

China and Russia Strengthen Strategic Alliance: A United Front over U.S. Dominance

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Abstract

If Russia does not swiftly enact democratic reforms, China and Russia will continue to battle for dominance of the world order for the next ten years. It is anticipated that it will involve the Global South and turn into a confrontation between the forces attempting to preserve the status quo. Leading the effort to overthrow the US-centered current order are China and Russia. It is expected that the result will be known with certainty once both teams have increased their level of competition. Rather, as the argument rages on, feelings will most likely begin to show. Effective competition management is essential for both parties to prevent destabilizing factors such as inadvertent confrontations and unanticipated escalation. Whether or not China can be prevented from using force to alter the status quo unilaterally will be the primary element determining how the battle for international order plays out in the future.

Keywords: China's alignment with Russia, Anti-US alignment, US and Changing the Current International Order, Rising Perceptions of Russia and China as Threats, Modifying the Nuclear Balance.

Introduction

With the support and encouragement of many nations, especially those in the West, the United States took the lead in efforts to create a new global order in the early 1990s. Freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights were the cornerstones of this worldwide legal system, which was founded on values that were widely recognized. The US and USSR were bitter rivals during the Cold War. Through agreements with other countries, the two superpowers turned their vast nuclear weapons systems against one another. The hypothesis concluded that increased collaboration between major countries was largely responsible for the stability and prosperity that followed the Cold War and that China's economic growth was accelerated by its adaptation to the post-Cold War international order. China replaced the US as the second-most powerful country in the world

in terms of military might. Events in the Taiwan Strait, the East and South China Seas, and other sites demonstrate that by the end of the 2000s, Beijing had expanded its unilateral efforts to alter the status quo and had started to use force to threaten the established rules-based international order. Strong great-power rivalry exists between the two nations because of China's aspirations aimed at establishing a new world order and its perceived rejection of international standards of Globalization. However, this global structure is currently confronting numerous significant problems.

1. China's Strategy to Change the World Order Currently in Place

CHINA China's position towards the United States has deteriorated under Xi Jinping's leadership. U.S.-China relations markedly deteriorated under the Obama administration, then heated up under the Trump administration and further heightened under the Biden administration. Notwithstanding the widening gap, the Xi administration still harbors animosity toward the US even after three terms in office. China and Russia may have some challenges, but overall, according to Ivanov, their relationship is "trending upward." [1] "At this point, I don't think the United States or Europe can significantly influence the direction of the China-Russia partnership," he stated. At a press conference outside the National People's Congress in March 2023, Foreign Minister Qin Gang attacked the idea that the United States can "out-compete" China, calling it an attempt to "contain and suppress China in all respects and get the two countries locked in a zero-sum game.

" He emphasized that repression and containment of the crisis "will not stop the rejuvenation of China." ". [2] and the ability to carry it out technologically," in light of China's more aggressive stance toward the US. [3]. China claims that the United States of America's "peaceful evolution" refers to the progressive substitution of Western values like democracy and freedom for CCP authoritarianism. [和平演变]. [4]

This paper examines China's approach to upholding international order in the first segment by examining the shifts in China's US policy from the end of the Cold War and the Xi Jinping administration. China's perspective on the international system aligns with its opinion of the United States. Moreover, the US strategy considers China's goal of maintaining international order. [5] The strategy adopted by the Xi leadership with Russia, a nuclear power that is comparable to the US and is growing more dangerous to the global status quo, is examined in the second section. [6] By looking at the connection with their growing strategic collaboration, China and Russia should be better able to comprehend each other's perspectives on the future of the world order. The final section explores China's evolving nuclear weapons posture and expanding military cooperation with Russia to present prospects for China's international order policy. [7]

2. China's new approach to the US is confrontational rather than cooperative

• Choosing a Cooperative Stand in the Post-Cold War International Order

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) government faced difficult circumstances at home and abroad from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. On June 4, 1989, the government dispatched the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to brutally repress citizens and students who were taking part in the events that took place in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, and advocating for political democracy. [8]

It revealed the fierce power battles occurring within the Party and seriously damaged the confidence of the Chinese people in it. Furthermore, the US and other Western nations strongly denounced the CCP government for using force to put an end to a nonviolent democratization movement and imposed severe economic and diplomatic sanctions, claiming grave human rights breaches concerning China.[9] China became the only communist state on the planet when the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe collapsed, as evidenced by the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991.[7] In addition, Western countries—the US included—vehemently condemned the CCP leadership for employing force to quell a peaceful democratization movement and imposed harsh diplomatic and economic penalties, alleging serious violations of China's human rights.[10].

Hu additionally underlined the importance of "more actively promoting the development of the international political and economic order in a more just and reasonable direction" in addition to "more actively participating in international rulemaking." [11]

Thus, as predictions of a long-term decline in American strength and a relative rise in Chinese power increased, there was a feeling that the capacity gap between the two countries was closing.[12] The Hu Jintao administration anticipated that China would be stronger than the United States and grew more optimistic that China could compete with the latter. As a result, he began to question the current US-led system and got over his fear of opposing the US on matters of fundamental concern to the global arrangement. The United States was included in China's new foreign policy. The vice president who was supposed to replace Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping, visited the United States in February 2012. Xi emphasized that China's sovereignty and territorial integrity are in jeopardy in the Taiwan dispute during his meeting with President Obama. Sincerity has always been the most important and delicate issue in the relationship between the US and China.[13].

Xi stated, "The issues concerning Taiwan and Tibet involve China's core interests," when he met with Vice President Biden. It is imperative that China and the US "respect each other's core interests."

Interests and main worries, refrain from creating issues for one another, and honor one another's boundaries.[14] "He emphasized that the two nations might create a "new type of relationship between major countries in the 21st century" by "respecting each other's core interests and major concerns." [15].

Xi underlined that without bolstering military capabilities, the "Chinese Dream" could not be realized.[16] Moreover, General Secretary Xi stated in January 2013 during the group study session on foreign policy of the CCP Central Committee Politburo that a peaceful international environment was necessary for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Furthermore, he emphasized, "We will keep working towards peaceful development, but we will never jeopardize our legal rights or our core national interests. No country can presume that commerce will advance its core objectives or that giving up its goals of growth, security, or sovereignty will result in "bitter fruit." [17] While the Chinese president was in the nation, President Xi and President Obama had

a meeting. China said at a press conference that "both sides agreed to make joint efforts to build... a new type of China-U.S. major country relations," according to Xi.[18].

State Councilor Yang Jiechi defines a "new type of major-country relations" as (i) avoiding conflict and confrontation; (ii) respecting each other's basic interests and primary concerns; and (iii) promoting collaboration and win-win outcomes results and abandoning the idea of a zero-sum game.[19] Then, the administration of Xi Jinping took a firm stand and pressed the US to acknowledge China's core interests. Chang Wanquan, the Minister of Defense and State Councilor paid a visit to the US in August 2013. Chang met with US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and asked that the US stop supplying Taiwan with weapons.

The US soldiers' information-gathering operations on China's borders and the US government's ban on high-tech exports to China are seen as roadblocks to the establishment of a "new type of China-U.S. military relationship." [20] In December 2013, while the USS Cowpens cruiser was observing a Chinese naval training off the southern coast of Hainan Island, a PLA Navy landing craft advanced dangerously and impeded it.[21] This new approach to international relations was dubbed "major-power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics" by him.[22] President Xi Jinping discussed China's aspirations for a new global order in the September 2015 General Debate of the UN General Assembly. In his speech, President Xi lambasted powerful nations for exerting pressure on weaker governments and meddling in their domestic affairs, emphasizing that all countries need to be treated equally.[23].

3. China and Russia's Growing Collaboration to Create a New International Order

• From Opponent to Partner

Cold War territorial and ideological disputes between China and the Soviet Union led to military skirmishes on Damansky Island (also called Zhenbao Island) in the Ussuri River in 1969. After that, China persisted in attempting to stabilize its ties with Russia, the nation that had driven out the Soviet Union.

The agreement also indicates that both countries had a similar understanding of the international order and that, in the end, the UN Security Council would be in charge of preserving peace and security on a global scale. The agreement opposed any action that involved invading or using force against a sovereign state and worked together to uphold global strategic equilibrium and strengthen UN authority.[24].

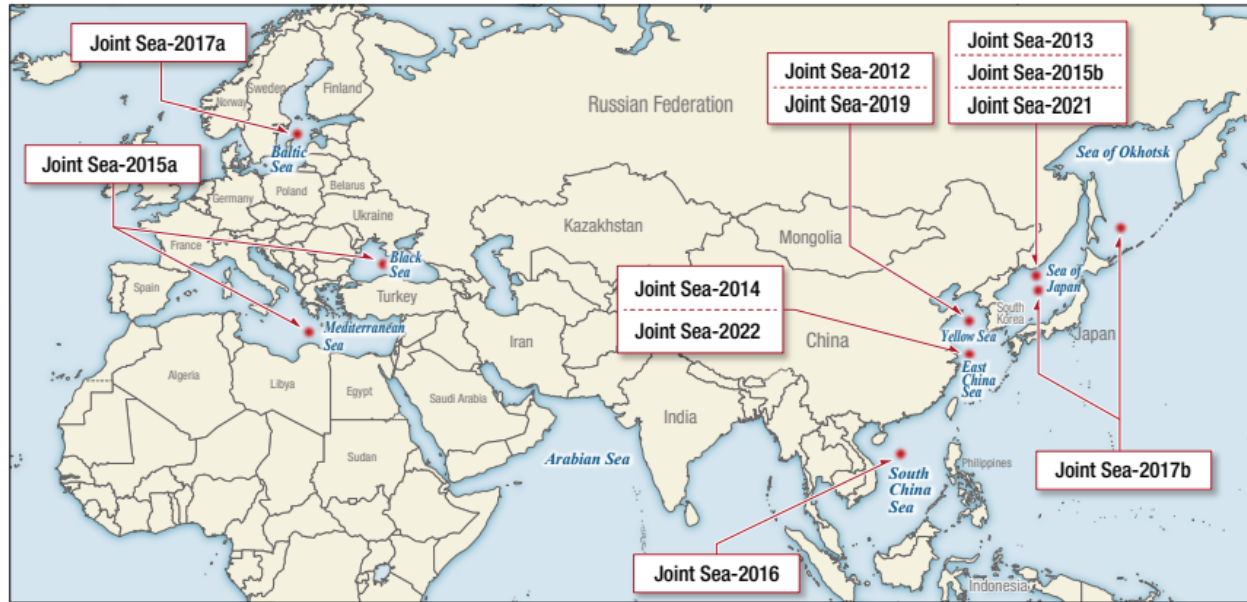


Figure: 1. Joint Sea Bilateral Exercises between China and Russia

Source: Compiled by the author based on PLA Daily, USNI News, and other news report

Additionally, they said that they would transform their agreement into a "comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation" instead of the conventional "strategic partnership of cooperation." [25] The 2008 global financial crisis, they emphasize, "showed how existing global governance mechanisms lack efficiency and do not reflect the current political, economic, and financial realities" and that "these mechanisms are actively moving in the direction of multipolarity." [26]

Xi stated that "a prosperous and powerful Russia is favorable for the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and the world and aligns with China's interests." [27].

4. Russia-Ukraine War: the Putin Regime's Survival Strategy

Vladimir Putin's current second term in office officially began with the "new May decree," also known as the presidential order "On National Goals and Strategic Objectives of the Russian Federation through to 2024," which outlined the administration's goals. [28]

It also shows how seriously the current administration takes the enduring policy problems that Russian society faces. Aware that Russia was becoming uninteresting, the Putin administration chose, on February 24, 2022, [29] to launch a military invasion of Ukraine, around four years after announcing the "new strategy." Russia's reputation suffered greatly as a result, and Western countries imposed harsh economic sanctions. If the administration's policy decisions are sound, what kind of survival strategy might be behind their actions?

5. Putin's Strategy of Regime's Survival

- The "Inner Circle's" Survival Strategy and the 2020 Constitutional Reform

Since the Putin administration entered office in May 2018, the announcement of pension reforms that will raise the retirement age has provided difficult maneuvers for the government. There have been forceful protests and a decline in popularity as a result. Nationalism increased after the "annexation of Crimea" in March. President Putin's approval rating stayed consistently high at 80% in 2014. However, his approval rating dropped to 67% in July 2018 and stayed there for the remainder of the year as the State Duma (lower house) discussed pension reforms in further detail.[30] The Russian Federation's Constitution at the time stated that "the same person may not be elected President of the Russian Federation for more than two terms running." [31] The term of President Putin was set to expire in May 2024, at which point he will turn 72. It began when he took up his job again in 2012. Putin's Survival Plan and the Conflict between Russia and Ukraine [31]. This set forth conversations about Putin's potential successor. At the president's yearly address to the Federal Assembly on January 15, 2020, Russia's primary constitutional reform process got underway.[32] There was a line in it that changed the previous sentence and said that President Putin may stay in office until 2036 when he would become eighty-four years old.[33].

As seen in **Figure 2**, the 2020 constitutional amendment altered the length of the presidential term, gave the president more authority, and granted former presidents immunity both during and after their terms in office.[34] In addition, it permitted presidents to appoint a maximum of seven-lifetime senators, who would continue to serve as lifetime senators in the Federation Council of the upper chamber upon their retirement.[35]. Lifetime protection, akin to that afforded to former presidents, is guaranteed under the constitution to a maximum of seven senators, since members of the Federal Assembly are exempt while holding office.[36] One could interpret these modifications as the definition of the Putin dictatorship's "inner circle" survival strategy.

Strategy for the political system's survival and presidential powers



Maintaining the political system and guaranteeing protections

- A clause that "resets" the number of terms that can be held by former presidents
- Immunity to presidents who have left office and *lifelong* senator status
- Presidential authority to appoint (no more than seven) senators *for life*

Enhancement of presidential powers

- The president was granted the power to dismiss the chairman of the government (prime minister) and conduct overall direction over the federal government (cabinet)
- The president appoints the heads of foreign affairs, defense, and intelligence agencies upon consultations with the Federation Council (upper chamber)
- The Security Council, the highest decision-making body, was transformed into a deliberative body that *cooperates* with the president
- Further centralization through the introduction of a "unified system of public authority" and the strengthening of the National Council's functions

The Putin regime's historical and moral perspectives



- "*protection of marriage as a union of a male and a female*"
- "The Russian Federation, united by the *millennium history*, preserving the *memory of the ancestors* who conveyed to us ideals and *belief in God*, as well as continuity of development of the Russian state, recognises the unanimity of the State that was established historically."
- "The Russian Federation honours the memory of the defenders of the Fatherland, ensures *protection of historical truth*. Diminution of the heroic deed of the people defending the Fatherland is precluded."
- "The Russian Federation ensures protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Any actions (except delimitation, demarcation, re-demarcation of the state border of the Russian Federation with bordering states) aimed at alienation of the part of the territory of the Russian Federation, as well as calls upon such actions are precluded."

Figure:2. The Putin Regime's Survival Plan and

Source: Source: Compiled by the author based on Hasegawa Takeyuki, "Russia's Constitutional Reform in the Second Putin Administration: Presidential Power in the Russian Political System," *Security & Strategy*, Vol. 3, January, 2023, pp. 61-80. Italics are the author's own emphasis.

Photo: Russian President official website

(<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69470/photos/69106>;

<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69470/photos/69108>).

Table:1 Matters falling under the purview of the Presidential Directorate for Intergovernmental Cooperation

Presidential Decree No. 893 (June 25, 2012)	Guarantees the president's involvement with two CIS members, "the Republic of Abkhazia" and "the Republic of South Ossetia," in social and economic concerns.
Presidential Decree No. 559 (October 2, 2018)	Assures that the president will act in compliance with executive orders for matters of cross-border cooperation with "the Republic of Abkhazia," "the Republic of South Ossetia," Ukraine, and other neighboring nations.
Presidential Decree No. 459 (August 9, 2021)	guarantees the president's activities concerning cross-border European cooperation problems

Source: compiled by the author using pertinent executive orders as a basis.

6. A New "Foreign Policy Concept" and Putting a "Small Group of States" to the Challenge

In this context, what is the international system that the Putin government envisions? In the second Russia-Ukraine war, the Russian government's main duties were to carry out financial policy, direct military operations, organize mass mobilization, and provide quick financial solutions to resolve the situation. Furthermore, policies have evolved. For example, the "Foreign Policy Concept," which outlines Russia's core foreign policy, was rewritten for the first time in nearly six years in March 2023.[37] With its most recent edition in July 2021, the "National Security Strategy" stands as the top-rated contemporary Russian strategic document. Below it are policy-specific writings, including the "Information Security Doctrine," "Foreign Policy Concept," and "Military Doctrine" sections. The documents are drafted by the relevant ministries and agencies and then officially approved by a presidential decree following changes by the Presidential Administration and Security Council (Kremlin). In a meeting with permanent members of the Security Council on March 31, 2023, President Putin stated that the Russian bureaucracy had spent a great deal of time and effort ensuring that the "Foreign Policy Concept" was in line with the "modern geopolitical phenomena". [38] But the idea is quite different from the paper in the 2016 edition. The presidential decree "On Measures to Implement" was revoked by the administration on February 21, 2023, before the concept was approved. Foreign Policy," mainly detailing its

objectives for the Foreign Ministry following Putin's reelection in 2012.[39] this decree established the "basic principles of pragmatism, openness, and multi-vector nature" to protect Russia's national interests.[40].

The revocation of the decree is recognized as a watershed in Russian diplomacy. **Table 2** presents the updated "Foreign Policy Concept," which follows the main framework of the 2016 version. The worldview is presented in Sections I and II, while details on issue- and region-specific foreign policy are provided in Parts IV and V. [38] Described as "a vast Eurasian nation with more than a millennium of independent statehood," this new description draws attention to the unique characteristics of the Russian state. Moreover, "Euro-Pacific power" along with "one of the two largest nuclear powers"[39]



It is also possible to read the current administration's "awareness of its special responsibility for maintaining peace and security at the global and regional levels" as a declaration of its objectives. The declaration declares the regime's stance on the international system and its rejection of the "rules-based world order"[40] clearly and openly. These traits align with the survival strategy of the Putin administration, which was discussed in the preceding section. "Strategic deterrence, preventing the aggravation of interstate relations to a level capable of provoking military conflicts, including with the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction," is mentioned as being crucial in the paragraph on strategic stability. It makes sense to do this given that it describes itself as "one of the two largest nuclear powers." [41] Narratives of the Putin regime's alleged "nuclear dependence" serve as an example of how it has used nuclear weapons as leverage in the confrontation with Ukraine.[42]. The terminology employed in the "Foreign Policy Concept" makes sense within this context.

Table. 2 : Essential Aspects of Contemporary Russia's Nuclear Policy Normative Documents

2016 Foreign Policy Concept	2023 Foreign Policy Concept
Approved by Presidential Decree No. 640 of November 30, 2016	Approved by Presidential Decree No. 229 of March 31, 2023
<p>I. General Provisions (Paras. 1–3)</p> <p>“allow Russia’s economy to grow steadily and become more competitive”</p> <p>“the principles of independence and sovereignty, pragmatism, transparency, predictability, a multidirectional approach and the commitment to pursue national priorities on a non-confrontational basis”</p>	<p>I. General Provisions (Paras. 1–6)</p> <p>“More than a thousand years of independent statehood”</p> <p>“a vast Eurasian and Euro-Pacific power”</p> <p>“one of the two largest nuclear powers”</p> <p>“awareness of its special responsibility”</p>
<p>II. Modern World and Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (Paras. 4–22)</p> <p>Worldview “The world is currently going through fundamental changes related to the emergence of a multipolar international system.”</p>	<p>II. Today’s World: Major Trends and Prospects for Development (Paras. 7–14)</p> <p>Worldview “Humanity is currently going through revolutionary changes”</p> <p>“a small group of states is trying to replace [the international legal system] with the concept of a rules-based world order (imposition of rules, standards and norms that have been developed without equitable participation of all interested states)”</p>
<p>III. Priorities of the Russian Federation in Overcoming Global Challenges (Paras. 23–48)</p> <p>Stipulates foreign policy specific to various issues, such as strengthening international security and international economic and environmental cooperation</p>	<p>III. National Interests of the Russian Federation in the Foreign Policy Domain, Strategic Goals and Key Tasks Set by the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (Paras. 15–17)</p> <p>Stipulates national interests and strategic goals</p>
	<p>IV. Foreign Policy Priorities of the Russian Federation (Paras. 18–48)</p> <p>Stipulates foreign policy specific to various issues</p>
<p>IV. Regional Foreign Policy Priorities of the Russian Federation (Paras. 49–99)</p> <p>China Russia will continue developing comprehensive, equal, and trust-based partnership and strategic cooperation, and proactively step up cooperation in all areas. Russia views common principled approaches adopted by the two countries to addressing the key issues on the global agenda as one of the core elements of regional and global stability. Building on this foundation, Russia intends to promote foreign policy cooperation with China in various areas, including countering new challenges and threats, resolving urgent regional and global problems, cooperation in international organizations and multilateral associations.</p> <p>India Russia is committed to further strengthening its particularly privileged strategic partnership with India based on shared foreign policy priorities, historical friendship and deep mutual trust, as well as strengthening cooperation on urgent international issues and enhancing mutually beneficial bilateral ties in all areas, primarily in trade and economy, with a focus on implementing long-term cooperation programmes approved by the two countries.</p>	<p>V. Regional Tracks of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (Paras. 49–65)</p> <p>New geographical divisions Listed in the order of near abroad; the Arctic; Eurasian continent, China, and India; Asia-Pacific; the Islamic world; Africa; Latin America and the Caribbean; European region; the U.S. and other Anglo-Saxon states; and Antarctica.</p> <p>China Russia aims at further strengthening the comprehensive partnership and the strategic cooperation with China and focuses on the development of a mutually beneficial cooperation in all areas, provision of mutual assistance, and enhancement of coordination in the international arena to ensure security, stability and sustainable development at the global and regional levels, both in Eurasia and in other parts of the world.</p> <p>India Russia will continue to build up a particularly privileged strategic partnership with India with a view to enhance and expand cooperation in all areas on a mutually beneficial basis and place special emphasis on increasing the volume of bilateral trade, strengthening investment and technological ties, and ensuring their resistance to destructive actions of unfriendly states and their alliances.</p>
<p>V. Formation and Implementation of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (Paras. 100–108)</p>	<p>VI. Formation and Implementation of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (Paras. 66–76)</p>

Source: Compiled by the author based on relevant presidential decrees.

Table 3: Essential Aspects of Contemporary Russia's Nuclear Policy Normative Documents

Normative documents	"Military Doctrine"	"Fundamentals of Nuclear Deterrence State Policy"
Legal basis	Article 83, (z) of the Constitution Presidential Decree No. 815 and Presidential Directive No. 2976 of December 25, 2014	Presidential Decree No. 355 of June 2, 2020
Notable parts	<p>Para. 27: The Russian Federation shall reserve the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it and/or its allies, as well as in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is in jeopardy. The decision to use nuclear weapons shall be taken by the President of the Russian Federation.</p>  <p>Strategic deterrence drill (October 26, 2022)</p>  <p>Strategic deterrence exercise (February 19, 2022)</p>	<p>The document consists of (I) General Provisions, (II) Essence of Nuclear Deterrence, (III) Conditions for the Transition of the Russian Federation to the Use of Nuclear Weapons, and (IV) Tasks and Functions of Federal Government Authorities, Other Government Bodies and Organizations for Implementing State Policy on Nuclear Deterrence.</p> <p>(III) Para. 17: The Russian Federation reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it and/or its allies, as well as in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is in jeopardy. (Same as Military Doctrine, para. 27)</p> <p>(III) Para. 19: The conditions specifying the possibility of nuclear weapons use by the Russian Federation are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> arrival of reliable data on a launch of ballistic missiles attacking the territory of the Russian Federation and/or its allies; use of nuclear weapons or other types of weapons of mass destruction by an adversary against the Russian Federation and/or its allies; attack by an adversary against critical governmental or military sites of the Russian Federation, disruption of which would undermine nuclear forces response actions; aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is in jeopardy. <p>(I) Para. 4: State policy on nuclear deterrence is defensive by nature, and is aimed at maintaining the nuclear forces potential at the level sufficient for nuclear deterrence. It guarantees protection of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state, and deterrence of a potential adversary from aggression against the Russian Federation and/or its allies. In the event of a military conflict, this Policy provides for the prevention of an escalation of military actions and their termination on conditions that are acceptable for the Russian Federation and/or its allies.</p>

Source: Compiled by the author based on relevant laws and regulations.

Photo: Russian President official. website ([http://kremlin.ru/events/pwebsite \(/news/69680/photos/69289; http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67814/photos/67633\)](http://kremlin.ru/events/pwebsite (/news/69680/photos/69289; http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67814/photos/67633)).

7. Russian and Chinese Regimes in the military, nuclear, and arctic domains

The new "Foreign Policy Concept" states Russia's goal of "further strengthening the comprehensive partnership and the strategic cooperation" with China. While this idea is in line with the National Security Strategy for 2021, it also acknowledges that cooperation will occur on a global scale rather than only in the Eurasian region. On March [43], 2023, President Xi Jinping had his first overseas visit since assuming office for a third term. He met with the head of state of Russia in Moscow. One of the fourteen documents that were produced using the outcomes of their conference was the "Joint Statement on Strategic Working Together in the New Century and Deepening the Comprehensive Partnership."

The materials attracted attention, especially Russia's stance on Taiwan and economic cooperation based on Russian LNG exports. The multinational nuclear corporation Rosatom and its "Comprehensive Long-Term Cooperation Programme in the Area of Fast Reactors and Nuclear Fuel Cycle Closure" are cited in the documents, along with the Chinese Atomic Energy Authority.[44] In December 2022, China allegedly got 6,477 kg of uranium from Rosatom, enough to run the CFR-600 fast-neutron reactor.[45] The claim made by these sources that the two countries' nuclear cooperation has been growing raises questions about the long-term implications for their nuclear partnership.[46]

China and Russia refer to "rules-based order" as "hegemonism" in their joint proclamation. Some have said that this means China and Russia consider the United States or other Western nations to be their "primary adversaries." [47] Russia's "Foreign Policy Concept" language is consistent with the language used in the joint statement by the West. Nevertheless, considering both nations. Though they may not yet share a shared picture of the global order, their perspectives on threats are quickly coming into line. As part of the sixth Russia-China Joint Patrol, two Chinese H-6 bombers and two Russian Tu-95 bombers crossed the Sea of Japan jointly on June 6, 2023, en route to the East China Sea.[48] In the Sea of Japan, joint naval exercises with China's Northern Theatre Command were conducted, while Russian forces participated in the Northern/Interaction-2023 military simulation.[49] These images show that throughout the conflict in Ukraine, the Russian and Chinese military continued to operate in some capacity close to Japan's border. (See **Figure 3**).

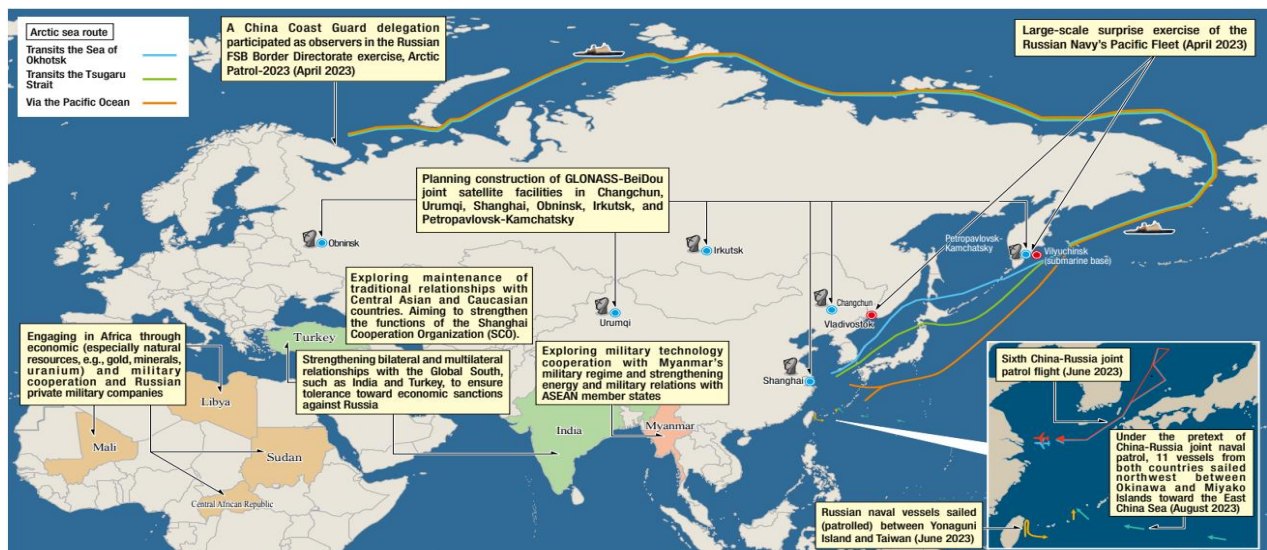


Figure 3: The Foreign Survival Strategy of the Putin Regime

Source: Author-compiled from Rossiyskaya Gazeta, August 8, 2022, "Mishustin approved the program for the development of the Northern Sea Route with funding of 1790.5 billion rubles"; Kommersant, September 27, 2022, "The Russian Federation and China agreed on the mutual placement of satellite stations"; May 19, 2023, Maritime News of Russia, "The leadership of the Border Service of the FSB of the Russian Federation thanked the sea rescuers for their active assistance in conducting the exercises 'Arctic Patrol - 2023'"; Amane Kobayashi

8. Rising Perceptions of Russia and China as Threats

• Re-emergence Competition of Great Power

China and Russia represent the biggest threat to the international order that the United States is trying to establish, according to the Biden administration's National Security Strategy (NSS 2022), which was released in October 2022. China has been referred to as "the only competitor with the capacity to alter the international system and the increasing capacity to achieve that goal in terms of economics, politics, the military, and technology." [50] However, in light of its invasion of Ukraine, Russia is defined as an "immediate and persistent threat to international peace and stability." [51] However, the US has only lately begun to acknowledge China and Russia as competitors in terms of geopolitical rivalry. Despite various obstacles, the US maintained a cooperative approach between China and Russia from the conclusion of the Cold War until the early 2010s. The George W. Bush administration asserted that the US "must seize the opportunity—unusual in historical terms—of an absence of fundamental conflict between the great powers." [52] The assertion that "a powerful, harmonious, and wealthy China has been formed" as well as the endeavor to forge "a new strategic engagement [with Russia] based on a fundamental reality of the twenty-first century: the United States and Russia are no longer geopolitical competitors" were both highly praised. [53] To preserve the US-led international order, the Obama administration committed to deepening relations with China and Russia when it first took office. "Seek a constructive, positive, and all-encompassing relationship with China" was the stated goal, to collaborate with China on many issues such as counterterrorism, environmental issues, and North Korea's nuclear program. It was additionally attempting to "establish a solid, multifaceted, and stable relationship with Russia, founded on shared interests." [54]. It also sought to progress nuclear technologies. [55]

"China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity," the National Security Strategy (NSS 2017) said, characterizing both countries as revisionist states that sought to reshape the world against American values and interests. The NSS 2017 was released in December 2017. With this statement, the Trump administration's strategy for working with China and Russia underwent a dramatic shift. [56]. It also warned that China was attempting to replace the United States in the Indo-Pacific region and that Russia was seeking to rebuild itself as a significant power region of influence near its limits. [57] In response to these new international political, economic, and military competitions, the United States stressed the need to "rethink the policies of the past two decades—policies based

on the assumption that engagement with rivals and their inclusion in international institutions and global commerce would turn them into benign actors and trustworthy partners".[58]

In addition to its perception that the globe is in a great power conflict, the Trump administration's severe approach towards China and Russia was spurred by China's use of faits accomplis in the East and South China Seas and Russia's military action in Ukraine. Beginning in the 2010s, these elements led to a rising belief that China and Russia posed a threat. Russia began to militarily intervene in the Crimean Peninsula shortly after the Revolution of Dignity in late February 2014, and in March of the same year, it violently annexed the peninsula as part of the Russian Federation. There was then widespread concern that Russia was using force to overthrow the government in the eastern Ukrainian province of Donbas. As a reaction to these occurrences, the Russian government and companies were subject to economic penalties by the Obama administration through executive orders.[59] The Obama administration penalized government entities and individuals accused of participating in cyberattacks during this period because of growing worries over Russia's use of cyberspace to influence and interfere in US elections focusing on crucial financial and infrastructure systems.[60]

Moreover, even as the trade deficit between the United States and China widened, non-tariff barriers—like restrictions on foreign companies' access to the Chinese market—became more common. The Bush and Obama administrations became increasingly less satisfied with and wary of these developments given China regarding the military and economics.[61] In December of the same year, China began boosting low tide levels in South China Sea places where neighboring countries had staked claims to territory. More large artificial islands were subsequently constructed, and the PLA was even stationed there to serve as military outposts.[62] Furthermore, "a competition is underway between the major powers to shape what comes next" and "the post-Cold War era is definitively over" were stated by the Biden administration, which came into office in 2021.[63] These statements demonstrate the administration's resolve to uphold the Trump administration's judgment that the world is going through a moment of transformation due to the competition between the two superpowers, Russia and China. The goal of the Biden administration is to uphold international order in "a world that is free, open, and prosperous".[64] According to NSS 2022, "international institutions must be strengthened, countries must be free to determine their own foreign policy choices, information must be freely available, and the foundational principles of self-determination, territorial integrity, and political independence must be respected." These are the requirements for a global order. Fair competition, unfettered trade, and the protection of all human rights must guide the global economy.[65] It goes on to emphasize that these ideals are also upheld by the United Nations Charter.[66] China, in the view of the Biden administration, is the largest challenge to the sustainability of this international system. NSS 2022 asserts that China presents the "most consequential geopolitical challenge" to the United States and highlights the administration's objective of winning this fight.[67]

From a military perspective, the Biden administration has likewise given China considerable attention. increased operational reach of the PLA following modernization, combined with China's use of hardline territorial claims in the East and South China Seas and faits accomplis.[68] In response, the US has attempted to halt the flow of cutting-edge technologies to China and establish

supply networks for semiconductors and other necessities that are independent of China.[69] Furthermore, the Biden administration has said that it will "compete responsibly" with China[70], putting a focus on managing the rivalry and ensuring that US interests are not jeopardized by unjustified military conflict or an economic decoupling between the two nations. the US and China. But it won't be easy to do this because there will probably be more competition in the future for military and technological dominance in the economy.

9. Three Military Challenges Emerging from Competitive Strategy

Since it initially emerged in the late 2010s, the strategic rivalry between China and Russia has taken on a more military aspect. To maintain a "free, open, and prosperous" international system in the future, the United States must ensure its dominance in this field. However, the competition with China, whose armed forces have rapidly advanced, and The incursion of Russia into Ukraine has increased Russia's reliance on its nuclear arsenal, posing several challenging challenges for the U.S. military to surmount. The US must contend with the following military challenges if it is to outperform China and Russia in their strategic competition: risks to the US military's capacity to project power, conduct operations, and construct a kill chain; (ii) actions that stop short of the line of armed confrontation; and (iii) prospective shifts in the nuclear forces in balance.

The first military problem is referred to as "gray-zone actions and circumstances." The US government did not formally recognise this threat until the Trump presidency.[71] The NSS 2017 states that "adversaries and competitors became adept at operating below the threshold of open military conflict." [72]"Such acts are designed to accomplish maximum effect without inciting the United States to respond militarily directly," the press release added, "and at the bounds of international law." [73] And as these little victories add up, a new normal starts to take shape.[74] The largest challenge facing the US military in this area is the PLA's A2/AD capabilities. The U.S. Department of Defence published the "China Military Power Report 2022" (also known as "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022") in November 2022. There are four categories of A2/AD capabilities in this paper. Future shifts in the nuclear force balance provide a third military issue as a result of strategic rivalry. In conjunction with its A2/AD capabilities, China has consistently enhanced and broadened its nuclear arsenal; by the conclusion of the A decade.[75]

In addition, Russia has been working on building nuclear weapons and has made them the center of its strategy for maintaining national security. This is a new issue for the The United States' current deterrent posture, ally assurance, arms control, and crisis escalation management approach.[76].

10. The American Military's Reaction to the New Military Challenges

• The Model of Competition Continuum

The first military challenge resulting from the geopolitical rivalry between China and Russia is responding to growing activities in the grey region. In response to this issue, the US military has carried out maneuvers in the areas of cyberspace, information operations, and freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs). Notable in addition to these responses is the creation of a fresh

conceptual framework meant to go beyond the military's previous peace-war experience. Historically, the U.S. military has organized operations based on a binary conception of war and peace, with intermediate states existing between the two.[77] The joint doctrine in the Joint Operation Planning, which was published in August 2011, outlined six phases. The "Six-Phase Model" (**Figure 4**) shows how much US military engagement is appropriate at each phase.[78] This concept was developed under the presumption that the military would play a modest role in the earlier stages and that "Phase III (Dominate)" would be the center of US military operations.[79] The United States Armed Forces' Joint Publication 1 Doctrine was published in March. A spectrum of conflict that represented the binary idea of peace and war was also presented in 2013.[80]

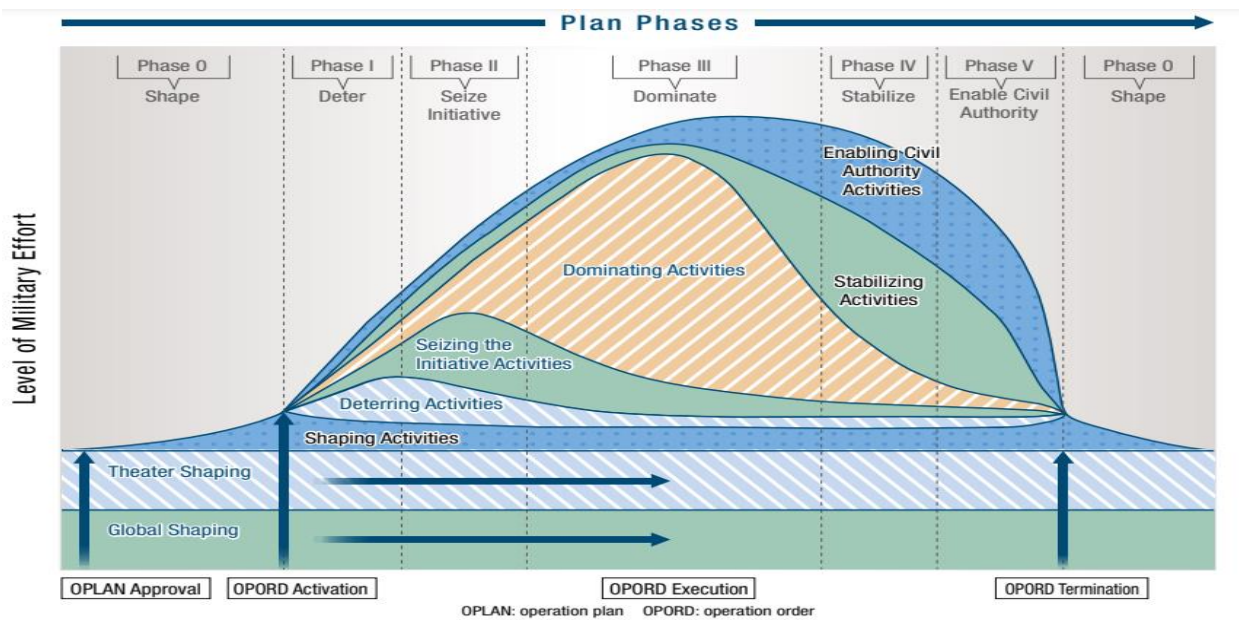


Figure 4 : Joint Doctrine's Six-Phase Model

Source: Joint Operation Planning, JP5-0 JCS, p. III-39, Figure III-16.

Announced, referring to the Crimean Peninsula and military operations in eastern Ukraine, that "strategic challenges such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea are employing coercive methods to accomplish objectives in the competitive space between peace and war." The South China Sea was illegally seized by Russia, and China had built artificial islands there, according to the JCIC.".[81]



Figure 5: The Competition Continuum Model of the U.S. Army

Source: Reproduced on page 15 of U.S. Army Concept: Multi-Domain Combined Arms Operations at Echelons Above Brigade 2025–2045, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-8.

11. Innovative Concepts for Warfare in the Future

The second military issue that the U.S. military has been developing new concepts to solve is the threat posed by A2/AD and its kill chain. At the request of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, the US Air Force, and Navy began studying the concept of Air-Sea Battle (ASB) in 2009. The goal is to steer the creation of armaments made to counter this threat. Later, in November 2011, the U.S. Marine Corps and the Department of defense established the ASB Office to further the ASB Concept.[82]

The goal of the ASB Concept, which was unveiled in May 2013, is to disrupt and destroy the enemy's A2/AD capabilities, hence making them completely useless, by attacking any point in their kill chain. Rather than highlighting the shortcomings of particular abilities, like long-range The ASB Concept seeks to: (i) interfere with the enemy's communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; (ii) destroy the adversary's A2/AD platforms and weapons systems; and (iii) defeat the adversary's weaponry and formations to create "networked, integrated forces capable of attack-in-depth" with precision strike capabilities.[83] Joint All-Domain Operations (JADO), "actions by the joint force in all domains that are integrated in planning and synchronized in execution, at speed and scale needed to gain advantage and accomplish the mission," is the foundation of the Joint Warfare Conference".[84]

The objective of both JADO and JWC is to create a system that can make decisions more quickly than the opponent to combat rivals with similar skills. To maintain its superiority in the command and control structure during the past few years, the US military has been training the next generation of strategic planners. To create a quick and effective kill chain, the Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2) system leverages artificial intelligence (AI) to integrate the sensors and strike capabilities of all US armed forces into a single network.[85]

12. Modifying the Nuclear Balance

• The Problem of "Two-Nuclear-Peer"

China's rapid nuclear arsenal buildup will likely have a significant impact on future shifts in the balance of nuclear power. China's operational nuclear weapon inventory is estimated to have exceeded 400, according to the China Military Power Report 2022. If China keeps up its present rate of nuclear program expansion, it is predicted that by 2035 it will "probably field a stockpile of about 1,500 warheads.[86] "As part of its nuclear proliferation policy, China has been constructing more than 300 silos to house intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). The DF-41, which could carry three or more warheads per missile and had a longer range and potential accuracy than ICBMs of the DF-31 class, would be housed in these silos. The article also discusses China's plans to build more fast breeder reactors to produce more plutonium, a substance used in nuclear weapons.[87]

Deputy Under Secretary of Defence for Policy Sasha Baker testified before the House Armed Services Committee on March 1, 2022, stating that while China was predicted to possess fewer than 200 nuclear warheads in 2020, it would potentially treble that number. Based on its efforts since then, China "may be able to amass up to 700 warheads by 2027 and at least 1,000 by 2030," or around 400 by that time.[88] The House Armed Services Committee heard testimony from Assistant Secretary of Defence for Space Policy John Plumb on March 28, 2023, on the China Military Power Report 2022's estimates. Estimates of China's nuclear weapons were included in the analysis; they increased by a maximum of 1.5 times in a calendar year.[89] The United States is concerned about China's increasing nuclear force power, both in terms of quantity (as seen by the nation's increasing nuclear weapon count) and quality (as evidenced by the improved nuclear warhead types and delivery methods). China is developing hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV) and nuclear weapon-capable fractional orbital bombardment (FOB) systems, among other cutting-edge nuclear delivery techniques. Anthony Cotton, the American Commander in Afghanistan. During a House Armed Services Committee hearing on March 8, 2023, Strategic Command (STRATCOM) voiced worries about China's November 2021 test of an HGV with FOB capability. The weapon's "implications for strategic stability" as a non-ballistic weapon were cited. Trajectories of FOB systems make it difficult to monitor and detect missiles.[90]

China's expanding collaboration ties with Russia raise more concerns about its potential breakout. At the end of February 2023, it was revealed that China will power its CFR-600 fast breeder reactors with 25 tons of highly enriched uranium from Rosatom, a state-owned nuclear energy company in Russia.⁷⁷ The United States fears that Russia would assist China's nuclear build-up and sees the CFR-600 as a reactor meant to produce plutonium for use in nuclear weapons..[91]

Over the past 20 years, Russia has been modernizing its nuclear arsenal and removing intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) from the Soviet era. The SS-18 is the oldest silo-based ICBM in the country, having been first deployed in 1988. Starting in 2023, the SS-29 will replace it.[92] Large stocks of non-strategic, short-range nuclear weapons and weapon systems that can also carry conventional bombs make up one aspect of Russia's nuclear arsenal. Warheads, whereas

the US government believes Russia possesses 1,000–2,000 non-strategic nuclear weapons on hand.[93]

As it did during its invasion of Ukraine, the United States claims that Russia will continue to threaten the world with nuclear weapons that are not strategically placed. The non-strategic nuclear weapons of Russia, according to Assistant Secretary of Defence Rosenblum, "underwrite an evident willingness on Moscow's part to use nuclear threats for coercive advantage and revisionist objectives.".[94]

13. The Reaction of the Biden Administration

The Biden administration has pledged to reduce nuclear weapons in response to the growing possibility of having "two nuclear-capable near-peers," or the US facing China and Russia simultaneously—two nations whose arsenals ought to be comparable to the US's. The possibility of using nuclear weapons by bolstering US deterrence and upholding arms control. At the Arms Control Association Annual Forum on June 2, 2023, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan declared that the US seeks to achieve strategic stability with other nuclear powers in light of the essential tactics of "updating U.S. deterrence capabilities and plans," "advance new arms control and risk reduction measures," and "reducing the risk of misperception and escalation.".[95]

Modernizing its nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) systems and all three of its nuclear weapons—ICBMs, SLBMs, and strategic bombers—are two of the U.S. policies meant to strengthen deterrence. The first deployment of [96] US nuclear forces and NC3 systems occurred during the Due to repeated service life extensions during the 1970s and 1980s refurbishment programs, modernizing them has become a more urgent policy issue. First off, the Biden administration has made it abundantly evident that the US national defense policy has three uses for nuclear weapons: (i) averting strategic attacks against the country; (ii) offering security guarantees to allies and partners; and (iii) achieving US goals if deterrence is ineffective. About "The fundamental role of nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack on the United States, its Allies, and partners as long as nuclear weapons exist," is the definition of deterrence.[97] Nuclear attack is the aim of deterrence, according to the Declaratory Policy, but it also admits that "a narrow range of other high consequence, strategic-level attacks, as well as nuclear attack, are also deterred by nuclear weapons." without ruling out the deployment of chemical and biological weapons or conventional military assaults as potential deterrents.[98].

14. Conclusion

China and Russia have been perceived as serious threats to US national security since the late 2010s. Regarding U.S. national security, the Biden administration has maintained the Trump administration's original view of the world as a great power competition. Russia and China are being considered as significant competitors in the development of the current approach. Apart from an international order grounded in the principles of territorial integrity, political independence, self-determination, and universal human rights found in the UN Charter, the Biden administration envisions a world that is "free, open, and prosperous." China is considered to be the main barrier to the maintenance of this multilateral system. The United States expressly views China as its

"most severe geopolitical adversary" and "the only challenger with the intent to rebuild the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological aptitude to accomplish that. However, due to its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which violated international law, Russia is seen as an "immediate and persistent threat to international peace and stability". The strategic military rivalry between Russia and China has increased recently. Right now, the US military is dealing with three new challenges: (i) reacting to non-combatative acts; (ii) threats to the US military's ability to project force; and operational acts, the death chain; and (iii) prospective future adjustments to the nuclear force balance. The United States of America has endeavored to address these issues by (i) implementing operational action planning within the Competition Continuum Model, a theoretical framework of the spectrum of conflict; and (ii) creating the Joint Warfighting Concept, which permits the US to conduct operations across multiple operating areas that fall under the adversary's A2/AD threat range; (iii) supporting security assurances to allies through maintaining a robust, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent posture; fostering strategic communication with China; supporting extended deterrence talks; and increasing the visibility of U.S. strategic assets. The Biden administration has adopted a more proactive stance to lessen the threat posed by Russia and obtain the upper hand over China in their strategic rivalry. It recognizes that the course of the international order will be determined by American activities during the next ten years. competition with It seems inevitable that China and Russia will continue their continuous and more intense disagreement about the future course of the international system.

15. The International Order's Future Direction

The goals of the international order as well as the steps taken to attain them by China, Russia, and the United States—three superpowers with the potential to have a substantial impact on it—have been examined in this paper. It has also covered how each nation approaches the other two to create their ideal arrangement. In this section, we summarize and evaluate the analysis presented in each chapter and offer our predictions for the future course of the global order. The current political regimes in China and Russia share a hatred of the civic movements that defend democracy, constitutionalism, and the civic liberties that underpin them, as well as the diversity and inclusivity that distinguish Western liberal ideas. Considering the situation in Ukraine, These days, this aversion serves as a strong incentive for cooperation across governments. To deter the United States, China and Russia have increased their tangible cooperation in crucial policy areas like military, nuclear, and Arctic development. This tendency is likely to persist as long as neither of the two political systems undergoes any major modifications. Based on the data presented earlier, we derive the following findings. Over the next ten years, China and Russia will continue to compete fiercely for dominance of the global order unless there are significant political changes in Russia.

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