

Russia, China counter threat to world security

by Mary Burdman

The governments of Russia and China issued a remarkable Joint Declaration on Dec. 10, after the two-day “informal” summit meeting of Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin in Beijing. Most of the world’s attention, including from Washington, has been focussed on the rough statements Yeltsin made during his first day in Beijing on Dec. 9, but that would be missing a very important point. The Russia-China Joint Declaration was no hasty production. It is a clear, stark statement, reflecting a long period of policy formulation by both Russia and China, in reaction to the unwavering, disastrous tendency of British-American-Commonwealth international operations over the past 12 months. Both Russia and China have drawn “a line in the sand,” which they consider essential for the very survival of their nations.

As both governments have reiterated, the strategic partnership between Russia and China is *not* an alliance, and is *not* aimed at any third nation or bloc. Rather, as the closing portion of the Declaration states, their “interaction is based on the goal of protecting the essential national interests of the two sides, and also in the name of strengthening peace and stability in the Asian-Pacific region and the whole world.”

Much has been made of Yeltsin’s comments, after his first meeting with Jiang Zemin, harshly criticizing U.S. President Clinton for his attack on Russian policy in Chechnya, and asserting that Russia “possesses a full arsenal of nuclear arms.” Yeltsin declared that “a multipolar world is the foundation for everything,” rather than Clinton’s views. The initial reaction of Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin was more conciliatory, as he said that “we have very good relations with

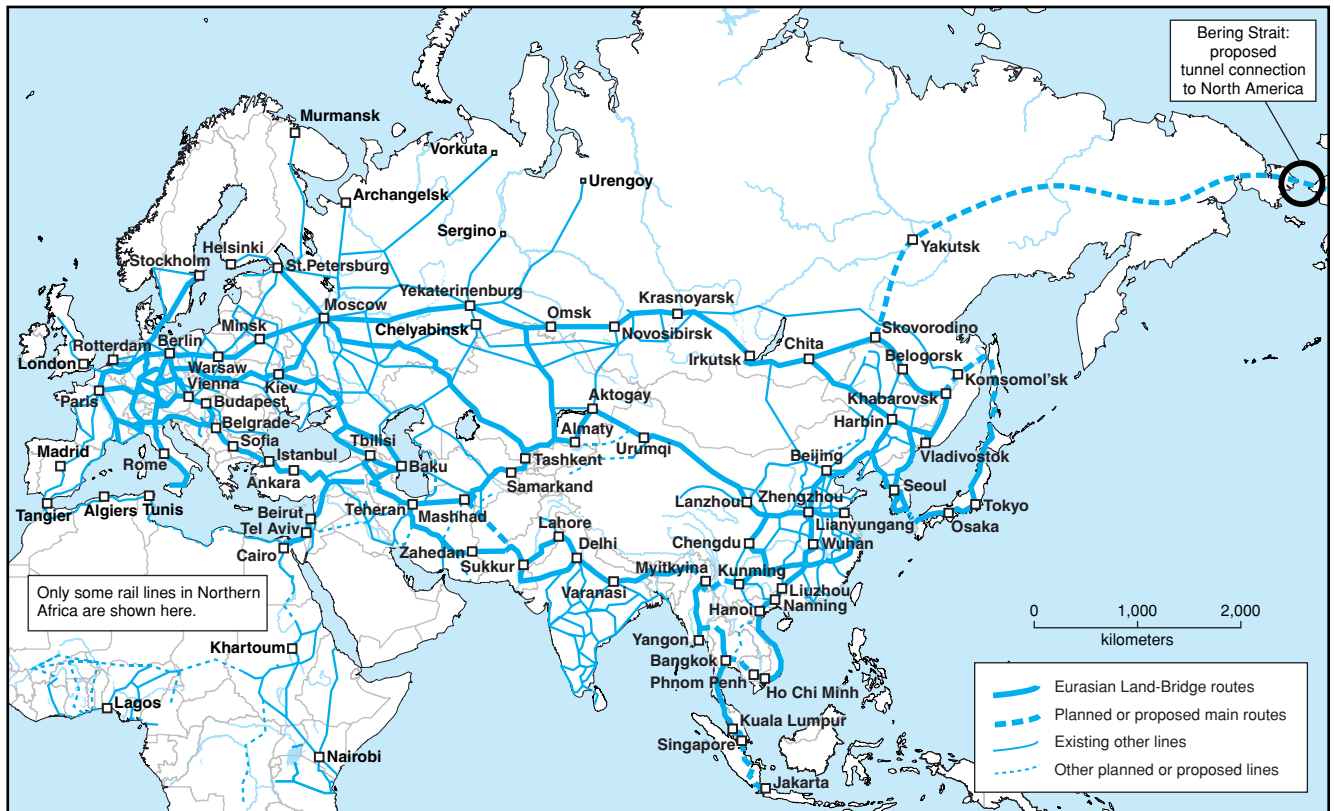
the leadership of the United States. . . . I would consider it absolutely incorrect to produce the impression that some kind of period of cooling off of relations between Russia and the United States has begun or is beginning.” Yet, three days later, speaking in Plesetsk, Putin made a statement similar to Yeltsin’s: “Russia will not allow itself to be spoken to from the position of force, and so will use every diplomatic and military-political lever available to prevent this. . . . Russia has everything it needs to secure its safety.”

Actually, this summit meeting was held to make a statement of *institutional*, strategic policy by both governments. Despite the profound turbulence within Russia, Yeltsin’s China mission was on a level above the ongoing, bloody political infighting at home. This is the eighth Russian-Chinese summit since 1992. Since then, Yeltsin and Jiang, who met earlier this year at a conference in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Aug. 25, have met once, or even twice, a year, every year except 1993. The new Joint Declaration begins by referring to the many previous agreements between Russia and China, and above all, to the “Russian-Chinese joint declaration on a multipolar world and the creation of a new international order,” signed by Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin in Moscow in April 1997.

Just a year ago, then-Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov, visiting New Delhi, made his proposal for the development of a “strategic triangle” among Russia, India, and China, a policy endorsed by a broad spectrum in Russia.

Yeltsin had been hospitalized up until Dec. 8, but suddenly recovered. Emerging from the hospital, he signed the Russian-Belarus Declaration of Union on defense, foreign

Eurasia: main routes and selected secondary routes of the Eurasian Land-Bridge



policy, economics, customs, and against crime and terrorism. The next day, he left for China, for this long-planned summit meeting.

The Joint Declaration is also an institutional statement from China. During his stay in Beijing, which lasted from the morning of Dec. 9 to the evening of Dec. 10, Yeltsin not only met several times with President Jiang Zemin, but also met with both Prime Minister Zhu Rongji and with Chairman Li Peng of the National People's Congress Standing Committee. Although there are some policy differences within the Chinese leadership, especially on the vital question of how to deal with the enormous pressures that economic and political globalization is exerting upon China, Yeltsin's meetings with both secondary leaders were given very prominent coverage.

Reviving the Great Silk Road

The great potential for the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership, was described by "political observer" Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, in an article published in the official Russian government *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* on Dec. 8. Ovchinnikov described the potential *economic* power of Eurasian development, in terms approximating the proposals for a Eurasian

Land-Bridge made by Lyndon and Helga LaRouche. Ovchinnikov was also the author of an article published in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* on June 16 stating that the Russia-China-India triangle was "already a reality in the area of military-technical cooperation."

Ovchinnikov wrote that while Britain dominated the 19th century, and the United States laid claim to the 20th, the 21st century "will belong to the Pacific." There, China—not Japan—is becoming "a financial powerhouse capable of being the main generator of world economic growth in the 21st century."

Moscow's foreign policy priority in the next century is the Pacific, Ovchinnikov wrote. The "most real achievement of Russian diplomacy in recent years has been the truly friendly ties between Moscow and Beijing. . . . The crucial task as the century draws to a close is to use the new world leader's dynamism for Russia's benefit and hitch the Russian freightcar to the Chinese train that is gaining speed. . . .

"It is necessary to use our countries' geographical position and the complementarity of their economies, so as to turn Russia and China into supports for a bridge between Europe and Asia, and between the Atlantic and the Pacific. In other words, at a new turning point in history, to revive the idea

of the Great Silk Road which, in addition to a purely trade function, would now have a function in transport, the power industry, telecommunications and other elements," he wrote. "The Great Silk Road [is] a road to prosperity for our peoples in the coming century."

Ovchinnikov warned that the expansion of NATO, the extension of the U.S.-Japanese security treaty, and the U.S. threat to abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, "are all prompting Russia and China toward rapprochement and transforming them into each other's strategic rear." But at the same time, "the coming century is also opening extensive opportunities for economic cooperation for the great neighbors. It is this which gives special importance to the next official meeting between the heads of our two states in Beijing."

Policy 'will be carried out'

Perhaps the single most important formulation in the new Joint Declaration, is at the beginning: that "the basic approaches to international problems" arrived at over the years by Russia and China, "will be rigorously carried out" (see *Documentation*).

The Declaration warns that "negative tendencies in international affairs have been growing more and more." These include the attempt to impose "a unipolar structure and a single set of culture, values and ideas" on the world; the undermining of the international role of the United Nations; the expansion of military blocs and of warfare; and attacks on nations' sovereignty. These tendencies are "preventing the establishment" of Russia and China's strategic goal of a "just, multipolar structure in international relations" (emphasis added). It is because of this fundamental conflict, that both nations believe that "there is a growing necessity for close coordination of their actions concerning the issue of maintaining global strategic stability."

The essential security issues

It is from this perspective, that the Joint Declaration is brutally clear: "Negative tendencies have recently appeared in the sphere of international security," the Declaration states, and warns that the policy of developing a national anti-missile defense system, considered by Russia, China, and many other nations to be a violation of the 1972 ABM Treaty, "would have a destructive effect on strategic stability." Plans to set up systems of regional anti-missile defense "can destroy peace and stability in the Asian-Pacific region," particularly if there is any attempt to include Taiwan in such a system.

The world financial crisis is also affecting Moscow-Beijing relations. China, in particular, is absorbing the lessons of the World Trade Organization summit in Seattle. The internal dissent in the United States, against the government's commitment to radical globalization, struck home. The situation in Europe, the growing opposition from France and Ger-

many to all-out globalization and the "Third Way" lunacies of "war hawk" British Prime Minister Tony Blair, has also made an impression in China. These impressions were strengthened by the contrast between the pompous, and often nasty, British reception of President Jiang Zemin during his October state visit, and the exceptionally warm welcome he was given in France.

At the same time, warnings about the international financial crisis are again emerging in the Chinese press, after a tendency to focus on the alleged "recovery" from the Asian financial crisis. Recent analyses have reported that, despite the proclaimed "end" of the Asian crisis, next year will be a very difficult and risky one. Lack of credit is strangling Asian economies, the Japanese economy is shrinking, and the potential for a crash of the U.S. dollar and/or stock market is posing a serious risk for Asian nations.

Thus, the Joint Declaration supports China joining the World Trade Organization, but under conditions which "would permit it to take an equal and dignified place in the system of international trade." The WTO must have a "universal character" and "balance rights and duties."

Sovereignty and security

At the summit, Jiang Zemin told Yeltsin that the settlement of the Taiwan issue and the reunification of China has become "still more pressing," since China will resume sovereignty over Macao on Dec. 20. Jiang also stated that China totally supports Russia's crackdown on "terrorism and separatism in Chechnya," and its move to safeguard its national unity and territorial integrity. Yeltsin reiterated Russia's support for China's great reunification cause, and particularly denounced the "absurdity" of calling China-Taiwan relations "state-to-state" relations, a reaction to the provocative policy of lame-duck Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui.

Jiang's statement on Taiwan is not intended to "up the ante" across the Taiwan Straits; rather, it is a reaction to the onslaught which has been mounted against China, by the "cold warriors" in the Anglo-American Establishment and the Congress. China wants to develop good relations with the United States, but knows at the same time, that it is impossible to do so, unless the broad anti-China insanity there—far greater than any such tendency in continental Europe—is brought under control.

Russia and China are also striving to collaborate against "international terrorism, religious extremism, and national separatism," a process in which the "Shanghai Five" have achieved some success. In spring 1996, the leaders of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan met in Shanghai to sign a protocol on reducing tensions and securing relations along their long borders, and on developing cooperation.

The five leaders have met several times since, most notably on Aug. 25 in Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan, when they expanded their measures to reduce tensions, oppose interna-

tional terrorism, and increase economic development. On Dec. 1, the heads of the law-enforcement agencies and special services of the five nations met again in Bishkek to develop concrete proposals.

In Beijing on Dec. 9, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan signed two border demarcation agreements which meant, as Ivanov announced, that “from this moment onward, there is no more problem on the border issues. This is a new step in our strategic partnership.” The two sides also signed an agreement on common economic usage of the islands on the Amur River (Heilongjiang) on their eastern border. At the beginning of December, the two nations signed an agreement allowing Russian airplanes en route from the Russian Pacific Maritime province to European Russia, to fly over China’s northeast region, restoring the situation that existed before the Sino-Soviet split 35 years ago.

While Russian-Chinese economic cooperation and trade still lag behind their economic potential, cooperation in the fields of energy development, metallurgy, engineering, and the chemical industries, continues. By far the most extensive economic cooperation remains in the military field.

As Russian Ambassador to China Igor Rogachev stated in Beijing Dec. 8, “I do not remember when in the past Russia and China have stood together so often.” And this, on cardinal problems that determine the future development of the world.

Documentation

From the declaration by Russia and China

This joint declaration was released in Beijing on Dec. 10, following meetings between Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin.

I. . . The top leaders of Russia and China stress, that the basic approaches to international problems, presented in the [Russian-Chinese joint declaration on a multipolar world and the creation of a new international order, of April 1997] will be rigorously carried out. They call for the creation of a multipolar world in the 21st century, based upon a strengthening of the leading role of the United Nations, . . . for equal rights and equal security of all members of the international community, for mutual respect for sovereignty and for the choice of development paths by nations, for non-interference in internal affairs, and for the creation of a just, equitable, and mutually beneficial world political and economic order. . . .

II. The two sides could not avoid taking account of the fact, that negative tendencies have recently appeared in the sphere of international security. The two sides consider, that the creation of a national anti-missile defense system by one of the nations signatory to the ABM Treaty of 1972, in violation of that treaty, would have a destructive effect on strategic stability and on the entire structure of key international agreements concerning disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. . . . The two sides affirm their rejection of any attempt to violate the 1972 ABM Treaty, and stress that this agreement remains and must remain one of the cornerstones of strategic stability. . . .

The two sides declare, that plans of certain states, to set up systems of regional anti-missile defense, can destroy peace and stability in the Asian-Pacific region. The Russian side supports the position of the Chinese side, rejecting the inclusion of the Chinese province of Taiwan, in any way whatever, into these plans. . . .

The two sides express deep regret at the refusal of the United States, to ratify the universal Test Ban Treaty. . . .

The two sides consider, that full responsibility for the consequences of a possible disruption of strategic stability and international security will be carried by those states, who initiate the collapse of basic agreements in the sphere of disarmament. The sides believe that in the present situation there is a growing necessity for close coordination of their actions concerning the issue of maintaining global strategic stability.

III. The two sides note, that negative tendencies in international affairs have been growing more and more, including the attempt to impose upon the international community a unipolar structure and a single set of culture, values, and ideas; the attempt to weaken the role of the United Nations and its Security Council; the search for a basis and pretext for an irresponsible interpretation of the basic content and principles of the UN Charter and its amendments; the strengthening and expansion of military blocks; the undermining of international law by threat of force, to the point of war, using the thesis that “human rights take precedence over sovereignty” and the theory of “humanitarian intervention” in order to launch attacks on the sovereignty of independent states.

The two sides express their readiness, together with other countries, to act against such tendencies, which are preventing the establishment of a just, multipolar structure in international relations.

IV. The two sides stress, that one of the most important priorities for foreign policy efforts of Russia and China is the strengthening of the leading role of the UN in international affairs.

The two sides agree, that strengthening the role and authority of the UN will make possible a rational, careful and regulated reform of the UN organization. In this context both sides express their conviction, that the status and role of the Security Council as the main organ responsible for maintain-

ing international peace and security, must not be placed into question or weakened under any conditions whatsoever. . . . A necessary condition for guaranteeing the effectiveness and stability of the UN is to preserve unchanged the legal powers of the present permanent members of the Security Council.

V. Russia and China attach importance to China's entry into the World Trade Organization under such conditions, as would permit it to take an equal and dignified place in the system of international trade. . . . The two sides believe that the WTO must have a universal character . . . it is necessary to balance rights and duties, taking account of the level of their social-economic development. . . .

VI. The two sides point out, that international terrorism, religious extremism and national separatism in all forms, and also trans-border criminal activities (illegal arms trade, drugs. . . .) have today become a serious security threat to the sovereign nations. . . . The sides affirm their commitment to undertake concrete coordinated steps against the above-mentioned problems on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

VII. Russia and China express satisfaction at the process of realization of the Bishkek declaration of the nation-members of the "Shanghai Five"—the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the Republics of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan—of August 25, 1999. . . . The two sides think, that the holding of a meeting of the Ministers of

Defense of the "Shanghai Five" during the year 2000 will be one of the most important events. . . . The two sides support the idea of carrying out expert consultations of the "Five" on issues of multilateral economic interaction (including the development of cooperation in transport, and also in the production and distribution of oil and gas). Such negotiations could be an important part of preparation of a summit of the heads of governments of the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the Republics of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. . . .

X. The two sides underline their commitment to support each other concerning the preservation of national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Russian side supports the great task of unification of China, supporting China's position on the Taiwan question. . . . The Chinese side again declared, that the Chechnya problem is an internal affair of the Russian Federation. The Chinese side supports the actions of the Russian government in the fight against terrorist and separatist forces.

[In conclusion] the interaction of the two sides in international affairs are not directed against third nations. This interaction is based on the goal of protecting the essential national interests of the two sides, and also in the name of strengthening peace and stability in the Asian-Pacific region and the whole world.

The Way Out of The Crisis



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