, the Chinese car manufacturer Great Wall signed a special investment contract with the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation. A decision was subsequently made to invest 42.4 billion rubles into the project as part of the second stage of the agreement. The construction of a full cycle plant in Tula Region will create more than 300 jobs.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Russia–China Economic Cooperation // Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, November 24, 2020. URL: <http://www.crc.mofcom.gov.cn/ruarticle/two/twosixth/202011/422105.html>

¹³⁶ Ivan Zuyenko. The Coronavirus Pandemic and Russia–China Regional Cooperation // *Izvestiya of the Far Eastern Federal University* 2020/2 (46), p. 24.

¹³⁷ Great Wall Invests 42.4 Billion Roubles in Localization of Auto Parts Production in Russia // Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People's Republic of China. URL: <http://www.russchinatrade.ru/ru/news/2020-09-26>

5. Russia–China Cooperation in Science and Technology: Interim Results of the Cross Years

5.1. Overview of Russia–China Cooperation in Science and Technology

Developing cooperation in science and technology is a key component of Russia–China interaction, and it is becoming even more important against the background of the trend towards diversifying cooperation, expanding the forms of interaction and moving away from the drive to develop trade relations. The main task in the coming decade is to implement joint innovative scientific and technical projects and to create a technological macro-region by combining the scientific potentials of Russia and China. For this to happen, it is important to minimize red tape, create a system of interaction that does not pose a threat to national scientific and technological development, ensure the protection of intellectual property rights, expand channels of interaction, and avoid making bold proclamations that do not bring about obvious results. This, in turn, requires a significant change in how research teams from both sides go about their activities.

The regulatory framework for Russia–China cooperation in this area is manifested in the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on Scientific and Technical Cooperation dated December 18, 1992, which sets forth the basic principles of interaction. The nature of this cooperation received further clarification in a number of protocols, most notably the Protocol between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Principles of the Protection and Distribution of Intellectual Property Rights dated February 25, 1999.¹³⁸

The most important mechanism for establishing interaction between the two countries is the Sub-Commission for Scientific and Technical Cooperation of the Russia–China Commission on Preparation of Regular Meetings of the Heads of Government, which is responsible for establishing interaction priorities in this area. The sub-commission is also used as a platform for proposing new initiatives in such areas as financial support for scientific projects, joint R&D, scientific publications, research exchanges, etc.

Scientific cooperation between Russia and China is marked by its sheer diversity,

¹³⁸ Protocol between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Principles of the Protection and Distribution of Intellectual Property Rights to the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on Scientific and Technical Cooperation dated December 18, 1992 // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, February 25, 1999. URL: https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/international_contracts/2_contract/-/storage-viewer/bilateral/page-13/46926?_storageviewer_WAR_storageviewerportlet_advancedSearch=false&_storageviewer_WAR_storageviewerportlet_keywords=%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B9+%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B9+%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BF%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B9&_storageviewer_WAR_storageviewerportlet_fromPage=search&_storageviewer_WAR_storageviewerportlet_andOperator=1

touching on many fields and using numerous mechanisms at the same time. While these areas are not always fully coordinated, they are nevertheless in the spirit of the general logic to continue to search for new projects and expand interaction. The sides work together in three main formats: university science; academic science and interaction among Russian Academy of Sciences institutions; and applied science and R&D. These three lines intersect, as institutions carry out joint multi-level research projects and can be affiliated with several structures. The main coordinating body on the Russian side is the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, which deals with university and academic science. Its equivalent in China is the Ministry of Science and Technology, whose activities are mostly focused on interaction among the country's academies of sciences, including the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), etc., as well as on R&D both in individual institutions and in various hi-tech fields.

Several hundred agreements on scientific, technical and educational interaction have been concluded between the countries' research institutions and universities over the past decade. However, many of these agreements remain on paper as the sides do not really know how to carry out this interaction, and because the documents themselves are full of abstract plans and declarative statements. Many initiatives are limited to science exchanges and research conferences, with no joint research projects being carried out at all. However, more active forms of interaction have appeared in recent years, mainly in hi-tech fields.

Most promising areas of Russia–China interaction in science and technology encompass IT, including data transmission security, cloud computing and computer technology in general, artificial intelligence, innovative energy and renewable energy sources, non-conventional materials and technologies for their processing, environmental protection, “green engineering,” robotics, and space technologies, including the development of a small satellite. Of particular interest are applied developments in agricultural science, in particular the cultivation of sustainable crops and land restoration.

On June 5, 2019, the Joint Statement between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on Developing Comprehensive Partnership and Strategic Interaction Entering a New Era declared 2020 and 2021 the Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China.¹³⁹ The main aim of the cross years is to encourage Russian and Chinese scientific organizations to cooperate more closely and productively in order to achieve specific scientific and practical results. It was initially assumed that the opening ceremony of the Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation would be a large-scale event. However, the epidemiological situation meant that it had to be held as a video conference, on August 26, 2020, with the participation of the chairpersons and members of the national organizing committees.¹⁴⁰ The pandemic also forced adjustments to be made to Plan of Events

¹³⁹ Russia and China Open Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation // Government of Russia, August 26, 2020. URL: <http://government.ru/news/40273/>

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

for the cross years – over one thousand such events had originally been planned. According to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, approximately 500 events took place in 2020, some of which had not been included in the Russian part of the Plan. Most of them were conducted online. Around 170 events planned for 2020 under the Russian part of the plan were cancelled or put back to 2021. The most important interim result of this work was the signing of the Roadmap for Russia–China Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation for the period 2020–2025 designed to systematize the positive results of bilateral cooperation.¹⁴¹ The document identifies the main areas of cooperation: digital technologies; big data processing systems; artificial intelligence; unmanned transport systems; new materials and nanotechnology; energy and new energy sources; energy saving technologies and environmental protection; informatics and telecommunications; environmentally friendly agricultural technologies; earth sciences; marine technology; personalized medicine; biotechnology; biomedicine and bioengineering; and cognitive and neurosciences. More than ten events in the field of IT, artificial intelligence, materials science, aerospace, natural resources, environmental protection, education and medicine were held as part of the roadmap.

5.2. Main Areas of Interaction

Despite the long list of areas in which the two sides cooperate, real and productive research interaction can only be seen on a small range of issues. Breakthroughs are expected not only in Russia–China cooperation, but also in world science in general. This includes joint research in physics and astronomy. For example, the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR) in Dubna, Moscow Region, is working with a number of Chinese scientific centres on mega-science projects, such as the construction and operation of the NICA, a particles accelerator complex. The agreement on the project was signed on August 26, 2020, as part of the opening ceremony of the Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China.¹⁴² The total funding on both sides for subprojects being carried out at the NICA complex is approximately \$19 million. The Ministry of Science and Technology of the People’s Republic of China has approved four subprojects to be implemented over the next four years.¹⁴³ These include joint work on the NICA MPD detector with ten Chinese universities that are members of the MPD Collaboration, and the Institute of Plasma Physics (Hefei) and JINR project on the development, manufacture and study of a model high temperature superconductor magnet to create an energy storage system for the NICA complex.

China is developing a large project of its own on the creation of a fusion reac-

¹⁴¹ Russia and China Open Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation (2020–2021) // Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, August 26, 2020.
URL: https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/?ELEMENT_ID=21430

¹⁴² China Signs Agreement with JINR on Participation in NICA Project // Otkrytaya Dubna, August 28, 2020.
URL: <https://open-dubna.ru/nauka/9985-kitaj-podpisal-s-oiyai-soglashenie-ob-uchastii-v-proekte-nica>

¹⁴³ Russia–China Scientific and Technological Cooperation Receives New Impetus for Stable Development // Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, June 18, 2019.
URL: https://www.minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/?ELEMENT_ID=21982

tor.¹⁴⁴ In late 2019, a joint Russia–China laboratory for ultra-high-power lasers was opened in Shanghai. Experts from Russia and China hope to use these lasers to obtain substances in states that are unknown to modern science.¹⁴⁵

An important area of Russia–China interaction over the past few years has been space. In September 2019, Russian State Space Corporation ROSCOSMOS and the China National Space Administration (CNSA) signed an agreement on cooperation to coordinate the Russian Luna 27 orbital spacecraft mission and the Chinese Chang'e 7 mission to explore the polar region of the Moon, as well as the Agreement on the Creation of a United Data Center for Exploration of the Moon and Outer Space.¹⁴⁶ Russia and China also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the Joint Construction of an International Lunar Research Station.¹⁴⁷ The sides are set to develop a roadmap for the project moving forward. The plan is to give all interested countries and international partners access to the station.¹⁴⁸ Moscow and Beijing have made progress in such areas as remote Earth sensing, exploration of the Moon and outer space, electronic components for space flight applications, and the monitoring of space debris. Additionally, Russian and Chinese scientists are planning to carry out joint observations using China's 500-metre aperture spherical telescope (FAST), as part of the Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation.

The coronavirus pandemic has made deeper cooperation in medicine a top priority. Interaction in this area goes beyond information exchange, with medical staff and epidemiologists making visits to each other's country, and special seminars on epidemiological issues taking place. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China sent a request to the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences regarding the use of its resources in the work to combat COVID-19. However, the latter did not have an institution that could help out at the time, as all of its resources had been transferred from academia to the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation.¹⁴⁹ The Mechnikov Scientific Research Institute of Vaccines and Serums of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Microbiology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Joint COVID-19 Research Laboratory.¹⁵⁰ The Russian State Research Center of Virology and Biotechnol-

¹⁴⁴ Russian Academy of Sciences to Develop Cooperation with Chinese Academy of Sciences // RIA Novosti, June 9, 2018. URL: <https://ria.ru/20180609/1522447624.html>

¹⁴⁵ Russian Academy of Sciences Chief: Russia and China Plan to Obtain Substances in States Unknown to Science // Russian Academy of Sciences, November 11, 2020. URL: <http://www.ras.ru/news/shownews.aspx?id=ec57941f-09d7-4175-a879-35049df6a7e7>

¹⁴⁶ Russia–China Agreement on Lunar Exploration // Roscosmos, September 17, 2019. URL: <https://www.roscosmos.ru/26811/>

¹⁴⁷ Russia and China Sign Memorandum on Creation of Lunar Station // Roscosmos, March 9, 2021. URL: <https://www.roscosmos.ru/30248/>

¹⁴⁸ Russia and China Agree to Work Together to Set up Lunar Station // RBC, March 9, 2021. URL: https://www.rbc.ru/technology_and_media/09/03/2021/6047720e9a7947583cdab884

¹⁴⁹ Chinese Foreign Ministry Asks Experts from Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences for Help in Combatting Coronavirus // InfoPro54.ru, February 11, 2020. URL: <https://infopro54.ru/news/mid-kitaya-predlozhit-uchenym-so-ran-sovmestno-borotsya-s-koronavirusom/>

¹⁵⁰ Russia and China Sign Memorandum of Joint COVID-19 Research Lab // RIA Novosti, August 26, 2020. URL: <https://ria.ru/20200826/laboratoriya-1576345955.html>

ogy VECTOR and the China National Center for Biotechnology Development have also started cooperation. In addition, the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR) and the National Natural Science Foundation of China have announced a competition for the best fundamental research projects studying the coronavirus infection.¹⁵¹

Russian manufacturers of the Sputnik V vaccine are discussing cooperation with the relevant Chinese companies. Russia's Petrovax and the Chinese pharmaceutical company CanSino Biologics have launched the third phase of clinical trials of the Ad5-nCov vaccine in Russia, which has already shown promising results.¹⁵² As for the development of antiviral drugs, China has provided Russia with data from clinical trials of the new drug Favipiravir.¹⁵³ What is more, the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation has approved the third phase of clinical trials of the Chinese drug Azvudin in the country.¹⁵⁴

The most important task for the two countries is the stepwise, yet at the same time accelerated, expansion of interaction in the hi-tech sector and innovative products. It is vital that Russia develop its export potential in these areas.¹⁵⁵ This is hardly a new problem, but progress has been painfully slow. Back in 2007, a Russia–China Working Group on High Technologies and Innovations was established under the Subcommittee on Scientific and Technical Cooperation to optimize the use of the existing potential for scientific and innovative interaction between the two sides. The Working Group held its 11th meeting in Moscow on April 2, 2019,¹⁵⁶ and its 12th meeting is scheduled for 2021. At the state level, significant funds are being pumped into supporting scientific and technical cooperation. The Russia–China Technology Investment Fund was launched in 2020, with an initial capital of \$1 billion.¹⁵⁷

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation process. Smart city technologies developed by the Russian company AT Consulting have been used for COVID-19 contact tracing.¹⁵⁸ Chinese company Huawei and VisionLabs (a Sber ecosystem company) signed a cooperation agreement on the creation of joint IT product for a smart city system based on computer

¹⁵¹ RFBR and National Natural Science Foundation of China Jointly Hold Competition for Best Fundamental Research Projects Studying the Coronavirus Infection // Russian Foundation for Basic Research. URL: https://www.rfbr.ru/rffi/ru/contest/n_812/o_2109210

¹⁵² Chinese Ambassador: CanSino Biologics and Petrovax Submit Application for Registration of Chinese–Russian Vaccine // Interfax, March 9, 2021. URL: <https://www.interfax.ru/interview/755051>

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Russian Academy of Sciences Head Calls for Reassessing Principles of Scientific Cooperation with China // Novosti Sibirskoy Nauki, September 24, 2019. URL: <http://www.sib-science.info/ru/ras/kitay-pereshel-k-politike-24092019>

¹⁵⁶ Moscow Hosts 11th Meeting of Russia–China Working Group on High Technologies and Innovations (in Chinese: 中俄高新技术和创新工作组第十一次会议在莫斯科举行) // Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China, May 23, 2019. URL: http://www.most.gov.cn/kjbgz/201905/t20190523_146793.htm

¹⁵⁷ RDIF and CIC to launch Russia-China Technology Investment Fund // Russian Direct Investment Fund, September 17, 2019. URL: https://rdif.ru/Eng_fullNews/4370/

¹⁵⁸ Expert Explains How Smart City Project Helped in Fight against COVID-19 // RIA Novosti, May 14, 2020. URL: <https://ria.ru/20200514/1571411223.html>

vision.¹⁵⁹ The governments of Russia and China are also developing cooperation in the creation of a number of digital platforms. On September 18, 2020, Moscow and Beijing signed an investment cooperation agreement, which stated that the Moscow Innovation Cluster and the Zhongguancun Science and Technology Park will carry out joint R&D and innovation work in advanced science and technology.¹⁶⁰

The International Conference and Exhibition on International Exchange of Professionals (CIEP) was held online from September to December 2020, with Russia taking part as the guest of honor.¹⁶¹ In March 2021, the ministries of the two countries started preparations for the 6th Round Table on Russian–Chinese Scientific and Technical Cooperation in the Development and Implementation of High Technologies to be held as part of the 7th Russia–China Expo.¹⁶²

5.3. Cooperation between the Russian and Chinese Academies of Science

Interaction between the academies of science of the two countries continues to develop. In July 2019, the Russian Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Sciences signed a roadmap for cooperation.¹⁶³ The document singled out research into the Tibetan Plateau, high-power lasers and the environment as priority areas of scientific and technical cooperation. Other important areas included Arctic research, neuroscience, natural disaster prevention, space optics, and the development of cooperation within the Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO). Joint projects in at least three main areas are planned under the agreement: the advancement of transport systems; the development and water and marine resources using new deep-sea research technologies; and joint work at large “mega-science” research facilities. Russian Academy of Sciences institutes primarily cooperate with Chinese partners in geology, geochemistry, engineering geocryology, hydraulic engineering, the environment, mineralogy, microelectronics, energy, new materials and nanostructures, laser technology, and plasma physics, as well as in the social sciences and humanities.

At a meeting of the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences in September 2019, President of the Academy Alexander Sergeev brought up Chinese proposals to set up technology exchange centers in Russia where researchers from both countries could hold symposiums and carry out joint work on various projects. However, he noted that Russian Academy of Sciences, unlike the many institu-

¹⁵⁹ Huawei and Russian Company VisionLabs to Create IT Solution for Smart City Systems // ChinaLogist, October 21, 2020. URL: <https://chinalogist.ru/news/huawei-i-rossiyskaya-visionlabs-sozhdadut-it-resheniya-dlya-sistem-umnogoroda-19188>

¹⁶⁰ Moscow Innovation Cluster and Zhongguancun Science and Technology Park Sign Cooperation Agreement // Official Site of the Mayor of Moscow, September 18, 2020. URL: <https://www.mos.ru/mayor/themes/11299/6796050/>

¹⁶¹ Opening Ceremony of the International Conference and Exhibition on International Exchange of Professionals (CIEP 2020) // State University of Aerospace Instrumentation, September 7, 2020. URL: <https://new.guap.ru/pubs/3486>

¹⁶² Russian Part of the Plan of Events to be Held as Part of the Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China in 2020–2021. Plan of Events to be Held as Part of the Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China in 2020–2021 // Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. URL: <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/upload/iblock/f65/f65b55dde86f146d4a55b47a09e4a5d1.pdf>

¹⁶³ Russia and China Sign Roadmap for Scientific Cooperation in Moscow // TASS, July 19, 2019. URL: <https://nauka.tass.ru/nauka/6681617>

tions that operate under its auspices, does not enjoy the status of a scientific organization as such and is thus not eligible for funding, meaning that such centers cannot be established at this time.¹⁶⁴ Back in 2019, Sergeev supported the idea of establishing a Chinese Academy of Sciences representative office in Russia.

The pandemic caused several meetings and planned events between the academies of science of the two countries (some involving the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) to be cancelled, although cooperation between the sides did, on the whole, continue to move forward.

5.4. Supporting Russia–China Cooperation through Grants

In recent years, Russia and China have moved from increasing the number of joint research activities to improving the quality of collaborative work, although this process has only just begun. An important part of this process was the announcement of research grants for scientific developments by both sides.

The countries agree on the priority areas of interaction and grant support for projects through the relevant ministries. According to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 61 projects involving Chinese research organizations and universities had received funding (including 39 on a bilateral basis) under the Federal Targeted Programme for Research and Development in Priority Areas of Development of the Russian Scientific and Technological Complex for 2014–2021. The Ministry of Science and Technology of China announced a joint grant in April 2020. By April 2021, the Chinese side had completed the first stage of reviewing the applications submitted by research and educational organizations inside the country, eventually selecting 27 projects for funding. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation announced a grant in autumn 2020 for projects to be implemented in 2021–2023.¹⁶⁵ The following topics have been agreed upon for 2021: mega-science class facilities, biology and biopharmaceuticals, physiology and fundamental medicine, resources and the environment, plasma physics, materials science, and chemistry.¹⁶⁶

The Russian Foundation for Basic Research and the National Natural Science Foundation of China are funding joint research projects and scientific exchanges. According to the Chinese side, a total of 273 project applications were received in 2020, of which 256 were preliminarily reviewed.¹⁶⁷ The RFBR reported that it had

¹⁶⁴ China Proposes Setting Up Permanent Centres for Russia–China Scientific Interaction // TASS, September 24, 2019.
URL: <https://nauka.tass.ru/nauka/6921016>.

¹⁶⁵ Russia and China: At Least Six Research Projects to Receive Funding in 2021–2023 // Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, September 18, 2020.
URL: https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/?ELEMENT_ID=25211

¹⁶⁶ Scientific and Technical Tenders // Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, March 5, 2021.
URL: https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/?ELEMENT_ID=30604

¹⁶⁷ Notification of Preliminary Consideration of Applications for RFBR–NSFC Exchange Programmes in 2020 (in Chinese: 2020年度国家自然科学基金委员会与俄罗斯基础研究基金会合作交流项目初审结果通知) // NSFC, August 19, 2020. URL: <http://bic.nsf.gov.cn/Show.aspx?AI=1371>

received 285 applications, with 64 projects securing funding.¹⁶⁸

In 2020, the Russian Science Foundation (RSF) and the National Natural Science Foundation of China signed a cooperation agreement and announced a grant for Russian–Chinese research teams.¹⁶⁹ The RSF grants range in size from 4 to 6 million rubles annually, with the projects to be carried out in 2021–2023. The results were announced in December 2020 after the applications were reviewed independently by both sides. Grants were awarded to 30 projects proposed by research teams from Novosibirsk State University (a joint project with Peking University), Marchuk Institute of Numerical Mathematics of the Russian Academy of Sciences (a joint project with Shanghai Jiao Tong University), the Institute of Automation and Electrometry of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (a joint project with the National University of Defense Technology), Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (a joint project with the University of Science and Technology of China), Lomonosov Moscow State University, the National University of Science and Technology MISIS, Far Eastern Federal University, the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, and others.¹⁷⁰ On the whole, the grants reflected the established format of scientific and technical cooperation: on the Russian side, a limited number of universities is responsible for the main scientific developments, with some of these institutions carrying out more than one project; meanwhile, the Chinese institutions that received support were more varied, although held fewer academic projects. According to experts, this shows that Chinese universities are more focused on cooperation than Russian universities.

5.5. University Science

University initiatives play a key role in scientific and technical cooperation between Russia and China. This has traditionally come in the form of educational exchanges, joint programs and joint research, albeit to a lesser extent. That said, new joint scientific projects were mapped out in 2019–2020.

One promising area that would also increase interaction in the development of hi-tech and innovative products is the active use of joint Russia–China universities not only as places to train students, but also as a platform for creating research centers and laboratories, carrying out joint research and publishing joint science journals. Several such projects currently exist, although only one is currently operational – the Shenzhen MSU–BIT University. The institution focuses on educational activities and developing programs in such areas as applied mathematics, computer science, chemistry, physics and mechanics of materials, economics, biology, Russian language and literature, the urban environment and regional

¹⁶⁸ Results of the Joint RFBR–NSFC Tender for the Best Fundamental Scientific Research Projects // Russian Foundation for Basic Research. URL: https://www.rfbr.ru/rffi/ru/rffi_contest_results/o_2103373

¹⁶⁹ RSF Signs Agreement with the National Natural Science Foundation of China // Russian Science Foundation, June 2, 2020. URL: <https://www.rscf.ru/news/found/soglashenie-s-fondom-kitaya/>

¹⁷⁰ Results of the 2020 Competition for Russian Science Foundation Grants in the Priority Area "Fundamental Scientific Research and Exploratory Research Conducted by International Research Teams (Jointly with the National Natural Science Foundation of China) // Siberian Science News. URL: <http://www.sib-science.info/news/files/sovmeestnyy-24122020/spisok-pobediteley.pdf>

planning. Admissions for the electronics and computer engineering program will begin in 2021.¹⁷¹ A number of programs on offer at the university are heavily science-based. The next step should be to create full-fledged joint laboratories to carry out joint R&D and implement the results of this work in Russia and China. Specifically, centers for computational mathematics and cybernetics, chemistry and materials science, advanced radiochemistry and radioecology research, advanced problems in modern biology, contemporary oriental studies, Russian as a Foreign Language testing, and comparative law, among others, have been proposed (the latter was established in 2020¹⁷²). Other topics that have been discussed include the opening of a number of scientific and technical laboratories, a specialized department of Roscosmos, an AFK Sistema laboratory, and other facilities.¹⁷³ As this is the first time the two countries have entered into such a joint university model, there are a number of obstacles to its development, including in terms of red tape and the speed at which decisions are taken. While it is a joint project, the bulk of funding comes from the Chinese side, and issues relating to the protection of patent rights and the results of joint research and development, not to mention how to go about implementing these results, have not been fully worked out.

The Association of Technical Universities of Russia and China (ATURK) established by Harbin Institute of Technology and Bauman Moscow State Technical University is being used as a major platform for jointly training specialists in science and technology. The association is made up of 18 Russian and 20 Chinese universities. A total of 75 large-scale educational, scientific and technical exchange events have been held under the auspices of ATURK since 2011, with over 80,000 people taking part. ATURK member universities traditionally hold science and technology camps and conferences. Russia–China nano- and microsatellites developed by students at these universities are planned for launch in the future.¹⁷⁴

On the whole, long-held plans for scientific and technical cooperation between Russia and China are now being put into practice, and work is moving towards the creation of joint projects and laboratories. All this is greatly facilitated by the cross Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation. At the same time, experience shows that many research teams in Russia and China do not fully understand the formal and administrative intricacies of their interaction and in many cases have not been involved in such cooperative work before. Interaction is often limited to organizing joint roundtables and symposiums that

¹⁷¹ Shenzhen MSU–BIT University // Lomonosov Moscow State University.
URL: <https://www.msu.ru/en/info/struct/depts/shenzhen-msu-bit-university.php>

¹⁷² The Rich Cultures of China and Russia Will Get Along Just Fine in Shenzhen // Russia–China Friendship Committee for Peace and Development, January 29, 2019.
URL: <http://russian-chinese.com/2021/01/29/bogataya-kultura-kitaya-i-rossii-poletit-v-legkom-tance-v-shenchezhen/>

¹⁷³ AFK Sistema Developing Scientific and Educational Cooperation with China // Shenzhen MSU–BIT University, December 23, 2020. URL: <https://szmsubit.ru/afk-sistema-razvivaet-nauchno-obrazovatelnoe-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitae/>

¹⁷⁴ Association of Technical Universities of Russia and China (ATURK) // Amur State University.
URL: <https://www.amursu.ru/mezhdunarodnoe-sotrudnichestvo/uchastie-v-assotsiatsiyakh/aturk/>

produce no tangible results and do not lead to joint R&D. From this perspective, it may be a good idea to develop training seminars that are aimed at analyzing successful forms of cooperation and developing recommendations for the practical implementation of agreements on scientific and technical cooperation that have already been concluded.

6. Russia–China Cooperation in Education, Culture, Media and Tourism

6.1. The Context of Cooperation in Education, Culture, Media and Tourism in 2020 and Early 2021

Russia and China continued to develop humanitarian cooperation in various fields in 2020. Events held in commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Victory in World War II, as well as in preparation for the 20th anniversary of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China and the Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation provided an important background for the development of contacts in this area. In 2021, the sides will also celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be a serious test for cooperation in education, culture, media and tourism, bringing to a halt all kinds of contact with the exception of online formats. At the onset of the pandemic in February–March 2020, when the disease was more or less localized to China, Russia was one of the first countries to close its borders with the PRC, and the Moscow authorities introduced strict control measures against foreign nationals, including those from China.¹⁷⁵ These steps caused some discontent among regular Chinese people, but had little effect on bilateral relations, especially because China took effective measures to become the first country to get the epidemiological situation under control. At the same time, Russian social networks and the media noted increasingly negative attitudes towards foreigners in China, as the situation in the country had stabilized and new surges were associated with people arriving from abroad.¹⁷⁶ On the whole, commentators believe that Russia–China relations have come through the coronavirus test relatively unscathed and that the two countries have managed to preserve the most important thing – the friendly attitudes of the people of Russia and China towards each other, partnership and a sense of community in the face of a global disaster.¹⁷⁷

Another COVID-19-related phenomenon affecting bilateral relations at the international level is so-called “vaccine diplomacy.” Russia and China are key players in this area alongside the United States, the United Kingdom, India and others. The two countries are partners when it comes to research, development and clinical trials of vaccines, but competitors when it comes to finding market access around the world. However, given the fierce polemics and information warfare between Russia and China on the one side and the United States and the Euro-

¹⁷⁵ Chinese Embassy Asks For End to Spot-Check of Chinese Citizens on Moscow Public Transport // Novaya gazeta, February 25, 2020. URL: <https://novayagazeta.ru/news/2020/02/25/159339-posolstvo-kitaya-poprosilo-prekratit-proverki-kitayskih-grazhdan-v-obschestvennom-transporte-moskvy>

¹⁷⁶ China Sees Sharp Rise in Xenophobia and Racist Sentiment // Livejournal, April 14, 2020. URL: <https://cashjournal.livejournal.com/1182687.html>

¹⁷⁷ New Milestones and Starting Points: The Prospects for Russia–China Relations in 2021 // PrimeMedia.ru, January 22, 2021. URL: <https://primamedia.ru/news/1051207/>

pean Union on the other over the quality of vaccines, coverage of such issues in Russia–China relations appears to be far more balanced and objective. Moreover, Russian government officials have gone on record saying that Russia and China and working together to counter the politicization of the pandemic and are fighting against the dissemination of inaccurate information about COVID-19.¹⁷⁸

In late November 2020, the 21st Regular Meeting of the Russian–Chinese Commission on Humanitarian Cooperation chaired by Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation Tatyana Golikova and Vice Premier of the People’s Republic of China Sun Chunlan was held in the format of a video conference. The parties summed up the results of their work in 2020 and discussed the progress of the 2012 Action Plan for the Development of Russia–China Cooperation in the Humanitarian Sphere, noting that, despite the trying times, when all efforts are being directed towards the fight against COVID-19, many projects had not been frozen and some had even been held online.

6.2. Educational Cooperation between Russia and China

The pandemic has had a significant impact on student exchanges. On February 20, 2020, Russia imposed a temporary ban on Chinese citizens holding work, private, study and tourist visas from entering the country. This, of course, included Chinese students.¹⁷⁹ The movement of students stopped completely when the two countries later closed their borders. However, it is difficult to assess just how severely the coronavirus has affected student exchanges in terms of absolute numbers.

At the meeting of the Russian–Chinese Commission on Humanitarian Cooperation, the Russian side announced that the countries had achieved the goal set back in 2015 of jointly hosting a 100,000 exchange students per year by 2020.¹⁸⁰ According to Chinese data, the number of students involved in annual academic exchanges has surpassed 104,000.¹⁸¹ Further details were given at a meeting of the Sub-Commission on Education in September 2020: in 2019, a total of 48,000 Chinese students were studying at Russian universities and 20,000 Russian students were studying at Chinese universities, with another 30,000 students taking part in short-term programs.¹⁸² However, these calculations are somewhat misleading: in order to pad the numbers, all types of short-term trips involving schoolchildren, teachers, officials, etc. were evidently included in the “student

¹⁷⁸ Naryshkin: Russia and China are Against Using the Pandemic to Settle Political Scores // Rossiyskaya gazeta, May 7, 2020. URL: <https://rg.ru/2020/05/07/naryshkin-rf-i-kitaj-protiv-ispolzovaniia-pandemii-dlia-svedeniia-politicheskikh-schetov.html>; Bella Cherkasova: “The Pandemic Has Demonstrated How Russia and China Have Successfully Counteracted Fake News. Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation, December 21, 2020. URL: <https://digital.gov.ru/events/40254/>

¹⁷⁹ Mishustin Bans Chinese Citizens from Entering Russia // RBC, February 18, 2020. URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/society/18/02/2020/5e4c1f129a7947d514d93520>

¹⁸⁰ Tatyana Golikova Chairs 21st Regular Meeting of the Russian–Chinese Commission on Humanitarian Cooperation // The Russian Government, November 25, 2020. URL: <http://government.ru/news/40945/>

¹⁸¹ Sun Chunlan and Tatyana Golikova Take Part in 21st Regular Meeting of the Russian–Chinese Commission on Humanitarian Cooperation (in Chinese: 中俄人文合作委员会第二十一次会议召开 孙春兰与戈利科娃共同出席) // Xinhua News Agency, November 25, 2020. URL: http://www.xinhuanet.com/2020-11/25/c_1126786623.htm

¹⁸² 20th Meeting of the Russian–Chinese Commission on Cooperation in Education // Siberian Science News, September 9, 2020. URL: <http://www.sib-science.info/ru/news/sostoyalos-09092020>

exchanges” category. In 2019, President of the People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping himself spoke about the need to increase the number of people taking part in student exchanges to 100,000 people.¹⁸³ Curiously, citing data from representatives of Russian universities, the *Kommersant* newspaper reported that 85,000 people had participated in academic exchanges that year.¹⁸⁴

Twelve specialized associations of universities representing 636 higher education institutions in Russia and China continued their work.¹⁸⁵ On June 7, 2020, the groundbreaking ceremony for the joint campus of St. Petersburg University and Harbin Institute of Technology took place.¹⁸⁶ Lomonosov Moscow State University and Peking University established the Russia–China Mathematics Centre.¹⁸⁷ And St. Petersburg State University and Tsinghua University have an Agreement on Cooperation in the Training of Specialists with Knowledge of Russian Language in the Field of Innovation.¹⁸⁸

On August 11, 2020, a dialogue on educational cooperation and exchanges between Shandong Province and Russia called “We’ll Meet in the SCO” took place, where the creation of a Russia–China alliance of international cooperation in education was announced.¹⁸⁹

6.3. Cultural Contacts

The 20th meeting of the Russian–Chinese Sub-Committee on Cultural Cooperation was held as a videoconference on August 21, 2020. At the meeting, the parties discussed continuing interaction in the face of anti-pandemic restrictions and the possibility of resuming contacts once the situation has returned to normal. Representatives of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People’s Republic of China reached a consensus on the Programme of Cooperation for 2020–2023.¹⁹⁰ The decision was made to hold an inaugural library dialogue and a Russia–China culture and arts fair (held simultaneously in Blagoveshchensk and Heihe).¹⁹¹

¹⁸³ China and Russia Plan to Increase Number of Student Exchange Participants to 100,000 People by 2020 // TASS, June 6, 2019. URL: <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/6520271>

¹⁸⁴ “Academic Exchanges between Our Countries Have Reached 85,000 People”: Russian University Representatives on the Growing Interest of China Students in Studying in Russia // Kommersant, June 5, 2019. URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3992207>

¹⁸⁵ Sun Chunlan and Tatyana Golikova Take Part in 21st Regular Meeting of the Russian–Chinese Commission on Humanitarian Cooperation (in Chinese: 中俄人文合作委员会第二十一次会议召开 孙春兰与戈利科娃共同出席) // Xinhua News Agency, November 25, 2020. URL: http://www.xinhuanet.com/2020-11/25/c_1126786623.htm

¹⁸⁶ St. Petersburg University and Harbin Institute of Technology Open Joint Campus in China // TASS Science, June 7, 2020. URL: <https://nauka.tass.ru/nauka/8669919>

¹⁸⁷ Peking University and Moscow State University Create China–Russia Mathematics Center // RIA Novosti, June 29, 2006. URL: <https://ria.ru/20200629/1573635709.html>

¹⁸⁸ Russia and China Open Cross Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation (2020–2021) // Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, August 26, 2020. URL: https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/?ELEMENT_ID=21430

¹⁸⁹ The Chinese–Russian Alliance of the International Cooperation in the Sphere of Education is Created // Seldon.News, August 12, 2020. URL: <https://news.myseldon.com/en/news/index/235708497>.

¹⁹⁰ Delegations of the Ministries of Culture of Russia and China Discuss Results of Their Joint Work in 2019 // Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, August 21, 2020. URL: https://culture.gov.ru/press/news/rossiya_i_kitay_obsudili_itogi_sovmestnoy_raboty_v_oblasti_kultury/

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

Despite the constraints associated with the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the sides continued to successfully hold cultural festivals, literary, music and visual arts events, film festivals and youth games in 2020. For example, the Russia–China “Landscapes of Longjiang” oil painting exhibition was held at Harbin Art Museum on August 25, 2020.¹⁹² And on December 8, 2020, a concert was held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of partner relations between Moscow and Beijing.¹⁹³

The younger generations in China and Russia are striving to continue the tradition of friendly relations. To this end, the “Russia and China through My Eyes” student online forum was held on December 15, 2020.¹⁹⁴

Literary diplomacy is also moving forward. The program to translate and publish Russian and Chinese literary works launched in 2013 continues. The initial plan was to translate and publish 100 books over the course of six years. A total of 44 Russian and Chinese novels had been published as of July 2020.¹⁹⁵ The first Russia–China: Literary Diplomacy awards aimed at promoting the translation and distribution of Russian literature in China was held on December 19, 2020.¹⁹⁶

Chinese online literature has a noticeable presence on the Russian market. As of December 31, 2020, Rulate, a popular Russian site for translating novels, had published 3672 works of fiction written in Chinese. Chinese novels consistently rank among the most translated and most popular on the site.

6.4. Media Interaction

The Sub-Commission for Mass Media of the Russian–Chinese Commission on Humanitarian Cooperation held an online meeting on October 20, 2020, under the chairmanship of the deputy heads of the Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation and the National Radio and Television Administration of the People’s Republic of China, where the work plan concerning media cooperation was discussed.¹⁹⁷ The sides continue to coordinate their approaches to the joint production of television programs and implement joint projects in new media.¹⁹⁸

Russian and Chinese media created audio and video content to lift the spirits of the people during the pandemic. In Russia, this included releasing a song entitled “Threads of Fate” recorded by China Central Television and the Russian radio sta-

¹⁹² Russia–China Oil Painting Exhibition Opens (in Chinese: 油画龙江” 中俄油画艺术交流展开展) // People’s Daily, August 26, 2020. URL: <http://hlj.people.com.cn/n2/2020/0826/c220027-34250999.html>

¹⁹³ Concert Dedicated to the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of Partnership Between Moscow and Beijing Held in the Chinese Capital // Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library, December 14, 2020. URL: <https://www.prlib.ru/en/news/1307317>

¹⁹⁴ Harbin Hosts “Russia and China through My Eyes” Student Forum // Biang, December 15, 2020. URL: <http://biang.ru/ru/politics/v-xarbine-proshel-studencheskij-forum-«rossiya-i-kitaj-moimi-glazami»>

¹⁹⁵ Russia–China Humanitarian Cooperation: Major Projects // Russian–Asian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, July 29, 2020. URL: https://raspp.ru/business_news/humanitarian-projects/

¹⁹⁶ Beijing Hosts Russia–China: Literary Diplomacy Translation Awards // Biang, December 19, 2020. URL: <http://biang.ru/ru/news/v-pekine-proshlo-vruchenie-perevodcheskoj-premii-rossiya-kitaj-literaturnaya-diplomatiya.html>

¹⁹⁷ Russia and China Approve Media Cooperation Plan for 2021 // Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation, October 20, 2020. URL: <https://digital.gov.ru/ru/events/40150/>

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

tion Metro (102.4 FM) in St. Petersburg and broadcast on Chinese state radio and television, in countries with Russian-speaking diasporas, and on such websites as Weibo and VK.¹⁹⁹

Despite the numerous events held in recent years to deepen cooperation between the Russian and Chinese media, unrealistic expectations should be avoided, as this is a very delicate area for both sides. That said, progress here is certainly possible.

6.5. Tourism

The pandemic has hit the tourism industry of both countries particularly hard and they both attach great importance to restoring the flow of tourists while keeping the peculiarities of the epidemiological situation in mind. The 17th Meeting of the Tourism Subcommittee of the Russian–Chinese Commission for Humanitarian Cooperation was held on July 2, 2020, at which the parties agreed to step up communication and policy coordination, promote cooperation in the regulation of the tourism market, develop online and offline integration, and continue to improve the overall quality and support the growth of the tourism industry in both countries.²⁰⁰ The Russian side intends to stimulate the digitalization of tourism, hoping to attract investment from Chinese companies into the Russian tourism infrastructure and thus jointly contributing to the speedy recovery of the tourism industry in both countries.

The 25th Regular Meeting of the Heads of Government of Russia and China was held via videoconference on December 2, 2020.²⁰¹ During the meeting, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and Chinese State Council Prime Minister Li Keqiang agreed to strengthen cooperation between Russian and Chinese tourism departments, associations and agencies, as well as to prepare for the signing of a new intergovernmental Agreement on visa-free group travel.

¹⁹⁹ "Threads of Fate": China Central Television and Metro Radio Station Co-Produce Song to Support Population of Wuhan // CGTN in Russian. February 18, 2020. URL: <https://ru-ru.facebook.com/cgtnrussian/videos/нити-судьбы-цтк-и-радиостанция-метро-представили-совместную-песню-в-поддержку-ж/579703919282995/>

²⁰⁰ 17th Meeting of the Tourism Subcommittee of the Russian–Chinese Commission for Humanitarian Cooperation (in Chinese: 中俄人文合作委员会旅游合作分委会第十七次会议召开) // Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, July 3, 2020. URL: https://www.mct.gov.cn/whzx/whyw/202007/t20200703_873021.htm

²⁰¹ 25th Regular Meeting of the Heads of Government of Russia and China // The Russian Government, December 2, 2020. URL: <http://government.ru/news/41002/>

Recommendations

Cooperation on International Agenda Issues

1. The current dynamics of international relations and the prospects for their development following the coronavirus pandemic are of concern to Moscow and Beijing. It would be a good idea to continue joint efforts to develop concepts for the future international, political, economic, financial, technological, regional and security orders, including alongside other foreign partners. Efforts to preserve the modern system of international law is another area of possible cooperation.

Moscow and Beijing should focus on recalibrating global governance in order to align it with global political and economic trends, making it fairer and more balanced. The priority task here is to restore and improve the manageability of the global and regional systems while at the same time respecting the principle of national sovereignty.

Additional steps should be taken to ensure global strategic stability. The sides should work together to improve the multilateral nuclear arms control regime and develop special arrangements for governing space, the Internet, hypersonic and other hi-tech weapons, artificial intelligence and other new areas.

2. The year 2020 demonstrated that neither China nor Russia is capable of transforming the international agenda by themselves. Under these conditions, promoting a common Russian–Chinese vision of key aspects of global and regional development is particularly important. It is also important to formulate joint positions on those global issues where the two countries could set the tone. These include issues of ecology and environmental safety such as preserving biodiversity, curbing pollution, developing the Arctic without harming polar ecosystems; and high technologies such as cyber currencies, high-speed data transfer technologies, and ensuring the security of communications and transmitted content.

3. Russia and China continue to prioritize support for the central role of the United Nations in international affairs. In this context, Moscow and Beijing could contribute to the development of special regimes, under the auspices of the United Nations, for activities in outer space, the Ocean depths, and the Internet, as well as mechanisms for other global issues.

It is high time that the United Nations underwent reform; as permanent members of the UN Security Council, Russia and China must assume a special responsibility in this process. Reform should be gradually carried out following careful preparation and on the basis of a broad agreement of all the states involved. One of the main issues appears to be the reform of the UN Security Council to make it more representative, without compromising its efficiency and maintaining the current prerogatives of the permanent members. There is also the issue of ensuring that the United Nations and its institutions adequately reflect the requirements of the time. In this respect, it would be wise to shift the focus of the UN's activities to responding to global threats.

4. Today, Russia–China cooperation is developing amid the confrontation of both countries with the United States. Under growing external pressure, it is particularly important not only to develop strategic coordination and an effective partnership model for countering negative trends at the global level but also to work on joint projects in practical areas that have been targeted by the restrictive measures imposed by the West. At the same time, bilateral ties are not focused on rivalry with the United States, and strengthening strategic cooperation between Moscow and Beijing exclusively around the negative agenda of confrontation with Washington is not conducive to long-term development.

Despite the growing confrontation, it would be wise to pursue a dialogue and potentially develop trilateral cooperation on issues of common interest, in particular with regard to strategic stability and resolving crises in various regions around the world.

5. Russia's and China's relations with the European Union are marked by a combination of negative political trends and continued economic cooperation to the mutual benefit. Joint initiatives on issues of mutual interest that are of particular interest to the global community could contribute to global prosperity and regional synergy. Promising areas here include the fight against climate change, the development of infrastructural connectivity in Eurasia and cooperation in the Arctic, particularly within the Arctic Council.

6. Tensions between India and China spiked in 2020. Such a state of affairs is not beneficial for Russia. Moscow's ability to influence the politics of Beijing and New Delhi is limited, although it could help develop constructive interaction between the two on multilateral platforms, including BRICS and the SCO. The countries may be interested in developing trilateral cooperation in such areas as agriculture and food production, new technologies, medicine and pharmaceuticals, and may also wish to carry out joint projects in the Russian Arctic and the Russian Far East.

Economic Cooperation

7. Russia–China trade has proved resilient even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the potential for explosive growth is limited, and careful work will be required to further increase trade turnover and improve the interaction infrastructure. State support for small and medium-sized enterprises remains as relevant as ever, particularly when it comes to helping companies establish contacts, carry out research and develop the correct strategy when entering the market of a partner country, as well as creating specialized educational programs.

There is still potential for significant progress to be made in agricultural and food trade. To this end, the practice of state assistance in organizing trial deliveries of samples of Russian products to China should be continued. As far as the Chinese side sees it, realizing the full potential of mutual trade has to do with increased market openness and trade liberalization. However, these measures should be based on a careful assessment of what each side stands to gain, with due

account of the scale of Russia–China interaction and the size of their respective economies.

8. Transport infrastructure, customs facilities and logistics centers in border regions – particularly, those in Russia – still require special attention. Modernizing infrastructure facilities and improving customs clearance procedures will go a long way to ensure uninterrupted supplies between Russia and China and help Russia realize its transit potential along the China–Europe routes.

9. The current dynamics of Russia–China investment and financial cooperation does not reflect the potentials of the two economies or the maturity of their partnership. The strategic task facing the two countries is to increase the share of mutual settlements in national currencies, which can be achieved by developing the payment infrastructure, provided that Chinese and Russian consumers have access to it, and reducing transaction costs.

Cooperation in Science and Technology

10. Russia–China cooperation in science and technology is particularly important amid global technological rivalry and the growing segmentation of the global technology sector as well as the introduction of restrictions against the two countries in this area. What is more, interaction in this area could serve as a new point of growth for the partnership. The main task for the coming decade is to implement joint innovative projects and establish a macro-region for technology by combining the scientific potentials of the two countries. To achieve this, the sides will need to liberalize bureaucratic procedures, expand channels of communication, develop a system of interaction without creating threats to the national systems of scientific and technological development, ensure the protection of intellectual property rights, and move away from purely proclamatory agreements and events that do not bring any practical results.

11. Work should be done to facilitate the transition from increasing the number of scientific activities to improving the quality of collaborative research. Joint research grants contribute greatly to this task.

12. Now is the perfect time to effect significant changes in how research teams from Russia and China work. In this context, it may be a good idea to hold training seminars aimed at analyzing successful cooperation formats and developing recommendations for the practical implementation of agreements that have already been concluded.

Contacts in Education, Culture, Media and Tourism

13. An important basis for Russia–China interaction going further in this field is the search for similar views regarding fundamental values that have historically been formed as part of the national consciousness of the two countries. This could include family values, mutual respect, the search for compromise between the government and the state, the paternalistic role of the state and its social responsibility, the priority of state values over religious and regional values, the

vital role of moral and ethical imperatives, the tremendous public interest in education, the desire for stability, historical memory, etc.

14. Traditional formats of interaction in education, culture, tourism and other humanitarian fields have been severely restricted during the pandemic. Contacts between the peoples of the two countries currently rely on information and communications technologies and digital tools. It is important to look for formats of interaction that would be most in demand among the general public – not only those who are already interested in bilateral relations – and which would allow younger generations to become involved in such cooperation. To achieve this, it would be a good idea to take both the national characteristics of the people in the partner country and the current social trends and concerns there into account.

15. Priority should be given to information cooperation between Russia and China as well as the implementation of joint media projects. On the one hand, given the politicization of the pandemic and vaccine diplomacy in the West, Moscow and Beijing should concentrate their efforts on countering the information campaign directed against them. On the other hand, due to the limited personal contacts and the differing epidemiological situations in Russia and China, it is important to embark on awareness-building work on the current situation in the partner state, creating a positive image of the two countries. That said, given the sensitive nature of this issue, we should not overestimate what can be achieved.

Annex. Monitoring of the Key Events in Russia–China Relations in Q2–Q4 2020 and Q1 2021

Global Governance and Regional Security Architecture

- 01.04.2020 Expert meeting in preparation for Meeting of Ministers of Health of SCO Member States
- 09.04.2020–
24.04.2020 Meeting of the Permanent Representatives of the SCO Member States
- 19.04.2020 G20 Health Ministers' Meeting
- 23.04.2020–
24.04.2020 Seminar of the SCO Interbank Association
- 28.04.2020 Extraordinary Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BRICS Countries on COVID-19
- 29.04.2020 Meeting of the BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues
- 13.05.2020 Meeting of SCO Foreign Ministers via Videoconference
- 15.05.2020 SCO Conference on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Development of the Global Economy
- 18.05.2020 Four-party video conference on the settlement of Afghanistan
- 03.06.2020 Four-party telephone consultation on the settlement of Afghanistan
- 16.06.2020 Consultations of experts and heads of SCO member states on sanitary and epidemiological wellbeing
- 18.06.2020 High-level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation in Beijing
- 23.06.2020 Talks between the foreign ministers of Russia, China and India
- 02.07.2020 BRICS Sherpas/Sous-Sherpas Meeting
- 08.07.2020 Joint position of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China in the UN Security Council on the Draft Resolution to Provide Humanitarian Aid to Syria Submitted by the West
- 16.07.2020 SCO Conference on Regional Cooperation
- 30.07.2020 6th BRICS Environment Ministers Meeting
- 03.08.2020 Meeting of the SCO Secretary-General with the Permanent Representatives to the SCO Secretariat in Beijing
- 11.08.2020 Videoconference on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on interaction within the SCO

- 11.08.2020 Expert meeting on preparations for the SCO Startup Forum
- 12.08.2020 Meeting of the BRICS Anti-Drug Working Group
- 13.08.2020 Videoconference “Russia’s Role in SCO Development”
- 13.08.2020 – Seminar on cooperation in environmental protection within the SCO
14.08.2020
- 15.08.2020 5th Model SCO Youth Conference
- 17.08.2020 Asia Pacific Public Safety Forum
- 20.08.2020 – 1st Meeting of the SCO Consortium of Economic Analytical Centres
21.08.2020
- 20.08.2020 Meeting between the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
and Ambassadors of the BRICS Countries in Moscow
- 28.08.2020 Consultations of BRICS Special Envoys on the Middle East and North Africa
- 01.09.2020– 5th Plenary Session of the BRICS Working Group on Counter-Terrorism
02.09.2020
- 01.09.2020 Informal meeting of the SCO “family” countries in Beijing
- 02.09.2020 Joint Meeting of the P5+1 Commission on Iran Nuclear Deal in Vienna
- 02.09.2020 Publication of a joint article by the ambassadors of the Russian Federation
and the People’s Republic of China in the U.S. magazine *Defense One*
- 04.09.2020 BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs Conference
- 04.09.2020– SCO Council of National Coordinators Meeting in Moscow
09.09.2020
- 04.09.2020 Joint Meeting of the Ministers of Defence of the SCO, CIS and CSTO States in Kubinka
- 05.09.2020 Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs on Countering New Challenges
and Threats
- 06.09.2020– Fourth Taihe Civilizations Forum in Beijing
12.09.2020
- 08.09.2020 Meeting of Supreme Court Chief Justices of the BRICS Countries
- 09.09.2020– Traditional BRICS Urbanization Forum
10.09.2020
- 10.09.2020 Meeting of RIC Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Moscow
- 11.09.2020 BRICS Sherpas/Sous-Sherpas Meeting
- 15.09.2020 15th Meeting of Security Council Secretaries of the SCO Member States

- 17.09.2020 6th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting
- 17.09.2020 10th Meeting of the BRICS High Representatives for Security Issues
- 17.09.2020 Opening of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly
- 18.09.2020 Joint position of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the debates on Belarus in the UN Human Rights Council
- 23.09.2020 BRICS Civil Forum
- 23.09.2020 Opening of the Russia-BRICS International Youth Cooperation Project Office in Ulyanovsk Region
- 23.09.2020 10th Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Agriculture and Agrarian Development
- 23.09.2020 Joint position of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on banning the placement of weapons in space
- 24.09.2020 SCO Roundtable on Developing Recommendations for a Gradual Transition to Mutual Settlements in National Currencies
- 26.09.2020 APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting (online)
- 27.09.2020–
30.09.2020 2nd Northern Sustainable Development Forum in Yakutsk
- 29.09.2020 14th SCO Forum Meeting
- 05.10.2020–
10.10.2020 International Research and Educational Program BRICS School and the BRICS Young Scientists (BRICSologists) Contest
- 09.10.2020 Meeting between the president of the Russian Federation and the SCO foreign ministers
- 09.10.2020 Meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Labour and Employment
- 10.10.2020 Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the SCO in Moscow
- 12.10.2020 Meeting in preparation for the meeting of the Prosecutors General of the SCO member states
- 14.10.2020 5th Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Energy
- 16.10.2020 7th Meeting of Ministers of Justice of the SCO
- 19.10.2020–
20.10.2020 BRICS Twin Cities and Municipalities Forum in Kazan
- 20.10.2020 18th Meeting of the Prosecutors General of the SCO Member States
- 20.10.2020–
28.10.2020 BRICS Business Forum

- 21.10.2020 5th Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the SCO Member States
- 21.10.2020 7th Meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Education
- 21.10.2020–
24.10.2020 5th BRICS Young Diplomats Forum in Kazan
- 22.10.2020–
23.10.2020 1st SCO Plus Inter-Party Forum
- 22.10.2020–
24.10.2020 12th BRICS Academic Forum
- 26.10.2020–
30.10.2020 SCO Council of National Coordinators Meeting in Moscow in Moscow
- 27.10.2020 6th BRICS Parliamentary Forum
- 27.10.2020 Co-development of the EAEU and the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative video forum
- 27.10.2020–
29.10.2020 Internship for BRICS intellectual property experts
- 28.10.2020 19th Meeting of Ministers of the SCO member states responsible for foreign economic activities and foreign trade
- 28.10.2020 8th Meeting of SCO Ministers of Transport
- 29.10.2020 1st Forum of Heads of Regions of the SCO Member States
- 30.10.2020 16th Meeting of the SCO Interbank Association Council
- 30.10.2020 15th Meeting of Supreme Court Chief Justices of the SCO member states
- 30.10.2020 13th Meeting of the SCO Youth Council
- 30.10.2020 9th BRICS Trade Union Forum
- 03.11.2020 10th Meeting of the Heads of the Competent Authorities for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking of SCO Member States
- 05.11.2020–
06.11.2020 BRICS Working Group for Research into Competition Issues in Automotive Markets
- 05.11.2020–
06.11.2020 2nd International Municipal BRICS Forum in St. Petersburg
- 09.11.2020 Meeting of BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors
- 10.11.2020 20th SCO Summit
- 10.11.2020 Documents adopted at the conclusion of the SCO Summit
- 10.11.2020 Annual Meeting of the BRICS Business Council

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- 11.11.2020– 15th East Asia Summit
15.11.2020
- 11.11.2020 10th BRICS Health Ministers Meeting
- 12.11.2020 Meeting of the BRICS Coordination Committee on Antimonopoly Policy
- 16.11.2020 Meeting of the Heads of BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism Member Banks
- 17.11.2020– SCO Council of National Coordinators Meeting
25.11.2020
- 17.11.2020 12th BRICS Summit
- 18.11.2020– 7th BRICS Legal Forum
19.11.2020
- 20.11.2020 APEC Summit
- 21.11.2020– G20 Summit
22.11.2020
- 23.11.2020– Geneva Conference on Afghanistan in Kabul
24.11.2020
- 23.11.2020 SCO Business Conclave
- 25.11.2020 Informal meeting of the UN Security Council on unilateral sanctions
- 26.11.2020 International Macroeconomic Seminar “COVID-19 Pandemics: World Economy Symptomatic and Treatment”
- 27.11.2020 SCO Regional Cooperation and Exchange Conference in Xuzhou
- 30.11.2020 19th Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Member States of the SCO
- 30.11.2020 Conference on Unilateral Sanctions in the Context of the Pandemic
- 01.12.2020 5th Presidium Meeting of the BRICS Media Forum
- 04.12.2020 Meeting between the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to China with the Special Representative for Security of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China
- 08.12.2020– BRICS Sherpas/Sous-Sherpas Meeting
09.12.2020
- 09.12.2020 11th Asian Conference
- 10.12.2020 Consultations of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BRICS countries
- 14.12.2020 Meeting of the National Statistical Offices of BRICS Countries

- 16.12.2020 Meeting of BRICS heads of services responsible for ensuring sanitary and epidemiological well-being
- 16.12.2020 Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of signatories to the Iranian Nuclear Deal
- 20.12.2020 SCO Model interactive game in Weihai
- 21.12.2020 Informal meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the JCPOA
- 23.12.2020 SCO Seminar on Modern Substance Abuse Prevention Technologies
- 23.12.2020 Russia–China consultations on Central Asian issues
- 18.01.2021 China’s position on Russia’s withdrawal from the Treaty on Open Skies
- 25.01.2021–
29.01.2021 Davos Agenda 2021
- 26.01.2021–
29.01.2021 SCO Council of National Coordinators Meeting in Dushanbe
- 02.02.2021 Meeting between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China and ambassadors of Eurasian countries in Beijing
- 04.02.2021 Conference on poverty alleviation in Beijing
- 12.02.2021–
16.02.2021 Joint Russia–China military exercises in Karachi
- 12.02.2021 Joint position of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China on Myanmar in the United Nations Human Rights Council
- 18.02.2021 Videoconference on countering terrorism in Tashkent
- 24.02.2021 Russia–China consultations on Middle Eastern settlement in Moscow
- 25.02.2021 Meeting of SCO experts on the establishment of a pool of SCO technology parks
- 26.02.2021 ASEM Northeast and South Asia Subgroup Meeting
- 02.03.2021–
05.03.2021 Model SCO interactive game in Saratov
- 10.03.2021–
11.03.2021 SCO Experts Meeting on Precursor Control
- 16.03.2021 1st Meeting of Heads of BRICS Diplomatic Academies
- 18.03.2021 Extended Troika meeting on Afghanistan in Moscow
- 18.03.2021–
19.03.2021 Meeting of experts from SCO anti-drug agencies on law enforcement
- 30.03.2021 SCO Expert Meeting on Work with Youth

Political Dialogue

- 10.04.2020 Telephone conversations between the Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China Sergey Vershinin and Ma Zhaoxu
- 14.04.2020 Telephone conversations between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 16.04.2020 Telephone conversations between the leaders of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 22.04.2020 Telephone conversations between Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China Sergey Vershinin and Ma Zhaoxu
- 24.04.2020 Telephone conversations between the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Morgulov and the Ambassador of China to Russia
- 08.05.2020 Telephone conversations between the leaders of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 08.05.2020 Telephone conversations between the ministers of defense of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 03.06.2020 Telephone conversations between the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Morgulov and the Ambassador of China to Russia
- 10.06.2020 Telephone conversations between the Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China Igor Morgulov and Le Yucheng
- 07.07.2020 Telephone conversations between the Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China Sergey Vershinin and Ma Zhaoxu
- 08.07.2020 Telephone conversations between the leaders of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 17.07.2020 Telephone conversations between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 22.07.2020 Video conference of the Russian–Chinese Working Group on coordinating the EAEU development plans and the Belt and Road Initiative
- 24.07.2020 8th meeting of the China–Russia Dialogue Mechanism between United Russia and the Communist Party of China
- 24.07.2020 Consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 31.07.2020 Meeting between the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Morgulov and the Ambassador of China to Russia in Moscow
- 10.08.2020 2nd Meeting of the Russia–China Working Group on Cooperation in the Arctic

- 03.09.2020 Exchange of congratulatory messages by the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II
- 11.09.2020 Meeting between Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China in Moscow
- 16.09.2020 Meeting between the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Andrey Rudenko and the Ambassador of China to Russia in Moscow
- 17.09.2020 Videoconference between the Deputy Chairmans of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation and the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China
- 01.10.2020 Telegram from the President of the Russian Federation to the President of the People's Republic of China on the 71st anniversary of the People's Republic of China
- 12.10.2020 Meeting between Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Vershinin and the Ambassador of China to Russia
- 13.10.2020 Consultations between the Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China Sergey Vershinin and Ma Zhaoxu
- 14.10.2020 Meeting between the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Andrey Rudenko and the Ambassador of China to Russia
- 02.11.2020 6th Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Commission on Cooperation between the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China
- 13.11.2020 Meeting between the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Vershinin and the Ambassador of China to Russia in Moscow
- 18.11.2020 Telephone conversations between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China
- 24.11.2020 24th Meeting of the Commission on Preparing Regular Meetings of the Prime Ministers of Russia and China
- 25.11.2020 21st Meeting of the Russian-Chinese Commission for Humanitarian Cooperation
- 02.12.2020 Meeting between the Prime Ministers of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China
- 22.12.2020 Telephone conversations between Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China
- 28.12.2020 Telephone conversations between the leaders of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China
- 31.12.2020 Exchange of New Year's messages between the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China

- 14.01.2021 Telephone conversations between Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Vershinin and the Ambassador of China to Russia
- 04.02.2021 Telephone conversations between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 05.02.2021 Telephone conversations between Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China Igor Morgulov and Wu Jianguo
- 09.02.2021 Interparty consultations between United Russia and the Communist Party of China
- 03.03.2021 Telephone conversations between Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Vershinin and the Ambassador of China to Russia
- 22.03.2021 – Talks between Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People’s
23.03.2021 Republic of China in Guilin
- 23.03.2021 Announcement of the extension of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation

Military–Technical Cooperation

- 24.06.2020 China participates in the Moscow Victory Day Parade
- 23.08.2020– International Military-Technical Forum “Army-2020” in Kubinka
29.08.2020
- 23.08.2020 Completion of contract for the supply of Russian air defense systems to China
- 23.08.2020– 6th International Army Games
05.09.2020
- 25.08.2020 Announcement of project to develop a Russian–Chinese non-nuclear submarine
- 05.09.2020 Working meeting of the Ministers of Defense of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China in Kubinka
- 21.09.2020– China participates in the Caucasus 2020 military exercises in Russia
26.09.2020
- 29.10.2020 Announcement of Russian deliveries of helicopters to China
- 15.12.2020 Negotiations between the Ministers of Defense of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 22.12.2020 2nd Joint Russian–Chinese air patrol in the Asia Pacific Region

Trade and Economic Interaction

- 01.04.2020 Resumption of gas supplies to China via the Power of Siberia gas pipeline
- 07.04.2020 Start of deliveries of Russian beef to China

- 13.04.2020 Deliveries of Chinese machine tools to Tatarstan for the production of masks
- 16.04.2020 Free delivery service launched by AliExpress Russia
- 16.04.2020 Lifting of the ban of the import of live shellfish from China to Russia
- 20.04.2020 Launch of Russian business support programme by Chinese logistics operator
- 30.04.2020 Deliveries of Chinese equipment to Ulyanovsk Region for the production of masks
- 15.05.2020 Arrival of freight train carrying seafood from Zarubino to Hunchun
- 17.05.2020 Resumption of truck deliveries across the Russia–China border in Primorsky Territory
- 18.05.2020 Start of project design work on Power of Siberia 2 pipeline
- 18.05.2020 Lifting of the restrictions on the import of live fish and exotic and decorative animals from China into the Russian Federation
- 26.05.2020 Meeting on the prospects for bilateral business cooperation in Moscow
- 29.05.2020 Launch of customs transit for Russian food shipments to China
- 29.05.2020 Launch of the Changsha–Moscow air freight route
- 03.06.2020 China introduces ban on supplies of Category C chicken paws from the Russian Federation
- 04.06.2020 Start of direct deliveries of chicken meat from Bryansk Region to the People’s Republic of China
- 08.06.2020 Launch of exports of Russian frozen beef to China
- 18.06.2020 Launch of sales of Kuban wines on the Chinese online store TMall
- 22.06.2020 Announcement of the launch of the Russia–China programme on assistance to small and medium-sized businesses
- 26.06.2020 Russia announces plan to increase gas exports to China
- 07.07.2020 Announcement of AliExpress Russia logistics subsidy scheme for Russian sellers
- 08.07.2020 Round table on export strategy with the SCO countries
- 13.07.2020 Russia launches supplies of Arctic oil to China
- 17.07.2020 Announcement of the launch of a cross-border cable car between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 17.07.2020 Round table on support for small and medium-sized businesses in the BRICS countries
- 18.07.2020 Videoconference on the digital economy and ecommerce in the SCO member countries
- 21.07.2020 AliExpress launches sales of its own products

- 22.07.2020 Meeting of the BRICS Business Council
- 23.07.2020 Negotiations between the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Supervision of the Russian Federation and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China
- 23.07.2020 Meeting of the Heads of the BRICS Competition Authorities
- 23.07.2020 Opening of a trading company to support Russian exports in China
- 23.07.2020 1st BRICS Women's Business Alliance Meeting
- 28.07.2020 Start of construction of the southern section of the East Route Natural Gas Pipeline in China
- 29.07.2020 Launch of training on Chinese online trade platforms in Primorsky Territory
- 07.08.2020 Expansion of the list of Russian suppliers of dairy products to China
- 12.08.2020 Commissioning of new Alibaba freight plane for flights to Russia
- 25.08.2020 Opening of the cross-border ecommerce experimental center in Lianyungang
- 26.08.2020 *Weidong* Webinar on Digital Education
- 26.08.2020 23rd Meeting of the Russian–Chinese Sub-Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation
- 28.08.2020 Sichuan Province starts exports of baked eels to Russia
- 31.08.2020 AliExpress launches express food delivery service in Moscow and St. Petersburg
- 05.09.2020 Beijing International Tourism Expo
- 15.09.2020–
22.09.2020 Precautionary suspension of gas supplies via the Power of Siberia gas pipeline to China
- 18.09.2020 Presentation of China–SCO Local Economic and Trade Cooperation Demonstration Zone in Beijing
- 22.09.2020 Launch of shipments of vegetable oil from Penza to Harbin by rail
- 24.09.2020 Launch of an intermodal service for the supply of seafood from the Russian Federation to the People's Republic of China
- 29.09.2020 Announcement of the creation of a Russia–China soybean alliance
- 18.10.2020 Start of shipments of Krasnoyarsk chocolate to China
- 20.10.2020–
02.11.2020 International BRICS Youth Business Incubator
- 22.10.2020–
26.10.2020 27th China Fair of High-Tech Achievements in Agriculture in Yangling

- 27.10.2020 1st SCO Startup Forum
- 28.10.2020 1st Meeting of the Joint China–EAEU Commission
- 29.10.2020 SCO Webinar on Youth Entrepreneurship
- 29.10.2020 Launch of Alibaba Parcel Locker Network in the Russian Federation
- 29.10.2020 Seminar on cooperation between the Russian Far East and the Liaoning Province
- 30.10.2020 Launch of a Chinese taxi aggregator in the Volga Region and Central Federal District of the Russian Federation
- 02.11.2020 Ban on the import of poultry products from several Russian regions to the People’s Republic of China
- 03.11.2020–
10.11.2020 China International Import Expo
- 10.11.2020–
20.11.2020 China–Northeast Asia International Trade Digital Expo in Beijing
- 13.11.2020–
17.11.2020 1st Liaoning International Fair for Investment & Trade in Shenyang
- 13.11.2020 Russian–Chinese Forum of Interregional Cooperation in Heilongjiang
- 13.11.2020 Opening of the “Green” Russia–China Agricultural Centre
- 13.11.2020 Expansion of the list of Russian suppliers of dairy products to China
- 13.11.2020 International EXPO in Yiwu
- 23.11.2020 Opening a new channel for Russian products to enter the Chinese market
- 25.11.2020 Xiaomi chain of electrical goods stores announces expansion into the Russian Federation
- 25.11.2020 Partnership agreement between RTK and Shandong Economic Cooperation Demonstration Zone
- 30.11.2020 Inauguration of the new Head of the Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the People’s Republic of China Alexey Dakhnovsky
- 02.12.2020 Launch of an industrial park for the processing of pharmaceutical raw materials from the Russian Federation in Suifenhe
- 02.12.2020 Launch of containerized LNG shipments from the Russian Federation to the People’s Republic of China
- 03.12.2020 Commissioning of a section of the eastern branch of the Russia–China gas pipeline
- 05.12.2020 SCO Round Table on Education, Investment and Entrepreneurship in Kunming

- 08.12.2020 6th Russian–Chinese Business Forum of Small and Medium Business in Ufa
- 09.12.2020 Business mission of Russian fisheries enterprises in the People’s Republic of China
- 15.12.2020 Establishment of a Russia–China coal enterprise in Shanghai
- 22.12.2020 Russia launches barley shipments to China along the Europe–China Highway
- 23.12.2020 Announcement of plans to increase Russian gas exports to China
- 01.01.2021 Opening of the Russian Food Exhibition Hall in Guangzhou
- 06.01.2021 Start of construction of the southern branch of the East-Route Natural Gas Pipeline in China
- 16.01.2021 *Shanghe Business Connect* Business Meeting in Shanghai
- 19.01.2021 IT integration of Russian Post and AliExpress
- 20.01.2021 Meeting of the Russian–Chinese Business Council in Moscow
- 22.01.2021 Start of design and survey work on Power of Siberia 2 pipeline
- 27.01.2021 1st meeting of the Russian–Chinese Standing Working Group on Interregional and Cross-border Cooperation and Special Economic Zones
- 08.02.2021 Start of direct deliveries of Rusagro sunflower oil to a Chinese hypermarket chain
- 26.02.2021 Announcement of the opening of enterprises for processing Russian grain in China
- 04.03.2021 Russian Export Center opens business account on WeChat
- 11.03.2021 Launch of AliExpress Seller Subsidization Programme in the Russian Federation
- 15.03.2021 Business visit of Chinese delegation to Crimea
- 19.03.2021 Expansion of the list of Russian suppliers of dairy products to China
- 28.03.2021 – Working visit of the trade representative of the Russian Federation to People’s Republic
30.03.2021 of China in Heilongjiang
- 29.03.2021 Launch of the programme for getting Russian goods onto the Chinese market

Financial and Investment Cooperation

- 03.04.2020 Construction of a new section of the Power of Siberia gas pipeline
- 03.04.2020 BRICS New Development Bank issues bonds in Chinese yuan
- 13.04.2020 Announcement of Russia–China aquafarm project in Primorsky Territory
- 26.04.2020 Russian National Wealth Fund allowed to invest funds in Chinese government bonds
- 12.05.2020 Announcement on the participation of a Chinese company in the construction of a high-rise building in Moscow

- 03.06.2020 Announcement of the creation of a Russia–China enterprise for the production of turbines in Kaluga Region
- 25.06.2020 Opening of new VTB office in Shanghai
- 06.07.2020 BRICS New Development Bank extends loan to Russian Federation
- 28.07.2020 Meeting of the Interdepartmental Working Group of the Russian–Chinese Commission on Investment Cooperation
- 05.08.2020 BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism Conference on Financing
- 18.08.2020 Opening of the BRICS Digital Bank in Switzerland
- 21.08.2020 Announcement of BRICS New Development Bank investments in Vladimir Region
- 21.08.2020 Presentation on the economic potential of Tatarstan for Chinese investors
- 27.08.2020 Start of construction of a Russian–Chinese plant for the production of polymers in Amur Region
- 03.09.2020 Conference of Deputy Heads of the Financial Agencies of the BRICS Member Countries
- 09.09.2020 Huawei increases investments in production facilities in the Russian Federation
- 10.09.2020 Videoconference of the central banks of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 14.09.2020 Agreement on the financing of Sberbank and Harbin Bank letters of credit
- 21.09.2020–
22.09.2020 Russia–China conference on cooperation in the banking sector
- 25.09.2020 China invests in the localization of Great Wall production in the Russian Federation
- 30.09.2020 3rd Meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Cooperation between the Russian Far East and the Baikal Region of the Russian Federation and Northeast China
- 14.10.2020 Haier announces localization of production in Tatarstan
- 21.10.2020 Expansion of Chinese investment in housing construction in the Russian Federation
- 28.10.2020 Ratification by the State Duma of the Russian Federation of the Agreement on the BRICS Bank Eurasian Regional Centre in the Russian Federation
- 17.11.2020 Announcement of the launch of the BRICS payment system
- 19.11.2020 7th meeting of the Intergovernmental Russian–Chinese Commission for Investment Cooperation
- 20.11.2020 Chinese investment in a fertilizer plant in Tatarstan
- 27.11.2020 12th China Overseas Investment Fair in Beijing

- 10.12.2020 Meeting of the Russian–Chinese Commission on Investment Cooperation
- 22.12.2020 VTB granted access to China’s internal payment system
- 28.12.2020 Establishment of Russia–China enterprise for processing liquefied gas in Amur Region
- 08.01.2021 Announcement of the opening of a Chinese business centre in Moscow
- 18.01.2021 BRICS New Development Bank invests in the restoration of Tatarstan’s cultural heritage
- 26.02.2021 Announcement of Penza–Harbin transport and infrastructure project
- 26.02.2021 Meeting of the Deputy Heads of the Financial Agencies of the BRICS Member Countries
- 11.03.2021 Announcement of cooperation between Yakutia and RTK in China
- 16.03.2021 Participation of BRICS New Development Bank in projects in Stavropol Territory
- 24.03.2021 Announcement of the establishment of a Russia–China import centre in Suifenhe
- 31.03.2021 1st Meeting on Settlements in National Currencies of SCO Member States

Cooperation in Transport and Infrastructure

- 28.03.2020– Resumption of rail transit traffic from Wuhan to Duisburg via the Russian Federation
12.04.2020
- 13.04.2020– Launch of Hunchun–Zarubino–Ningbo freight route
14.04.2020
- 05.05.2020 Opening of a new railway route from Yiwu to Vilnius via the Russian Federation
- 12.05.2020 Green-light for the commissioning of the Blagoveshchensk–Heihe bridge
- 14.05.2020 Opening of new rail freight route from Shenzhen to Europe via the Russian Federation
- 12.06.2020 Announcement of the construction of the SCO Asia–Europe Transport Corridor
- 17.06.2020 Announcement of the start of construction of the Russian section of the Europe – Western China highway
- 20.06.2020 Start of work on the Russia–China logistics center in Moscow Region
- 01.07.2020– Launch of a new freight train on the China–Europe route
12.07.2020
- 07.07.2020 Completion of tunnel construction for new section of the Moscow Metro
- 17.07.2020 Announcement of the launch of the Russia–China Blagoveshchensk–Heihe bridge
- 31.07.2020 Launch of the Shijiazhuang–Yekaterinburg air freight route
- 07.08.2020 Meeting of the SCO Special Working Group on Development of Transit Potential
- 12.08.2020 Postponement of the commissioning of the Tongjiang–Nizhneleninskoye railway bridge

- 21.08.2020 Announcement of the opening of a logistics centre in Orenburg Region for trade with China
- 24.08.2020 Launch of Chinese taxi service DiDi in Kazan
- 31.08.2020 Postponement of the opening of the Blagoveshchensk–Heihe road bridge
- 29.09.2020 Announcement of Russia’s participation in the construction of the China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway
- 07.10.2020 Announcement of cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China in the construction of toll roads in Russia
- 12.10.2020 – 2nd Meeting of the Joint Commission on Creating Favorable Conditions for International
13.10.2020 Road Transportation within the SCO
- 23.10.2020 Start of full-scale transit of goods under sanction through the Russian Federation to the People’s Republic of China
- 17.11.2020 Announcement of the start of construction of the Blagoveshchensk–Heihe cable car
- 24.11.2020 Resumption of regular traffic at the Dzhalinga–Lianyung border crossing
- 18.12.2020 Start of rail shipments of Russian confectionary products from Cheboksary to Jinan
- 21.12.2020 Announcement of the launch of a direct trade link between Tuva and China
- 05.01.2021 Announcement of construction of the Russia section of the Shanghai–Hamburg highway
- 15.01.2021 Start of container transportation of grain from Khabarovsk to China
- 03.02.2021 Announcement of the opening of the Tongjiang–Nizhneleninskoye railway bridge
- 11.02.2021 Red Wings airline announces launch of flights to China
- 16.02.2021 Announcement of the start of construction of a crossing point on the Blagoveshchensk–Heihe bridge
- 20.02.2021 Announcement of an increase in the crossing capacity at border crossings between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 21.02.2021 Opening of the St. Petersburg–Chengdu rail freight route
- 26.02.2021 Opening of a route for the supply of medical equipment from China to Russia
- 11.03.2021 SCO–IRU conference on transit procedures
- 15.03.2021 Opening of the Blagoveshchensk–Heihe bridge
- 16.03.2021 Launch of exports of Russian barley to China via Jiangsu
- 23.03.2021 Completion of the electrification of the railway section on the Russia–China border
- 23.03.2021 Announcement of the expansion of the DiDi taxi service in the Russian Federation

Cooperation in Science and Technology

- 02.04.2020 Russia's involvement in the creation of an international standard for emergency response in large cities
- 02.04.2020 Russia takes part in three-party project to clean up Poyang Lake
- 07.04.2020 Joint Russia–China development of a sonar communications system
- 21.05.2020 Announcement of plans to strengthen Russia–China cooperation in medicine
- 22.05.2020 Webinar on the economic prospects of the China–Mongolia–Russia Corridor
- 22.05.2020 Announcement of the launch of a Russia–China Earth remote sensing satellite
- 28.05.2020 Webinar Digital Actions for Entrepreneurs in the COVID-19 Epoch: Key Lessons from Alibaba
- 09.06.2020 Confirmation of the Russia–China Cross Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation
- 29.06.2020 Opening of the China–Russia Mathematics Centre in Beijing
- 28.07.2020 Start of work on the installation of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)
- 11.08.2020 Creation of the Shandong–Russia International Education and Cooperation Union in Jinan
- 16.08.2020–
18.08.2020 Power China 2020 exhibition in Guangzhou
- 23.08.2020 Russia's position on cooperation with China to develop 5G technologies
- 26.08.2020 Opening of the Russia–China Cross Years of Scientific, Technological and Innovative Cooperation
- 26.08.2020 12th Meeting of the BRICS Heads of Intellectual Property Offices
- 07.09.2020 Russia and China participate in trilateral project to develop hydrogen batteries
- 16.09.2020 Meeting of the Russia–China Working Group on Radio Electronics
- 18.09.2020 Moscow and Beijing announce cooperation in the field of innovation
- 20.09.2020 1st Russian–Chinese Competition in Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- 21.09.2020 –
25.09.2020 5th BRICS Young Scientist Forum in Chelyabinsk
- 21.09.2020 Meeting of the Working Group of the 4th Russian–Chinese Committee on Satellite Navigation
- 23.09.2020 3rd Meeting of BRICS Working Group on Oceanic and Polar Science and Technology

- 24.09.2020 – 6th Meeting of BRICS Astronomy Working Group
25.09.2020
- 25.09.2020 Announcement of the creation of an Arctic research centre in Yantai
- 26.09.2020 Russia–China nuclear reactor materials testing project
- 01.10.2020– 2nd Meeting of BRICS Working Group on Materials Science and Nanotechnology
02.10.2020
- 10.10.2020– BRICS Energy Week in Moscow and Saransk
16.10.2020
- 13.10.2020– 2nd Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Photonics
15.10.2020
- 15.10.2020– 4th Meeting of the BRICS Science Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship
16.10.2020 Partnership (STIEP) Working Group
- 16.10.2020 Announcement of Russia–China educational project
- 20.10.2020– 7th 100+ TechnoBuild International Forum and Exhibition in Yekaterinburg
22.10.2020
- 13.11.2020 Russia–China medical symposium in Guangzhou
- 13.11.2020 8th BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation Ministerial Meeting
- 16.11.2020 Kazan International Linguistic Summit
- 25.11.2020 Meeting of the Russian–Chinese Intergovernmental Commission on Energy Cooperation
- 01.12.2020 – 13th Education Week of SCO Member States “Education Without Borders” in Moscow
04.12.2020 and Novosibirsk
- 04.12.2020 3rd China–Russia Industrial Innovation Competition in Moscow and Xi’an
- 08.12.2020 Opening of BRICS Partnership Innovation Center in Xiamen
- 09.12.2020 Announcement of the start of testing of Russian autopilot systems for Shanghai trams
- 09.12.2020 Skolkovo business mission to the People’s Republic of China
- 10.12.2020 Qingdao International Technology Transfer Conference
- 10.12.2020 China purchases Russian helicopter engines
- 11.12.2020 Announcement of the launch of sales of Russian–Chinese aircraft
- 14.12.2020– 3rd Meeting of the BRICS Academies of Science
15.12.2020
- 16.12.2020 Launch of the China–Russia Eurasian Studies Center in Guangzhou
- 25.12.2020 Handover by Rosatom of operation of power unit No. 4 of the Tianwan NPP in China

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- 30.12.2020 Announcement of cooperation between AFK Sistema and MSU–BIT University in Shenzhen
- 11.01.2021 Final of the 2020 China–Russia Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition
- 12.01.2021 Cloud algorithm technologies presentation in Beijing
- 21.01.2021 Russia–China symposium on biopharmaceutical technologies
- 25.01.2021 Assembly of the CRAIC CR929 Russia–China liner begins
- 25.01.2021 Russia–China innovation competition in Beijing
- 03.02.2021 Announcement that Chinese technologies will be used for glass tempering in Tatarstan
- 09.02.2021 Announcement of the opening of the Russia–China laboratory of one-dimensional materials in Vladimir
- 12.02.2021 Russia and China announce construction of a lunar station
- 16.02.2021 Russian instruments used on Chinese space station
- 17.02.2021 Russia–China conference on cooperation in Moscow
- 02.03.2021 Announcement of Russia–China environmental project in Tatarstan
- 09.03.2021 Signing of a memorandum of understanding on the construction of an international lunar research station
- 11.03.2021 Announcement of the start of shipments of Russian uranium fuel to China
- 15.03.2021 Announcement of Russia–China projects on cooperation in innovation
- 23.03.2021 Energy Systems Conference in Beijing
- 30.03.2021 Participation of Russia’s Channel One television station in the linguistic and translation project Russian-Chinese Parallel Corpus

Cooperation in Education, Culture, Media, Tourism, Sports and Related Areas

- 20.04.2020 Announcement of the laying of a monument of friendship and mutual assistance between China and Russia during World War II
- 24.04.2020–
09.05.2020 Ribbon of Saint George event in China
- 29.04.2020 Opening of Victory Parade photo exhibition in Guangzhou
- 30.04.2020 China takes part in the Doctor Jazz Party charity marathon
- 07.05.2020 Russia–China teleconference on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the victory in World War II
- 07.05.2020 China takes part in online Immortal Regiment event

- 09.05.2020 The City of Heihe sends Victory Day congratulations via video to the City of Blagoveshchensk
- 09.05.2020 Laying of wreaths at memorials to Soviet soldiers in Shenyang, Dalian, Changchun and Harbin
- 09.05.2020 Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China sends his Victory Day congratulations to the Russian Federation
- 22.05.2020 Online Meeting of the Tourism Administrations Heads of SCO Member States
- 27.05.2020 Opening of Russia–China Centre for the Study of Leninism in Guangzhou
- 31.05.2020 Consultations for Russian patients at Harbin hospital
- 15.06.2020 Start of construction of joint St. Petersburg State University – Harbin Institute of Technology campus in Harbin
- 15.06.2020 SCO children’s art exhibition in Beijing
- 17.06.2020 Russian–Chinese animated film takes part in international film festival in France
- 17.06.2020 13th Chinese Bridge competition in St. Petersburg
- 22.06.2020 Panda Chat project in Moscow
- 23.06.2020 Alibaba Business School digital economy webinar
- 30.06.2020 1st Meeting of the Coordinating Council of the SCO University
- 25.07.2020 Laying of wreaths at memorials to Soviet soldiers in Harbin and Chengde
- 25.07.2020 23rd Shanghai International Film Festival
- 27.07.2020 Announcement of the Summer Dreams Russia–China art exchange
- 31.07.2020 3rd Forum of Ancient Cities in Ryazan
- 05.08.2020 Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on the Development on Volunteerism
- 11.08.2020 Jinan Education Conference
- 12.08.2020 Video conference on “The Role of Youth in the SCO Region”
- 17.08.2020 Russia–China immersive theatre project in Kaifeng
- 21.08.2020–
30.08.2020 Russian cinema week in Shanghai
- 22.08.2020–
29.08.2020 10th Beijing International Film Festival
- 26.08.2020 China delivers humanitarian aid to schoolchildren at the Russian Embassy in Beijing
- 27.08.2020 Meeting of the BRICS Civil Forum Working Group

- 30.08.2020 Photo exhibition in Shanghai dedicated to the 75th Anniversary of the Victory in World War II
- 01.09.2020 Russia–China teleconference on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II and the victory over the Japanese
- 03.09.2020 Laying of wreaths in honour of World War II allied pilots at the Nanjing Memorial Cemetery
- 03.09.2020 5th BRICS Ministers of Culture Meeting
- 09.09.2020–
08.11.2020 Exhibition of works by a Chinese artist in St. Petersburg
- 10.09.2020–
04.10.2020 Exhibition of Chinese paintings in Moscow
- 10.09.2020 Presentation of commemorative medals to Chinese veterans in Beijing
- 24.09.2020 Meeting of the Russian–Chinese Subcommittee on Cooperation in the Field of Archives
- 01.10.2020–
07.10.2020 5th BRICS Film Festival
- 10.10.2020 17th Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the SCO Member States
- 10.10.2020–
19.10.2020 Pingyao International Film Festival
- 10.10.2020–
16.10.2020 Pacific Meridians Film Festival in Vladivostok
- 18.10.2020 Presentation of SCO cultural and sporting events in 2020–2021 in Beijing
- 20.10.2020 Meeting of the Subcommittee on Collaboration between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China in the Sphere of Mass Media
- 28.10.2020 BRICS Tourism Ministers’ Meeting
- 03.11.2020 Announcement of the Silk Way Rally in the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China and Mongolia
- 09.11.2020–
17.11.2020 BRICS Future Skills Challenge international competition in Moscow
- 12.11.2020–
23.11.2020 4th BRICS International Festival of Theatre Schools in Moscow
- 13.11.2020 Meeting between the heads of the Russian–Chinese Committees for Friendship, Peace and Development of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 13.11.2020–
23.11.2020 Russia–China oil painting exhibition in Harbin

- 16.11.2020 Chinese citizen awarded medal “For Strengthening Peace, Friendship and Cooperation”
- 18.11.2020 Publication of a book on the Soviet–Chinese struggle against Japanese militarism in Primorsky Territory
- 20.11.2020–
13.12.2020 Golden Turtle International Wildlife Festival
- 29.11.2020–
02.12.2020 6th BRICS Youth Summit in Ulyanovsk
- 29.11.2020 Geographical Dictation in Guangzhou
- 01.12.2020 Meeting of BRICS Ministers and Heads of Agencies Responsible for Youth Policy
- 01.12.2020 Opening of an exhibition of works by Russian artists in Harbin
- 03.12.2020 Laying of wreaths at the graves of Soviet soldiers in Yingkou
- 03.12.2020–
10.12.2020 11th Danzhou International Chess Tournament
- 05.12.2020–
12.12.2020 3rd Hainan International Film Festival
- 06.12.2020 5th SCO Kunming Marathon
- 07.12.2020–
08.12.2020 “Moscow – Beijing – 25” online forum
- 13.12.2020 Photo exhibition commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Victory in World War II
- 14.12.2020 Announcement of the establishment of the Russia–China Medical University in Yakutsk
- 18.12.2020 Russia–China New Media Forum
- 21.12.2020 Award ceremony for the best translations of Russian literature into Chinese in Beijing
- 01.01.2021–
15.03.2021 BRICS traditions video competition
- 19.01.2021 Civil Code of the People’s Republic of China translated into Russian
- 20.01.2021 Russian–Chinese animated film premier
- 21.01.2021 *RTVi* service launched in China
- 28.01.2021 Meeting between the Minister of Sport of the Russian Federation and the Ambassador of China to Russia in Moscow
- 09.02.2021–
08.04.2021 Exhibition of Chinese artist Zhang Huan’s works in Moscow
- 10.02.2021 Happy Spring Festival 2021 Concert

- 16.02.2021 Video concert in Blagoveshchensk to celebrate Chinese New Year
- 16.03.2021 Russia–China Women’s Forum
- 16.03.2021 Chinese citizen receives the Russian medal “In Memory of the Heroes of the Fatherland”
- 19.03.2021 Navruz celebrations at the SCO Secretariat in Beijing
- 27.03.2021 SCO Football Tournament in Beijing
- 31.03.2021 SCO Model interactive game

Spread of the Novel Coronavirus

- 01.04.2020 China provides humanitarian aid to Magadan
- 01.04.2020 China sends medical masks to Russia for Russian Post employees
- 02.04.2020 Delivery of Chinese humanitarian aid to the Russian Federation
- 02.04.2020 Consulate General of the People’s Republic of China sends humanitarian aid to the Administration of the Primorsky Territory
- 03.04.2020 China’s position on cooperation with the Russian Federation on the fight against the coronavirus pandemic
- 06.04.2020 Postponement of BRICS and SCO summit events in Chelyabinsk
- 07.04.2020 Postponement of the 7th China–Russia Expo to 2021
- 07.04.2020 Postponement of BRICS Young Diplomats Forum in Kazan
- 08.04.2020 China publishes Russian-language guide to coronavirus prevention
- 09.04.2020 Suspension of the operation of passenger border crossings between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 10.04.2020–12.04.2020 St. Petersburg International Legal Forum (online)
- 11.04.2020–18.04.2020 Visit of a delegation of doctors from the People’s Republic of China to Moscow
- 11.04.2020 Russian and Chinese military doctors hold videoconference
- 13.04.2020 Meeting between the Mayor of Moscow and a delegation of Chinese medical professionals in Moscow
- 13.04.2020 Arrival of humanitarian aid from the People’s Republic of China in Yekaterinburg
- 17.04.2020 Representatives of the Jilin Chamber of Commerce donate medicines to help fight the pandemic to SCO member states in Beijing
- 19.04.2020 Videoconference on coronavirus with the heads of the health ministries of the G20 countries

- 20.04.2020 China sends humanitarian aid to Russia
- 07.05.2020 Meeting of BRICS Senior Officials on COVID-19
- 28.05.2020 Postponement of the BRICS and SCO summits in St. Petersburg
- 28.05.2020 China sends humanitarian aid to Khabarovsk Territory
- 07.06.2020 China announces plans to work with Russia to develop a vaccine against COVID-19
- 09.06.2020 CASS video forum on international cooperation in the fight against COVID-19
- 10.06.2020 Russia–China medical conference (online)
- 15.06.2020 China delivers equipment for the production of medical masks to the Russian Federation
- 17.06.2020 Russia–China video forum on COVID-19 in Hefei
- 22.06.2020 Cancellation of BRICS Games in Chelyabinsk Region
- 02.07.2020 China sends humanitarian aid to Crimea
- 03.07.2020 Russia–China medical conference (online)
- 08.07.2020 2nd Working Meeting of SCO Health Experts
- 15.07.2020 China provides humanitarian aid for SCO countries in Beijing
- 20.07.2020 BRICS competition of research projects to overcome the consequences of the global coronavirus pandemic
- 24.07.2020 3rd Meeting of Ministers of Health of SCO Member States
- 30.07.2020 SCO Forum on Traditional Medicine
- 18.08.2020 Clinical trials of the Chinese vaccine against COVID-19 in the Russian Federation
- 27.08.2020 Announcement of the establishment of a Russia–China laboratory to study COVID-19
- 26.08.2020 Meeting of the Russia–China Sub-Commission for Healthcare Cooperation
- 03.09.2020 Video conference of G20 foreign ministers
- 09.10.2020 9th Meeting of the BRICS Tuberculosis Research Network
- 19.10.2020 Aeroflot suspends flights between Moscow and Shanghai
- 28.10.2020 Shandong Province suspends deliveries of goods on Russian ships
- 05.11.2020 China suspends entry for Russian citizens
- 09.11.2020 Cancellation of ice hockey match on Amur River between Russia and China
- 14.11.2020 International medical congress on COVID-19
- 19.11.2020 Aeroflot resumes flights to Hong Kong

- 19.11.2020 Opening of Russia–China COVID-19 training centre in Vladivostok
- 20.11.2020 Chinese company obtains the right to register the Sputnik V vaccine
- 02.12.2020 Consulate General of the People’s Republic of China sends humanitarian aid to a St. Petersburg hospital
- 07.12.2020 Trials of Chinese COVID-19 vaccine begin in the Russian Federation
- 18.12.2020 BRICS media roundtable on the pandemic
- 23.01.2021 Temporary suspension of deliveries of Russian seafood products to the People’s Republic of China
- 28.01.2021–
14.02.2021 Temporary suspension of the work of road checkpoints between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China
- 03.02.2021 Announcement of Russia–China cooperation in the development of a vaccine against COVID-19
- 03.02.2021 Temporary suspension of Russian meat exports to China
- 04.02.2021 Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Supervision sends data on Russian enterprises to China
- 17.02.2021 Cancellation of the Chinese leg of the Silk Way Rally
- 18.02.2021 UN Security Council Ministerial Open Briefing on COVID-19 vaccine
- 11.03.2021 Announcement on the creation of a Russia–China COVID-19 vaccine
- 24.03.2021 China temporarily suspends imports of Russian seafood products into the country
- 24.03.2021 China’s participation in the Russian project to create a drug against COVID-19
- 29.03.2021 Start of Sputnik V vaccine production in the People’s Republic of China

About the Authors

Russian Side

Andrey Kortunov (Head) – Ph.D. in History, RIAC Director General, RIAC Member

Aleksey Maslov (Head) – Dr. of History, Professor, Acting Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, RIAC Member

Andrey Karneev – Ph.D. in History, Head of the School of Asian Studies at the Higher School of Economics

Vasily Kashin – Ph.D. in Political Science, Deputy Head of the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies at the Higher School of Economics, Leading Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Northeast Asia Strategic Issues and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, RIAC Member

Ksenia Kuzmina – RIAC Deputy Director of Programs

Yury Kulintsev – Research Fellow at the Center for the Studies of Northeast Asia Strategic Issues and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Alexander Larionov – Ph.D. in Public Administration, Lead Researcher at the Center for Strategic Forecasting and Planning of the Institute of Economic Policy and Economic Security Problems of the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation, Director of the Centre for Organizing Student Research Activities at the Financial Academy under the Government of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Petrovsky – Dr. of Political Science, Chief Research Fellow at the Center for Russian–Chinese Relations Studies and Forecasting of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Chinese Side

Zhao Huasheng (Head) – Professor at the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University

Liu Huaqin – Dr. of Economics, Professor, Director of the Institute of Europe and Eurasia at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation under the Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China

Xing Guangcheng – Dr. of Law, Professor, Academician, Director of the Institute of Chinese Borderland Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)

Yu Bin – Dr. of Political Science, Professor at the Center for American Studies of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University; Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Wittenberg University (United States)

Yang Cheng – Dr. of Law, Professor at the Shanghai International Studies University, Executive President of the Shanghai Academy of Global Governance and Area Studies

Feng Yujun – Dr. of Law, Professor, Deputy Director of the Institute of International Studies, Director of the Center for Russia and Central Asia Studies at Fudan University

Zhang Guihong – Dr. of Law, Professor, Director of the Center for United Nations and International Organizations of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University

Lin Minwang – Dr. of Law, Professor, Deputy Director of the Center for South Asian Studies of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University

Jian Junbo – Dr. of Law, Professor, Associate Professor at the Center for China–EU Relations of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University

Russian International Affairs Council

The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) is a non-profit international relations think tank on a mission to provide policy recommendations for all of the Russian organizations involved in external affairs.

RIAC engages experts, statesmen, entrepreneurs and members of civil society in public discussions with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of Russian foreign policy.

Along with research and analysis, RIAC is involved in activities aimed at creating a solid network of young global affairs and diplomacy experts. RIAC is an active player on the public diplomacy arena, presenting Russia's vision on the key issues of global development on the international stage.

RIAC members are the leaders of Russia's foreign affairs community – diplomats, businesspeople, scholars, public leaders and journalists.

RIAC President Igor Ivanov, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation from 1998 to 2004 and Secretary of the Security Council from 2004 to 2007.

Andrey Kortunov is the Director General of RIAC. From 1995 to 1997, Dr Kortunov was Deputy Director of the Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

The Institute of Far Eastern Studies (IFES) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) is a leading scientific research institution of the Russian Academy of Science. The institute conducts research work on fundamental problems and development of economy, history, foreign policy, philosophy and culture of China, Japan, Korea as well as international policy issues and economic integration in the Asia Pacific Region.

Since its establishment, the IFES RAS has become one of the largest research centers conducting integrated studies on the Northeast Asia problems, situation on the Korean Peninsula and relationship between Russia and the countries of the region.

The Institute of Far Eastern Studies continues the best traditions of over two hundred years of Russian oriental studies. Priority areas of its research activities are as follows: scientific support of a relationship program for Russia and its Far Eastern neighbours, development and security issues of the Northeast and Central Asia, studies on history, modern life, social and economic development and spheres of life of China, Japan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Republic of Korea.

Fudan University

Fudan University was established in 1905 as Fudan Public School. It was the first institution of higher education to be founded by a Chinese person, renowned modern educator Ma Xiangbo. The school's name was chosen from the "Biography of Yuxia" in the Classic of History (《尚书大传 虞夏传》), where the two characters fù 复 ("return") and dàn 旦 ("dawn") are found in the famous lines "Brilliant are the sunshine and moonlight, again the morning glory after the night," signifying continuous self-renewal, and expressing the hope that China will become a country with a strong higher education system run by Chinese intellectuals.

Fudan University was merged with Shanghai Medical University in 2000, forming a new, stronger Fudan University with a broader set of disciplines: medicine, sciences, and arts.

As one of the first participants in the 211 and 985 Projects, Fudan has developed into a comprehensive research university, with Departments of Philosophy, Economics, Law, Education, Literature, History, Science, Engineering, Medicine, and Management.

Fudan University celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2005.

**Russian International Affairs Council
Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences
Institute of International Studies at Fudan University**

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Tel.: +7 (495) 225 6283
Fax: +7 (495) 225 6284
welcome@russiancouncil.ru

119049, Moscow,
8, 4th Dobryninsky pereulok

russiancouncil.ru