

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE USA AND RUSSIA IN EAST ASIA

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Russian Foreign policy in Asia

This section will delve into the role of Russia in East Asia, the relations of Moscow with major Asian powers (China, Japan, South Korea and North Korea), and the current status of Russia on the international stage.

Russia's relations with its neighbors in East Asia are traditionally influenced by power politics and a desire to increase the trade and economic exchanges with the rest of the world.

During the Cold War, the Soviet strategy in Asia was described by Mikhail Gorbachev who, during a speech in Vladivostok in 1986, announced the opening of Russia to foreign investment on a large scale, but at the same time argued in favor of pursuing power politics in Asia¹.

Firstly, it is useful to review the five fundamental facts of the Russian leadership in East Asia: (1) the priority of having China as a regional and geopolitical ally, and not just as an economic partner; (2) no priority for the settlement of territorial disputes with Japan and also disinterest in establishing the necessary conditions to attract Japanese investments to Russia; (3) a neutral attitude towards possible projects for the unification of South and North Korea, but maintaining decisive support for Pyongyang; (4) a significant delay in the resolution of matters of national interest in the area, due to a lack of political cooperation with other regional powers; (5) distrust towards globalization and the role of the United States of America in East Asia².

¹ Stephan, John. J. *The Russian Far East: a history*. – Stanford: Stanford University press, 1994. - 508 p.

² Rozman, Gilbert. *Russian Foreign Policy in Northeast Asia // The International Relations of Northeast Asia* / ed. by Samuel S. Kim. - Rowman & Littlefield, 2004. - P. 201.

In the years of Yeltsin's presidency, a major debate among Russians revolved around the policy toward East Asia. One of the issues to address was whether Moscow had to give priority to relations with the West, or rather to balance its foreign policy keeping openings to the East. The actual response consisted in seeking a rapprochement with East Asia, also in view of the dismay of Moscow over some diplomatic decisions adopted by the United States and Europe. Another question was whether Russia could rely on China as a major partner in East Asia, or instead had to look for balance in the region. In the end, during the period following the Cold War, it emerged that the United States retained a status of superpower in the region, challenged mainly by the People's Republic of China, while the Russian Federation assumed a more marginal role.

That was the situation when Vladimir Putin was first elected President in 2000, and the beginning of military expansion has increased its influence in the Far East. Putin was at a crossroads when it came to make choices for his country, trying to find a fine equilibrium on the international stage, while not forfeiting Russia's own national interests. Those choices would then affect Moscow's position in East Asia for the years to come. After a long process of rapprochement to the United States, ending with a negative result, President Putin decided to strengthen ties with China, build a dialogue with Japan, maintain the existing relation with North Korea – with the caveat of avoiding clashes with South Korea – all of which while delaying Russian plans for strong regional policies in Asia.

In the early 2000s, with a rampant economic crisis in Russia, Putin kept cordial relations with major regional powers. Moreover, after September 11 Putin, taking what might

have been considered a bold decision, chose to ally himself with the United States in the war on terror, kicking off a chain of events that could have reshaped the role of Russia in East Asia.

As a further sign of detente Putin refrained from further comments against the decisions of the Bush administration concerning the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, and the expansion of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). After that he tackled some sensitive issues in East Asia with a similarly pragmatic approach, which can be summarized in three points: (1) finding a turning point in the relations with Japan; (2) finding solutions in the debate surrounding North Korea's nuclear program; (3) strengthening the partnership with China in several fields (economic, military, diplomatic).

The Russian president Vladimir Putin expressed his desire for cooperation in the Asian region, during the APEC summit on 10 November in Beijing; here is an excerpt of his speech:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak on a subject of great importance for us developing Russia's cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region.

The twenty-first century has already been called 'the Pacific century'. As part of the Asia-Pacific region, Russia must make use of the competitive advantages offered by this fast-growing economic, technology and innovation center.

In turn, Russian regions such as Siberia and the Far East offer a unique chance for this vast region's countries to effectively develop and make use of the opportunities there and further strengthen their potential (...).

Cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region is one of Russia's strategic priorities. The overall constructive spirit that characterizes our relations with the vast majority of countries in the region is very important. We value this spirit greatly and will do everything possible to develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas.

(...) Direct foreign investment from Asia-Pacific region countries in the Russian economy has doubled since 2009 and now comes to nearly \$10 billion.

Russian investment in the Asia-Pacific region countries is more modest and came to slightly more than \$1 billion as of the end of last year. We will work actively to correct this imbalance.

We hope in particular that the establishment of the National Coordination Centre for Developing Economic Relations with the Asia-Pacific Region Countries will make it possible to launch new projects with Russia's involvement.

The People's Republic of China is one of our key partners in the region. We will make greater use of settlements in our national currencies in our trade with China. We are already carrying out our first deals in rubles and yuan. Let me say that we are ready to extend such possibilities to trade in the energy sector too.³

Table 1

The major trading partners in Asia Russians

	Import to Russia	Exports from Russia
China	15%	8.1%
Japan	4.4%	3.7%
South Korea	3.4%	2.6%

Source: Europe, «Russia-Trade Statistics: Russia's trade balance with majors partners, <http://trade-info.cec.eu.int>.

It is time to move on and break down the diplomatic relations between Russia and the major actors in the area: China, Japan and North Korea and South Korea (see Table 1).

During the 1980s, after two decades of great antagonism, Sino-Soviet relations began to improve. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early nineties, sufficient conditions came into existence to ease the positive transformation. Russia enjoyed diminished power compared to the Soviet age, with only half of its gross domestic product (GDP) of the URSS, and less than half of the population, although still retaining about 80% of his old territory.⁴ Meanwhile, China had launched a program of reforms to turn the Chinese economy closer to the Western model of capitalist market. Together, these two developments represent a huge shift in the balance of power between the two nations, with China in a position of superiority over its Russian rival.

During the nineties, the two countries finally reached harmony, after centuries of territorial disputes over their 2,700 miles of borders,

³ Source: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/putins-asia-pacific-economic-cooperation-apec-summit-speech-trade-in-rubles-yuan-will-weaken-dollars-influence/5413432>.

⁴ Lowell, Dittmer. Ghost of the Strategic Triangle: the Sino-Russian Partnership // Chinese Foreign Policy / ed. by Suisheng Zhao. - New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004. - P. 217.

the longest in the world, which went from being highly militarized to become the meeting point for thriving trade. Overcoming the disputes over the borders allowed Russia and China to withdraw a large number of troops from the periphery of their territories. The new destination for the Russians was the European theater, following the expansion of NATO, while the Chinese forces were relocated to the Taiwan Strait.

After Primakov became prime minister in 1996, Moscow began a strategic partnership aimed to consolidate a multipolar world, which was intended to limit US hegemony after the end of the Cold War. This decision was reinforced after the choice of the US to declare war on Serbia, which had historically enjoyed the protection of Russia, and invade Kosovo, also in consideration that an American aircraft bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.

The constant improvement of the relations between the two powers, led to the creation of an international organization: the Shanghai Cooperation Organization – founded in June 14, 2001 – which among its members includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

Table 2

Major International Organizations in Asia

	ARF	ASEAN	APEC	SCO
China	X	X	X	X
Russia	X	X	X	X
USA	X	X	X	X

X = Membership

Source: ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asia nations)
 ARF (ASEAN regional forum) APEC (Asia-pacific economic cooperation) SCO (Shanghai cooperation organization)

On the world stage, China and Russia, beside their positions in the Security Council of the United Nations, are also part of the BRICS group, along with Brazil, South Africa and India, all these five nations annually organize the summit of their heads of state since 2009. It should be noted that, while it had been a superpower in a position of antagonism to the United States of America during the Cold War, Russia was a medium power for several years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. On the other hand China has taken on a role of medium power in the last two decades, with the ability to challenge the

supremacy of the United States. This situation, namely the sense of vulnerability in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has encouraged a desire to build peaceful relations with its neighboring states. Demographically, economically and perhaps politically Russia ran the risk of slipping into a relationship of dependency to the other powers during the first decade after the end of the Cold War.

After September 11, 2001, both Russia and China supported the operation of counter-terrorism promoted by the United States with a moral support, intelligence, cooperation in the field of security and diplomacy. However, during the outbreak of the second war between the US and Iraq in 2003, both the Russians and the Chinese criticized the choices made by the Bush administration, to the point of making use of the right of veto at the Security Council of the United Nations.

Slowly, Russia and China will recover from the shock wave of September 11 and adapt their strategies to the geopolitical situation created in the aftermath of the attack to the Twin Towers.

In 2003 in St. Petersburg there was a summit attended by Vladimir Putin for Russia, George Bush for the US and Hu Jintao for China. One of the most significant results of this summit – for what concerns Sino-Russian interests – was the strengthening of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). A few measures to strengthen the mechanism of regional security in Asia were established: in 2004 the creation of a secretariat of the SCO in Beijing, and the opening of a regional counter-terrorism entity based in Bishkek. Some nations such as Iran, Pakistan, India, Mongolia and Turkey have expressed interest in joining the SCO.⁵

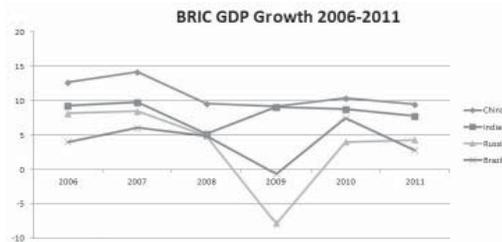
The fact that Russia is rich in gas and oil, as well as having advanced military technology, attracts the Republic of China into its sphere of influence. On the same token Russia needs China as customer to empower its economy status, while Beijing needs raw materials and military equipment to develop its economy and national

⁵ Yu Bin. China and Russia: Normalizing Their Strategic Partnership // Power Shift, China and Asia's new dynamics / ed. by David Shambaugh. University of California Press, Berkeley, 2005. - P. 236.

defense. However, Russia expressed criticism towards China regarding the will of the latter to expand its political influence in Central Asia, namely in some former Soviet republics. This position is very evident under the presidency of Vladimir Putin. Specifically, China has shown a growing interest in the area, with an agreement with Turkmenistan that allows Chinese to the joint exploitation of gas reserves in that country thanks to the creation of a gas pipeline through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. It seems that the Chinese influence in Central Asia is set to grow rapidly.⁶ This fact, however, did not suggest that the relations between China and Russia were destined to deteriorate in the near future; almost certainly because Putin's Russia did not want to fall under the political influence of Western powers, namely the European Union, the United States, and NATO.

Table 3

BRIC GDP Growth 2006-2011



Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG/countries/RU-CN-IN-BR?display=graph>.

In the future, what will be the Russian strategy towards China?

The current leaders in Moscow and Beijing have different interests and programs. Russia is working on two fronts: Europe and Asia. In recent years under President Putin there has been some points of friction between the leaders of the United States and the European Union, notably about the Russian support to Iran's nuclear program, until the Ukrainian crisis caused a clear fracture in Russian-European relations, especially after the Crimean peninsula was joined with Russia. Concerning Asia, there was a gen-

⁶ Monro, Alexandra and Dana, Denis-Smith. China taps into the heart of Turkmenistan's gas fields // Financial Times, 17 December, 2009. Mode of access: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f10ceb20-eb34-11de-bc99-00144feab49a.html>

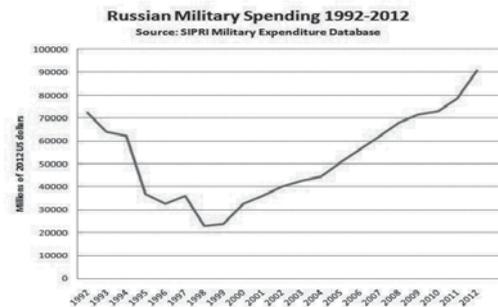
eral agreement between Moscow and Beijing about Taiwan, with Moscow recognizing the island of Taiwan as a province of China overseas, and not as an independent nation. With regard to the Korean issue, Russia and China sponsored a diplomatic solution to resolve the dispute on North Korean nuclear weapons.⁷

The concern of Russia about its strategic interests as well as about its vulnerability is also reflected in the way it conducted military relations with China; the Russian objective is to create an area of peace and stability in East Asia, to promote the growth of trade.

Russia has become the main supplier of weapons and military technology to China, the main weapon selling deals include: seventy Su-27SK fighters, six Su-30 MKK fighters, four Kilo-class submarines, S-300 Tor-M1 missile systems, and tanks. It is worth mentioning that those weapons are not of the latest generation. China has effectively helped the Russian arms industry to survive since the end of the Soviet era.⁸

Table 4

Russian Military Spending 1992-2012



Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database

China has no other choice but to buy weapons from the Russian market, just as Russia has no other choice but to sell their military technology to China to support its own military production needs.

The Russian policy towards Japan.

During his presidency, Gorbachev began a

⁷ Yahuda, Michael. The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific. - Routledge Curzon: New York, 2004. - P. 281.

⁸ Blank, Stephen J. The Dynamics of Russia Weapons Sale to China, Carlisle Barracks. - Strategic Studies Institute: U.S. Army War College, 2007.

gradual normalization in relations between the two countries with an exchange of diplomatic notes. This friendly atmosphere survived during the early years of the Yeltsin presidency. The possibility of Russian-Japanese agreements to resolve territorial disputes and to sign a peace treaty – a leftover of the end of World War II – were also discussed, although the difficulty of solving these issues led to a diplomatic impasse. Efforts to reach a turning point in relations with Japan have to overcome three obstacles from the standpoint of Russia.⁹ Firstly, the Russians have retained the Soviet-era claims for the Kuril Islands, which the Japanese claim for themselves and call the Northern Territories. In 1960, Moscow unilaterally abrogated the treaty of 1956, which contained the promise to return two of the islands closest to the Japanese coast from the Soviet to Japanese control. Secondly, Russia criticizes Japan for the strong diplomatic ties with the United States. Thirdly, there was the fear that Japanese products could damage the Russian domestic market. During the Yeltsin presidency it was discussed the first hypothesis of resolving the dispute over the Kuril Islands that was to review the option to put the two aforementioned islands under the control of Tokyo.

During the years 1997–1998, under the first presidency of Vladimir Putin, there was a rapprochement between the two states – for example, an agreement on fishing was signed – this happened during the economic crisis that hit Russia – circumstance that caused the loss of many potential foreign investments. When Junichiro Koizumi won Japan's elections and became prime minister, there was a new stalemate regarding the issue of the Russian-Japanese territorial disputes, in fact, Tokyo was no longer interested in only two islands but in the entirety of the Kuril Islands.¹⁰ However, there are some improvements in diplomatic relations between Moscow and Tokyo. In fact, the Japanese have supported the entry of Russia in

APEC (Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation), while Moscow has supported the possibility Japan could become permanent member of the security Council of the United Nations.

However, Japan is not a determining force of Russian power nor a major influence on their decisions in the world geopolitical order.¹¹

After September 11, the logic of normalizing relations between Japan and Russia became very compelling. Japan saw the rapprochement between Russia and the United States and for this reason had reason to step in and seek benefits, also because Japanese relations with China remained tense, and Tokyo wanted to avoid isolation in the Asian region.

Russian policy toward the Korean Peninsula has undergone changes after the normalization of diplomatic relations between North and South Korea.

North Korea has enjoyed the support first of the Soviet government and later of Russia. Assistance is on the economic, diplomatic, political, and military levels. Even after the collapse of the Soviet block – when Pyongyang was very critical about the reforms approved by Gorbachev, such as perestroika – the ties between the two countries remain strong.

Russia maintained interests with both South and North Korea. With South Korea, Russia reached a series of trade agreements with the objective to attract Korean investors, a difficult target to achieve as in the early nineties Russia had not defined a market economy close to similar parameters of the major Western powers. On the other side, that of North Korea, the two countries signed an agreement for the sale of Russian nuclear material, which North Korea employed to build warheads intended for medium and long-range missiles capable of reaching the coasts of Japan and South Korea.

In 1994 Russia interrupted its nuclear assistance program to North Korea, as the latter had great difficulty in paying Moscow, which was also facing pressure from the international community demanding an immediate suspension of the nuclear weapons program wanted by Pyongyang.

The international community, through a contact group made up of four nations (Four

⁹ Rozman, Gilbert. Russian Foreign Policy in Northeast Asia // *The international relations of Northeast Asia* / ed. by Samuel S. Kim. - Rowman & Littlefield, 2004. - P. 207.

¹⁰ Masaru Tamamoto. Ambiguous Japan: Japanese National Identity at Century's End // *International Relations Theory and Asia-Pacific* / ed. by J. Ikenberry and M. Mastanduno. - Columbia University Press, 2003. - P. 191.

¹¹ McDougall, Derek. *Asia Pacific in World Politics*. - Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007. - P. 275.

Party Talks): North Korea, South Korea, China and the United States; sought through diplomatic meetings to start a program to deter North Korea in its determination to acquire nuclear weapons in exchange for economic aid.

Since the mid-nineties, Russian foreign policy aimed to increase Russia's influence in the Korean peninsula; this does not mean support towards regional economic integration that could entice the North to greater autonomy from the sphere of influence of Moscow. Indeed, Russia tries to avoid that North Korea could become a target of economic pressures and military moves by the Republic of China and that this kind of pressure will lead to a gradual change of the historical relations between Moscow and Pyongyang.

The second Korean nuclear crisis began in October 2002, writing a new chapter in the construction of multilateral cooperation to promote security and stability in East Asia. The contact group now called Six-Party Talks, formed by North Korea, South Korea, China, the US, Russia and Japan had the objective of finding a peaceful solution regarding the dispute over the North Korean nuclear weapons program and to avoid an escalation.¹² This crisis highlighted the absence of dialogue with the North Koreans during the various meetings held between representatives of the six countries.

When dialogue between Seoul and Pyongyang was stalled in 2001, Putin hosted Kim Jong II in Moscow, offering him the support of Russia. North Korea had found it advantageous to obtain Russian weapons and economic aid, while Russia benefited from this strategy to put pressure on the United States and Japan.

After the events of September 11, which have influenced the decisions of the various geopolitical global powers, Russian support to North Korea was no longer one of the priorities of President Vladimir Putin. The new policy was accelerated by the pressure brought by the Russian-Japanese and the Russian-American increasing relations. Also the instability of Pyongyang regime led Moscow to side with Western demands.

¹² Snyder, Scott. *The Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia Stability // International Relations of Asia* / ed. by D. Shambaug. - Rowman publishers inc, 2008. - P. 259.

Russia strengthened its ties with South Korea, including contacts between the armed forces of the two countries, a fact that greatly surprised analysts of foreign policy. Moscow looked to develop deeper relations in East Asia with several countries including South Korea, Japan and China, with the objective to find new markets to increase its exports.¹³

In the days of the Cold War, Eastern Asia was identified as a battleground between Moscow and Washington, as part of the struggle between socialism and capitalism.¹⁴

Finally, the Ukrainian crisis reached a new level of significance after the annexation of the Crimean peninsula to Russia, leading to a serious fracture between the West and Russia, and focusing Russia's interests further on Asia. The United States and the European Union have approved economic sanctions against the Russian Federation, both have expressed strong criticism against the government of Moscow.

Igor Sechin, the CEO of the oil company Rosneft, stated in a news agency that: if the United States and the European Union want to isolate Russia in the international community, Moscow will be forced to promote agreements in the field of energy, military and political cooperation with other regional powers.¹⁵

The diplomatic weapon in the hands of the Russians is the opportunity to sign more agreements with China in the energy field, particularly for the supply of natural gas; President Putin can use this tool against Western leaders to force them to understand that Russia doesn't depend on the West. Furthermore China has consistently expressed solidarity and support towards Russia. Beijing does not want to isolate Moscow in this time of international crisis; an important example of this is when China abstained from the vote at the Security Council of the United Nations on a draft resolution declaring invalid the referendum that sanctioned the unification of Crimea with Russia).

The support of Beijing is crucial to Putin. Not only is China another permanent member

¹³ Chufrin, Gennady. *Russia and Asia-Pacific Security* / Sipri, Stockholm, 1999.

¹⁴ Rozman, Gilbert. *Russian Foreign Policy in Northeast Asia // The International Relations of Northeast Asia* / ed. by Samuel S. Kim. - Rowman & Littlefield, 2004. - P. 218.

¹⁵ Press statement released to Reuters, 21 March 2014.

of the Security Council along with Russia, but more than once they found common positions on some important issues of international politics. According to some analysts of President Putin's policy, Russia is approaching the Chinese model as a system that eliminates democracy and restricts certain rights.¹⁶

Anyway, Putin gave a sign of the ties between the two countries when he thanked China for its understanding about the Ukrainian crisis during a speech held at the Kremlin, for the signing of the Treaty of reunification with Crimea, sixty years after it had been delivered to Ukraine by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. Chinese President Xi Jinping has shown as well how much he appreciates the relations with Moscow, and especially those with Putin, when the Chinese President chose Russia to make his first trip abroad as head of state last year, and to witness the opening of Winter Olympics in Sochi. In contrast, many Western leaders were not present on the day of the inauguration of the Winter Olympics, as a sign of protest against Russian domestic politics, which according to the Westerners do not meet the requirements of democracy and human rights and they also deemed Russian the foreign policy as aggressive.

A strong Sino-Russian alliance could offset the position of hegemony that the United States has today.

Can we say that the past issues that led to the confrontation between China and Russia are really buried? Is it possible that there is a form of escalation in East Asia between the two blocks, the first formed by China and Russia and the other by the United States and possibly Japan?

These are questions that remain unanswered. There is no doubt that Russia wants to retake its role as a great power in the wake of its Soviet past; Russia plays on two international theaters: the European one and the Asian one. The presidency of Putin supports a feeling of nationalism aimed at asserting the rights of Russians in foreign policy.

In our humble opinion, I find the criticism from Western media against Russian foreign policy to be biased, as each state has the right to promote and protect their national interests.

¹⁶ Lucas, Edward. *The New Cold War: How the Kremlin Menaces both Russia and the West.* - Bloomsbury, 2008.

The Political Power of the United States in East Asia

In this section we analyze the role of the US in East Asia, in particular, I will detail the China-US relations.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 changed the US position in Asia. For the first time since the beginning of the Cold War in the early 1940s, the United States seemed to become the dominant power in the Asian region, with some challenges in front of them coming from the main Asian competitors.¹⁷ In the new millennium, the United States pursues three main objectives in Asia. Firstly, the United States is interested in maintaining a balance of power in Asia favorable to American interests and limits the power politics of the other actors. Secondly, they seek to promote American economic interests in the region with the protection of trade and investments achieved through a series of bilateral and multilateral agreements with Asian nations. Thirdly, they aim to promote the American culture and values, such as democracy, human rights, the market economy in Asia and other areas of the world. The priority given to each of these objectives changes according to the fact that it depends on color of the US government in charge in any given period.

The Department of Defense of the United States, right at the end of the Cold War, prepared a brief summary of American interests in East Asia. The strategic commitments are listed as follows:

The importance of security for the United States in East Asia is evidenced by the bilateral treaties with Japan, South Korea and the Philippines; the Pact of Manila, which adds Thailand as our ally; and our treaty with Australia and New Zealand, the ANZUS. It is further enhanced by the deployment of ground and air forces in South Korea and Japan, and the presence of the Seventh Fleet in the western Pacific. Our main regional objectives, together with our friends and allies in the region, are: to maintain the safety of our major sea lanes and our interests in the region, maintaining the ability to live up to our commitments discussed in the Pacific and in East Asia; to prevent the Soviet Union, North Korea and Vietnam

¹⁷ Yahuda, Michael. *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific.* - New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004.

*from interfering in the affairs of others; to build lasting strategic relationship with the People's Republic of China; and to support the stability and independence of friendly countries.*¹⁸

Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the US administration has established two objectives: to eliminate the terrorist organizations and to contain the proliferation of weapons of mass production.

According to documents of the US Department of Defense in 2006:

*[the United States] will seek to ensure that no foreign power can dictate the terms of regional or global security. [The United States] will attempt to dissuade any military competitor from developing disruptive or other capabilities that could enable regional hegemony or hostile action against the United States or other friendly countries, and it will seek to deter aggression or coercion. Should deterrence fail, the United States would deny any hostile power its strategic and operational objectives.*¹⁹

These stated goals seem to be consistent with the struggle of the United States to create a system of balance of power in Asia. The US government calls into question their own interests and priorities depending on the geopolitical changes taking place in Asia since the end of the Cold War.²⁰ These changes can be grouped into five categories:

1. Changes in relations with major regional powers. American foreign policy in Asia had to take into account the constant growth of China's power, that of India, the strong cooperation of Japan, and finally the diplomatic activity of Russia in Asian business.

2. Economic Globalization. The growing strength of economic globalization has prompted Washington to strengthen the free market in the Asian region by creating economic interdependence between the various states of the region.

3. Asian Multilateralism. American policy has acted through multilateral organizations that reflect the growing interest and convergences of many Asian leaders to create subjects that deal with security policies, economics and politics of Asian countries.

4. War on terror and nuclear weapon proliferation. These recent American priorities (war on terrorism) are not taken into account with the highest priority by many Asian governments.

5. Changes in U.S. policy. American politics is forced to treat with caution relationships with many governments of Asian countries, even if they would be inclined to criticize the human rights violations occurring in some Asian countries. Though, from the perspective of foreign policy, and on matters of national interest, they are induced to "turn a blind eye" on continuing violations of basic principles of democracy and human rights.

The American officials have adapted to the changes they encountered during their administration; for example the rulers from the Democratic Party have proved to be inflexible regarding the promotion of human rights in Asia; while Republicans are more elastic about their claim to expand their vision of democracy and to spreading human rights.²¹ The Asian leaders have favored the development of some regional institutions whose primary objective is to address the key issues of economic nature, as well as to deal with globalization at the regional level, without the interference of the United States.

They also show the determination to maintain the initiative in security policy, and in some cases the interests of Asians do not match those of Americans.

Economic changes in Asia, particularly in East Asia, are one of the most significant developments at the global level in the second half of the twentieth century. In the early nineties the economic development had generated a kind of economic euphoria in many observers, who saw the East Asia and the entire Pacific area connected through commercial networks, which were becoming increasingly large and capable to en-

¹⁸ Source: Report of the Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger to the Congress, Washington DC, 1989. - P. 17.

¹⁹ Source: The U.S. Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review of February 6, 2006. Mode of access: <http://osd.dtic.mil/qdr/report/Report.pdf>

²⁰ Dittmer, Lowell. Assessing American Asia Policy // Asia Survey, Iss. 47, July-August 2007.

²¹ Sutter, Robert. The United States in Asia / International Relations of Asia / ed. by D. Shambaug. - Rowman publishers inc., 2008 - P. 87.

sure peace and harmony among nations. The optimism was based on the assumption that commercial trade was invariably a force for peace.²²

The economic development of East Asia is altering the balance of power between Asia and the West, and specifically between the United States and the People's Republic of China; indeed, strong economic growth generates self-esteem and desire for success in those who produce and benefit from it.

To better understand the role played by the United States in Asia, and particularly in East Asia, it is useful to consider the relations between China and the United States from the end of the Cold War to the present day, at least to highlight the links and divisions between the two states. This analysis will then be useful in the conclusions, when I will focus on Russian-American relations in Asia and how these are in turn influenced by the role of China in their relationship.

In the aftermath of the events of Tiananmen Square (1989), the Sino-US relations were stalling; the US government decided to approve an embargo against China, especially with regard to the sale of weapons, this was declared to be the answer against the massacre of unarmed Chinese citizens made by the regime in Beijing.

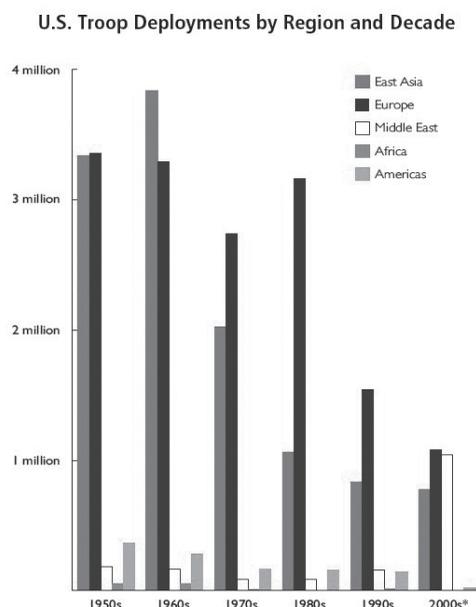
Once elected, the Democratic President Bill Clinton adopted the spreading of democracy as the main objective of its foreign policy. The purpose, as he proclaimed before the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 1993, was: "To expand and strengthen the global community of democracies based on the market and widen the circle of nations that are governed by these free institutions "until the 'humanity had created "a world of prosperous democracies that work and live in peace with each other."²³

The aggressive position of the new administration on the issue of human rights was not intended, according to former Secretary of State Kissinger, as a tactic to weaken China and

gain a strategic advantage for the United States. It was instead a reflection of a general conception of world order, of which China would have to be part as a respected member.²⁴

In Beijing, however, the American pressure, backed by other Western powers, were regarded as a strategy to keep China in conditions of weakness and as meddling into its internal affairs, similarly to the colonial powers of the nineteenth century, evidence of this could also be traced in the deployment of US military forces in East Asian theater, see the following two figures.

Figure 1. U.S. Troop Deployments 1950 – 2005



* Values for 2000s are extrapolated based on data for 2000-2005. Source: Heritage Foundation calculations based on annual records from U.S. Department of Defense, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports.

Source: Tim Kane, "Global U.S. Troop Deployment, 1950-2005", in Center for Data Analysis Report #06-02 on National Security and Defense, The Heritage Foundation, 2006.

Chinese leaders interpreted the statements of the new administration as evidence of an attempt of the capitalist to overthrow the communist governments around the world.

Chinese leaders no longer claimed to preach an exceptional revolutionary truth to be exported to other countries. They pursued, however, the goal of creating a world not manifestly hostile to

²⁴ Kissinger, Henry. La Cina, Mondadori editore, Milan, 2011. - P. 414.

²² This statement is criticized by American political scientist Huntington, in *The Clash of Civilizations*, Garzanti editore, Milan, 2005. On the other hand, for an optimistic view see K. Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere*, Public Affairs Books, United States of America, 2008.

²³ Speech of President Clinton to the General Assembly of the United Nations 27 September 1993 entitled "Confronting the Challenges of a Broader World," retrieved from the US State Department Internet site.

their political system or to their territorial integrity and to buy time to increase the economic and military power of their country.

According to Chinese President Jiang Zemin: *"China and the United States, as great powers, should consider the problems in a long-term perspective. Economic development and social stability in China serve its national interest but also transform China into a major force for peace and stability in Asia and other regions of the world. I think that in relations with other countries, the United States should take account of their self-esteem and sovereignty. This is a friendly suggestion."*²⁵

In the final period of his term, Clinton softened the tone of his confrontational foreign policy towards China and stressed the importance of a constructive involvement in the geopolitical dynamics in Asia. Relations between China and the US were rapidly settled. A visit of Jiang Zemin in Washington took place in 1997, and was reciprocated by Clinton with a visit to Beijing in 1998.

What was missing was a definite agreement on the common goal, such as the one had been once put in place during the seventies, namely the resistance against Soviet hegemony that had joined Beijing and Washington at that time. The differences of view were still about the protection of human rights. Also the Chinese perceived the American policy as hostile against China, as it aims to prevent it from reaching the status of a great power.

Among the many points of friction between Chinese and Americans, the issue of Taiwan is among the most worrying. Taiwan was able to develop a thriving economy and create strong democratic institutions; it had joined APEC (Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation) and had participated in the Olympic Games with the approval of Beijing.²⁶ In the eighties Beijing had advanced proposals for unification under which Taiwan would be granted full internal autonomy. At the end of 1993, Taiwan had already surpassed Japan to become the second largest source of overseas investments in China.

The US administration tried to keep out of

²⁵ Kissinger, Henry. Op. cit., - P. 417.

²⁶ Sutter, Robert. Taiwan's Future: Narrowing Straits. - National Bureau of Asian Research Analysis, 2011. Mode of access: <http://www.nbr.org/publications/issue.aspx?id=224>

these developments. In a meeting between Clinton and Jiang Zemin held in November 1993 in Seattle, during an APEC summit, Clinton declared: *"The US policy on a unique China is the policy that's right for our country. Does not prevent us to follow the guidelines of the Taiwan Relations Act, nor prevents us from maintaining close economic relations with Taiwan. In this summit, as you know, there is a representative of Taiwan, so I'm satisfied with the situation in which we find ourselves. But do not think this will build an obstacle to our relations with China."*²⁷

From the perspective of Clinton, Chinese leaders had to show moderation.

In May 1995, according to China government press agency *"China-U.S. relations plummeted to its lowest point."*²⁸ Chinese officials began to regularly denounce alleged American interference in their internal affairs. The complaint by the Chinese was clear, the United States were pursuing an inconsiderate policy of power and hegemony, they wanted to westernize and divide China.²⁹ Specific examples were provided to substantiate these allegations. The United States had allowed the Taiwanese President Lee to travel to their country, they had sold to Taiwan 150 F-16 fighters, had called Tibet a "sovereign occupied territory", had denounced China for human rights abuses, accusations were moved to China for selling components for the construction of chemical weapons to Iran.

There were displays of force between the Chinese and US troops in the Taiwan Strait in March 1996. By then on the brink of the precipice, Washington and Beijing both pulled back, realizing they did not have interests for which to fight a war, nor conditions to impose capable of changing the reality.

During the Kosovo war, in May 1999, an American B-2 bomber destroyed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. China unleashed a storm of protest, the Chinese President Zemin spoke

²⁷ Clinton, William J. Remarks and an exchange with reporters following discussion with President Jiang Zemin of China, November 19, 1993, Source: public papers of the president of the United States of America.

²⁸ Mode of access: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-12/31/content_10586695.htm.

²⁹ Huntington, Samuel P. Lo Scontro delle Civiltà. - Garzanti editore, Milano, 2005. - P. 327.

of deliberate provocation and added, in a tone of defiance: “*The great People’s Republic of China will never be bullied, the great Chinese nation will never be humiliated, and the great Chinese people will never be conquered.*”³⁰

In the new millennium, China reached the status of a great power after taking the road toward modernization. The results are astonishing. China grew by more than 9% a year for almost thirty years, and for a large economy, the growth rate is the highest in history. In this same period, it pushed out of poverty about four hundred million people, and the average per capita income of the Chinese rose about seven times.

China is the world’s largest producer of coal, steel and cement. It is the largest market for mobile phones in the world. In 2005 it had about two thousand square kilometers occupied by construction works in progress, over five times more than in the United States of America. Its exports to the United States grew by 1,600% over the past fifteen years.

Looking at the manufacturing sector, if we consider Walmart – one of the largest companies in the world – its revenues are eight times those of Microsoft, and amount to 2% of the U.S. GDP. It employs 1.4 million people, more than those of General Motors, Ford, General Electric and IBM’s combined.

China has also pursued a policy of investment and the conquering of new markets. Now the trade/GDP ratio in China is 70%, a figure that makes it among the most open economies.

China is also the largest holder of money in the world. Its foreign exchange reserves amounted to fifteen hundred billion dollars, 50% more than those of the second country (Japan) and three times those of the entire European Union.

In short, China is the largest country in the world, the fastest growing economy, the largest producer, the second largest consumer, the biggest investor and (almost certainly) the second country in the world for military expenditures.³¹

The data listed above show what is the extent of the rise of China, it will not replace the US as the superpower of the world in the short term but, industry after industry, it has become

³⁰ Kuhn, Robert Lawrence. *The man who changed China: the life and legacy of Jiang Zemin.* - Crown, 2005.

³¹ Zakaria, Fareed. *L’Era Post-Americana.* - Rizzoli, Milano, 2008. - P. 93.

the second most important country in the world, shaping an entirely new international system.³²

In 2001 the new status of China was confirmed by the approval of its application for the organization of the 2008 Olympics and the conclusion of negotiations for its entry into the WTO (World Trade Organization). During this process, China and the United States developed ever closer economic relations.

China was quickly rising to a new role in the world, with interests in every corner of the globe and ever closer integration with the major political and economic trends (see Figure 3).

Figure 2. Facts and Figures of Chinese Growth

Data Profile	2000	2005	2007
World view			
Population, total (millions)	1,262.65	1,303.72	1,317.89
Population growth (annual %)	0.8	0.6	0.5
Surface area (sq. km) (thousands)	9,598.1	9,598.1	9,598.1
GNI, PPP (current international \$) (billions)	2,939.18	5,339.64	7,157.37
GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$)	2,330	4,100	5,430
Economy			
GDP (current US\$) (billions)	1,198.48	2,235.91	3,382.26
GDP growth (annual %)	8.4	10.4	13.0
Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)	2.1	3.8	7.4
Gross capital formation (% of GDP)	35	44	43

Sources: UNData, The World Bank, OECD iLibrary.

The United States in 2001 had a new president, George Bush Jr., the son of ex-president George H.W. Bush. The relationship with the new president began with further military confrontation which was not at all desired. On April 1, 2001, a US reconnaissance plane flying over the Chinese coast just outside the territorial waters of Beijing was located and tailed by

³² Kaplan, Robert. *China’s Grand Map // Foreign Affairs,* May/June 2010. - P. 22.

Figure 3. The North Korean Nuclear Threat

North Korean missile threats

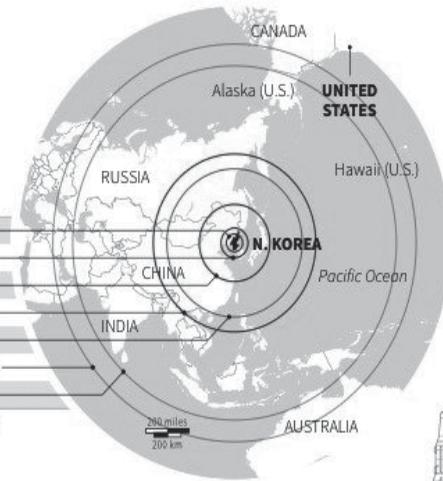
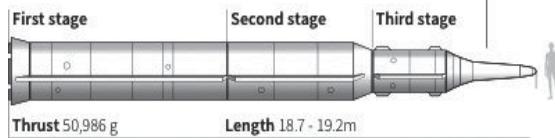
Speculation about missile movements have centred on two types of weapon, the Musudan and the lesser-known KN-08 limited-range ICBM

MISSILE CAPABILITIES — North Korea's estimated ballistic missile ranges

STATUS: ■ Operational ■ Flight tested ■ In development/untested

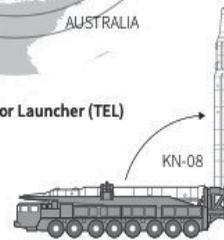
	Origin	Warhead (kg)	Range (km)	Length (m)
Hwasong-5	Russia	1,000	300	~10
Hwasong-6	Russia	700	500	~15
Rodong	N. Korea	700	1,300	~20
Musudan	Russia	650	3,000+	~25
Taepodong-1	N. Korea	500	2,500	~30
Taepodong-2	N. Korea	700-1,000	6,700	~30
KN-08 (Nodong C)	N. Korea	750-1,000	6,000	~30

KN-08 — Unlike the Taepodong-2, the North's other long range missile, the KN-08 is transportable and can be deployed strategically



Transporter Erector Launcher (TEL)

Origin	China
Axles	8
Wheels	16
Length	20.11m
Width	3.35m



Sources: Federation of American Scientists, Global Security, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, South Korean defence ministry

Sources: Reuters on data from the Federation of American Scientists, Global Security, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, South Korean Defense Ministry

a Chinese military plane, which then collided in flight with the American aircraft off the coast of southern China. However, the Chinese president reiterated in a statement the importance of Sino-American.

The American position towards the issue of Taiwan has to be put in evidence, the United States did not support Taiwan independence, but they did not even favored reunification with continental China.³³

Regarding America we can question if China was a partner or an opponent and whether the future reserved a partnership or a falling-out. The American mission was torn between spreading democracy in China, or collaboration with this country in order to create a peaceful world.

In China, in 2003, the new President Hu Jintao rose to power; as did his predecessor, he supported cooperation with the United States in the fight against international terrorism. In

³³ Yahuda, Michael. "The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific", op. cit. - P. 274.

particular in the Chinese region of Xinjiang, there were cells of Islamic terrorists that struck the central authority of Beijing with a series of bombings. After the September 11 attacks, China offered diplomatic support and intelligence; in the period between the American invasion of Afghanistan and the war in Iraq, Beijing proved far less critical of Washington than some European countries (primarily France and Germany³⁴) at the United Nations.

Another issue that divided China and the United States was the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and relations with North Korea. For the duration of the Cold War, nuclear weapons were almost exclusively in the possession of the United States and the Soviet Union. Despite deep ideological hostility and geopolitics, the two powers were both aware of the risk of a possible use of nuclear weapons in war. Since nuclear weapons have continued to spread, the balance that was standing in the Cold War is be-

³⁴ Kissinger, Henry. Op. cit. - P. 441.

ing challenged by countries that do not have the knowledge and experience of the superpowers.

Perhaps it is an irony of history that dialogue emerged between Washington and Beijing from the issue of nuclear proliferation in North Korea, since it was about Korea that the United States and the Republic of China clashed for the first time on the battlefield, sixty years ago.

In 1950 the newborn Republic of China went to war against the United States because they saw in the permanent presence of the US military on its borders with Korea a threat to its long-term safety. Sixty years later, the engagement of North Korea in a military nuclear program posed a new problem, which evokes some of geopolitical issues of that period.³⁵

In the first ten years of the North Korean nuclear program, China took a neutral position, saying that it was an issue that the United States and North Korea had to resolve among themselves.³⁶ With the passage of time, it became clear that the North Korean nuclear proliferation would eventually also affect the security of China. If Korea had become a nuclear power eventually, Japan and South Korea would probably join the nuclear club, changing the strategic landscape of Asia.

China was concerned, as it was aware of the fragility of the regime of North Korea, and would like to avoid having a neighbor with nuclear weapons at its borders, which could cause instability in East Asia.

At the election of President Barack Obama, in 2008, the Sino-American relations could be considered good. The two countries proclaimed commitment to consultation and even to the partnership on major international policy issues. There are some outstanding issues: relations with Taiwan, the resolution of the crisis in North Korea, the Chinese territorial claims, the defense of human rights, the issue of Tibet. These events mark the distance between Beijing and Washington, which still seems significant.

³⁵ Snyder, Scott. *The Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia Stability // International Relations of Asia / ed. by D. Shambaug. - Rowman publishers inc, 2008. - P. 258.*

³⁶ Kang, C.S. Eliot. *North Korea's International Relations: the Successful Failure? // The International Relations of Northeast Asia / ed. by Samuel S. Kim. - Rowman & Littlefield ed, 2004 - P. 281.*

Conclusions

In this paper we wanted to analyze the role of Russia and the United States in East Asia since the end of the Cold War during the period leading up to about 2010. We highlighted the relations of the two historical superpowers, respectively with China, South Korea, North Korea, Taiwan, and finally Japan.

The analysis has produced the following observations:

- Russia acted as a rising power in Asia, its relations with China and South and North Korea are generally positive to strong.

- The points of attrition between the American superpower and the People's Republic of China in Asia have grown with the rising of the latter.

- Russia worked toward regaining its role as a superpower in Europe and in Asia.

- The relations between Russia and the U.S.A. are marked by fractures due to a broad range of issues.

The unilateral policy promoted by the Bush administration after the terror attacks of September 11 shaped the contrasts between Washington and Moscow during the last decade.

A legitimate question is why the Western media direct a significant effort in criticizing the actions, especially the foreign policy, of the Russian Federation and the person of its President, whereas the American international policy is generally subject to more benevolent views.

The conclusion of the authors is that Russia pursued a policy of protection of its national interests in the region, a common goal to all the world powers; hence the debate concerning the criticism of the West against Moscow – while countries such as England, France and the United States are not judged by such strict standard – should be contextualized with considerations on public opinion shaping and consensus gaining, rather than less palpable ethical and moral reason.

Внешняя политика США и России в Восточной Азии

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***Аннотация:** Статья посвящена роли Российской Федерации в Восточной Азии как мировой державы с 2000 по 2010 годы, когда Россия продолжала углубление отношений с такими ключевыми региональными акторами, как Китай, Япония, Тайвань, КНДР и Южная Корея. Автор предлагает подробный сравнительный анализ политики и конкретных шагов России в регионе с политикой США, которые, как считалось, играли доминирующую роль на протяжении всего указанного периода. Особое внимание также уделено сценариям возможной эскалации в отношениях между различными акторами азиатского региона.*

***Ключевые слова:** США, Россия, Восточная Азия, внешняя политика, Китай, Япония, мировая держава.*

Foreign Policy of the USA and Russia in East Asia

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***Abstract:** This paper analyzes the role of the Russian Federation as a world power in the East Asian area between 2000 and 2010, delving into its relations with major regional actors, namely: China, Japan, Taiwan, North Korea and South Korea. Russia's policies and actions are compared to those of the United States as the arguably predominant superpower during most of the period in exam. Emphasis is put on the possible causes of escalation between the various actors within the Asian scenario, with a detailed comparison between the actions taken by Russia and the United States.*

***Key words:** USA, Russia, East Asia, foreign policy, China, Japan, world power.*