

## **SINO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS SINCE THE SEPTEMBER 11 INCIDENT**

By Ni Xiaoquan\*

In July 2001, Chinese President Jiang Zemin and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin signed in Moscow a landmark treaty – Sino-Russian Good-Neighborly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. Shortly after that, on September 11, New York and Washington, D.C. were attacked by international terrorists, which shocked the whole world. As Russia, under the leadership of President Putin, actively joined the international anti-terrorism alliance following the September 11 incident and Russia and the United States moved closer to each other, quite a number of people, both in China and other countries, predicted that Russia's interest in Sino-Russian strategic partnership would decline and that Sino-Russian ties would grow weaker.<sup>1</sup> Now, more than one year have passed since the September 11 incident, and what we have seen is that the Sino-Russian Good-Neighborly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation has been implemented successfully, cooperation between the two countries in the fields of politics, economics and international affairs has continued to develop and Sino-Russian relations are now better than any time in the past. Some problems still exist in relations between China and Russia, but they will not present an obstacle to further development of strategic partnership between the two countries.

### **Changes of Russian Policies toward the United States**

Beginning from the second half of the Yeltsin period, especially after the military attacks of the U.S.-led NATO against Yugoslavia, relations between Russia and the United States were always in a state of sustained crisis. The serious differences between the two countries on a series of major issues far exceeded the common ground between them. After George W. Bush took office, as the Bush administration took a very hard line toward Russia, relations between the two countries dropped to the lowest point since the beginning of the 1990s. Although the Bush administration made some adjustments to its Russia policy beginning from the middle of 2001 owing to many criticisms both at home and abroad to its tough stance toward Russia and also because of the EP-3 aircraft incident between the United States and China, which took place in April 2001, there was no substantial improvement in Russian-U.S. relations.

The September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States changed the whole situation. The Russian leadership viewed the incident as a good opportunity to end confrontation and establish a new cooperative relationship with the United States. Russian President Vladimir Putin was the first foreign leader to express his country's willingness to stand on the side of the United States and help it in fighting against terrorism. During the whole process of the war aimed at removing

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Pang Zhongyin's article "What Changes in Russia-U.S. Relations Mean to China", Beijing Review, June 27, 2002, p7, and the article of Jessica T. Mathews, President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "September 11, One Year Later: A World of Change", published in August 2002, [www.ceip.org](http://www.ceip.org)

the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Russia offered its unconditional support to the United States. It provided the United States with large amounts of important intelligence regarding Taliban and al Qaeda and supplied large amounts of advanced weapons and equipment to the Northern Alliance of Afghanistan that was fighting against the Taliban regime. What is more important, Russia also permitted American troops to enter its traditional spheres of influence in Central Asia, which would have been unthinkable before the September 11 incident. Many American scholars admitted that in the anti-terrorism war in Afghanistan, the contributions made by Russia exceeded those made by all the NATO allies of the United States combined. Apart from that, Russia, in order to improve relations with the United States, also made concessions to the United States on some other important issues. For instance, it tacitly consented to the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty signed in 1972 and abandoned the “limit” or “the red line” which it had set on NATO’s eastward expansion so that the barriers for three ex-Soviet Baltic states to join NATO no longer exist. Russia also closed, on its own, its military bases in Cuba and Vietnam.

The all-out support of Russia to the United States in the latter’s war in Afghanistan has brought about substantial improvement of Russian-U.S. relations. The Joint Declaration on New Strategic Relationship between Russia and the United States, which was signed by President Putin and President Bush in Moscow in May 2002, says that “the era in which the two countries saw each other as an enemy or strategic threat has ended”. The Declaration also says that “Russia and the United States will establish a new strategic relationship to cope with new global challenges and threats”. The two leaders also signed a formal Treaty on the Reduction of Strategic Offensive Weapons, according to which, Russia and the United States would cut their respective strategic nuclear arsenals by about two thirds within the next ten years. Besides, in return for Russia’s support to the U.S. military actions in Afghanistan, the United States has lessened its pressure on Russia with regard to Chechnya and helped Russia in gaining a full membership of the G8 club of the industrialized nations. During their meeting in Moscow in May 2002, Putin and George W. Bush also signed a joint statement on energy cooperation between Russia and the United States, which could be of great significance for future Russian-U.S. economic and trade cooperation and the development of Russian economy. The improvement of Russian-U.S. relations has also given an impetus to the improvement of Russian relations with NATO and European Union. Russia and NATO signed a “Rome Declaration” in the Italian capital at the end of May 2002 to set up a new NATO-Russia Council, which marked the establishment of “new relationship” between the two parties, and the United States and European Union have also granted Russia formal status and treatment of “market economy”, which is expected to promote Russia’s export to the United States and European Union.

The reasons for the adjustment of Russian policies toward the United States may be summarized as follows. First, since taking office, President Putin has always regarded the rejuvenation of the Russian economy and the improvement of the living standards of the Russian people as the top priority of the work of his government and viewed the creation of a favorable external environment for the domestic economic development as the most important task of Russia’s foreign policy. He knows that in order to realize this goal, Russia must end confrontation with the United States and build a normal and constructive relationship with the latter. It is clear to

Putin that confronted with the increasingly expanding gap of economic and military strength between Russia and the United States, to continue to engage in confrontation with the United States would only mean suicide for Russia. So, in this sense, President Putin has no choice but to make necessary concessions to the United States as long as these concessions would not undermine the fundamental interests of Russia. Secondly, the view of the Russian leadership with regard to the threat to Russia's national security has undergone an important change. Before the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Russian leadership paid more attention to the threat from the West, including the effort of the United States and the U.S.-led NATO to constantly strengthen their military superiority and their increasing tendency to use force to obtain their goal, than to the threat from other directions. After the September 11 incident, the Russian leadership has come to the conclusion that with the changed international situation, the United States no longer regards Russia as its enemy or its main threat and that as the United States has been bogged down in its long-term struggle against terrorism, it is impossible for the United States and NATO to launch military attacks against Russia. Thirdly, since military threat from the West no longer really exists and since the Chechen separatists and the terrorist forces in Afghanistan, which have had close links with the Chechen rebels, have posed such a grave threat to the security of Russia and the southern borders of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Russia, just as the United States, now pinpoints international terrorism as the biggest and most direct threat to its national security.

<sup>1</sup> In other words, for the first time in more than half a century, Russia and the United States now have a common enemy—international terrorism. Under such circumstances, the Russian leadership believes that Russia's support to the United States in the latter's military actions in Afghanistan also serves Russia's own security interests especially because Russia's strength has declined so much and Russia alone would not have been able to eliminate the terrorist bases in Afghanistan. The Russian leaders also believe that the changed international situation has made it possible for Russia to substantially improve its relations with the United States.

Nevertheless, while supporting the United States in its war against Taliban and al Qaeda, the Russian leadership has tried its best to defend Russia's national interests wherever it can. President Putin has emphasized many times that the priority of Russian foreign policy is Russia's national interests.<sup>2</sup> The difference from his predecessor is that President Putin insists on solving differences with the United States through dialogue and negotiation rather than resorting to confrontation with an aim to develop a normal and predictable relationship with the United States. The fact is that although Russia and the United States have moved closer to each other since the September 11 incident, the two countries still have important differences regarding anti-terrorism and a number of other major issues. Take the Iraqi issue for example. The Bush administration believes that Iraq has violated the resolutions related to weapon's inspection of the United Nations Security Council and has continued developing weapons of mass destruction, which, it says, has posed a

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<sup>1</sup> After the "9.11" incident, President Putin emphasized many times the need to redefine the priority of Russia's national security. For instance, in a speech to a group of Russian military leaders on November 12, 2001, he said, "Through analyzing the abruptly changing situation, we have correctly defined the new threat to international security. Terrorism is threatening the entire system of strategic security." Talking about Russia's security policy in 2002, he demanded that the Russian military sector "readjust priority in accordance with the new threat confronting our national security". He emphasized that "(We) should successfully cope with the threat of the new era, first all, the threat of terrorism." ITAR-TASS, Moscow, November 12, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Xinhua, Moscow, May 26, 2002

grave threat to the security of the United States and other countries. It claims that it has the right to unilaterally launch military attacks against Iraq without the approval of the United Nations Security Council. But President Putin has pointed out that Russia does not have any intelligence to prove that Iraq already possesses weapons of mass destruction nor has Russia got any such information from other countries. The Russian leadership calls for a political solution of the Iraqi issue. As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Russia insists that the Iraqi crisis must be solved on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and in accordance with the principles and norms of international law. Many Russian scholars have pointed out that the real purpose of the United States in the Iraqi issue is to dominate the world price of oil, protect Israel and serve American domestic politics, i.e., to prepare for the next presidential election.<sup>1</sup> Russian high-ranking officials have made it clear that Russia is not going to make a deal with the United States in this issue. The reason for Russia to persist in this stand is not only because Russia has important economic and political interests in Iraq<sup>2</sup> but also because it is firmly opposed to the attempt to establish a one-polar world dominated by one superpower. Russia insists that the United Nations and its Security Council should play a leading role in solving major international issues, which it believes will promote the establishment of a multi-polar and democratic world order.

Russia also has disputes with the United States over the issue of Iran. The United States considers Iran to be a sponsor of terrorism and has tried to persuade Moscow to stop building a nuclear power station in Iran, which, it says, will help Iran to produce weapons of mass destruction. But Russia has emphasized that Russia's nuclear cooperation with Iran "will not undermine" the process of non-proliferation. Shortly before the United States demanded that Russia stop its nuclear cooperation with Iran, Russia announced a ten-year plan to expand its nuclear assistance to Tehran. Russia not only insists in completing the unfinished reactor for civilian use in Iran's coastal city of Bushire, the investment of which is about US\$ 800 million, but will also build five more reactors for Iran. It is estimated that the total projects will bring an income of US\$ 6-10 billion to the nuclear industry of Russia.

Russia is not happy with the United States either with regard to relations between Russia and ex-Soviet Georgia and to the new attitude of the U.S. government in the issue of Chechnya. Russia, irritated by constant attacks by the Chechen rebels, accused Georgia of harboring Chechen terrorists in its Pankisi Gorge and warned that it may take actions to defend itself if Georgia fails to prevent cross-border attacks. But the Bush administration has declared that the United States will firmly support "the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Georgia and warned Russia not to take unilateral military actions to solve the issue of Pankisi Gorge. After the "9.11" incident, the United States began to criticize Russia again for the latter's military actions in Chechnya, claiming that Russia "is continuing violating human rights and excessively using military force against civilians". From Russia's perspective, the Bush administration is pursuing a

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<sup>1</sup> This is the view expressed by many Russian scholars whom the author has met recently in Beijing.

<sup>2</sup> If the United States succeeds in replacing Saddam Hussein with a "predictable" leader, it will obtain the goal of controlling the price of oil, which could drop to the level of US\$ 15-16 a barrel. As 40% of Russia's export revenue comes from oil, the drop of oil price will be a heavy blow to Russia's economy and also to many Russian oil companies and, besides, Russia probably will not be able to get back the money (about US\$ 7 billion) which Iraq owes to Russia.

double standard in the issue of anti-terrorism.

Russia still has differences with the United States regarding the implementation of the treaty on reducing strategic offensive weapons, the missile defense program of the United States and some other issues. So, it is hard to say that since the September 11 incident Russia and the United States have already become genuine strategic partners or that the two countries have already established a close relationship of mutual trust

### **Strategic Coordination between China and Russia in International Affairs**

It is clear that although the Russian leadership has given all-out support to the United States in the struggle against terrorism and made concessions to it on a number of other issues since the September 11 incident, it is incorrect to say that President Putin has pursued a pro-Western foreign policy as Russia's former foreign minister Kozrev did in the early 1990s. As a matter of fact, Russia and the United States still have different aims and interests on many major international issues as has been illustrated in the above. Therefore, although there has been a significant improvement of relations between Russia and the United States, relations between the two countries have not been changed fundamentally. Likewise, since the September 11 incident, relations between China and the United States have also improved evidently as compared with the period when George W. Bush just took office in 2001, but the two countries still have major differences in principle regarding Taiwan, human rights and other issues. On the other hand, although the Bush administration, after the September 11 terrorist attacks, has tried to obtain support from the international community including Russia and China in its effort against terrorism, it still refuses to be tied up by international agreements and has persisted in doing things in a unilateral way. Besides, in excuse of anti-terrorism, the Bush administration has put forward a new military strategy of "preemptive strike" and has increased its military expenditure in a big way. All this will inevitably have a serious and negative impact on the current system of international law and the role of the United Nations that holds the main responsibility for international peace and security. This, of course, runs counter to the stand of establishing a democratic and multi-polar world order and strengthening the leading role of the United Nations and its Security Council in major international issues, which has always been held by China and Russia. Under such circumstances, China and Russia still need to strengthen their strategic coordination on major international issues so as to defend their respective national interests. In other words, the basis of Sino-Russian strategic partnership has not been weakened because of the improvement of Russian-U.S. relations since the September 11 incident as some people have claimed. As China and Russia hold identical views and stands on the key issues in the present international politics, each of them still regards the other as its own "strategic rear" or a "reliable backing" in dealing with the West. Both of them still view their strategic partnership as the main driving force in establishing a new international order. Just as President Putin put it when he met a delegation of Chinese newspaper "People's Daily" in Moscow on May 30, 2002, the common attitude of China and Russia on major international issues is the basis of strategic cooperation between the two countries.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *People's Daily*, June 1, 2002, P3.

Since the September 11 incident, China and Russia have cooperated closely in all the international organizations and have conducted consultations with and supported each other on major international issues. The two countries have cooperated very well in the issue of anti-terrorism. Both of them stand for opposing and striking at terrorism of all forms and insist that there should be no double standard in this issue. The two countries also hold that cooperation in anti-terrorism among various countries should be based on the United Nations Charter and other norms of international law and that the leading role of the United Nations in the struggle against terrorism should be strengthened. The two countries have set up an “anti-terrorism working group” at the suggestion of President Jiang Zemin and President Putin, which has held regular meetings to exchange views on the situation of the international struggle against terrorism and on how to strengthen cooperation in the field of anti-terrorism between the two countries. The two countries have also supported each other in their respective struggles against “the East Turkistan Islamic Movement” and the Chechen terrorist forces. With regard to the Iraqi issue, China and Russia have conducted close consultations and co-ordinations in the United Nations Security Council and other international organizations. The two countries hold identical stand in this issue, that is, Iraq must implement the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council earnestly and comprehensively and the Iraqi issue should be settled politically within the framework of the United Nations and on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. Both countries are also opposed to depicting Iran, Iraq and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as the “axis of evils” by the United States and have continued to develop normal political and economic relations with these countries.

Since the “9.11” terrorist attacks, China and Russia have also strengthened their cooperation in Central Asia within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). After the “9.11” incident, terrorist bases in Afghanistan have been destroyed and the security environment in Central Asia has been greatly improved. But the collapse of the Taliban regime and the removal of al Qaeda have not completely eliminated the three evil forces, namely, international terrorism, national separatism and religious extremism, and Central Asia remains one of the main areas of the activities of these evil forces. The activities of drug trafficking and illegal weapon smuggling in this area have not been reduced either, which is still threatening the security and stability of the countries in this area. Besides, although the United States has announced that it has no intention to build permanent military bases in Central Asia, many people in China and Russia are still doubtful that the United States will really keep its promise. Many people are of the view that even if the United States ends its military presence in Central Asia when the anti-terrorism action is over, it will still try to maintain its political and military influence there, which will constitute an uncertain factor for the future situation in the area. In consideration of the above-mentioned factors, China and Russia, in the past year and more, have strengthened their cooperation in Central Asia within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In the summit meeting held in St. Petersburg in June this year, the heads of state of China and Russia and the four other member states of the SCO signed the SCO Charter and a formal document on setting up a permanent regional anti-terrorism agency. In the past year, the foreign ministers, defense ministers, heads of the law enforcement organs and heads of intelligence organs of the SCO member states have held regular consultations. It is clear that the close cooperation between China

and Russia has played an important role in promoting the multi-lateral cooperation within the framework of the SCO. Both China and Russia hope to maintain security and stability in Central Asia and prevent the change of the balance of forces in this region, which has been brought about by the military presence of the United States, from harming their own security interests. Both China and Russia hold that the present anti-terrorism actions of the United States in Afghanistan also serve their own security interests, but Russia also demands that the U.S. military actions in Central Asia should be transparent as much as possible and that there should be a time limit for its military presence there. This stand of Russia has been supported by China.

Since the September 11 incident, China and Russia have continued their cooperation in maintaining the global strategic balance and stability. As Russia failed last year in preventing the United States from unilaterally withdrawing from the ABM Treaty of 1972, it is now concentrating its efforts on establishing a supervision and transparency mechanism to restrict the development of missile defense system of the United States. China and Russia have conducted consultations with each other over this issue. On June 27, 2002, the two countries submitted a joint proposal to the arms reduction conference held in Geneva, demanding that a new international treaty be formulated to forbid the deployment of weapons in the outer-space. This is the first joint proposal raised by China and Russia concerning this issue. Obviously, this proposal is a challenge to the missile defense program of the Bush administration.

China and Russia have also resolutely supported each other in their respective efforts to safeguard national unification, sovereignty and territorial integrity. China has continued to support Russia in its policy of normalizing the situation in Chechnya, and Russia has continued to support China in the issues of Taiwan, Tibet, etc. Largely because of the principled stand of Russia, discussion of China's human rights policies was not placed in the agenda of the human rights conference held in Geneva in the middle of this year. The two countries have also cooperated well in the United Nations over some regional issues such as the conflict in the Middle East, confrontation between India and Pakistan, etc. The two countries hold the same or similar stand on all these issues.

The leaders of both China and Russia have repeatedly emphasized that the strategic partnership between the two countries is not aimed at any third country. This is true and is not a propaganda because Sino-Russian strategic partnership is mainly aimed at establishing a new type of relations between the two countries. As Putin has put it, in such a relationship, relations between the two partners are equal and they try to settle all issues in a spirit of mutual trust and, besides, both countries conscientiously combine nonalignment with coordination of their efforts to defend their common interests.<sup>1</sup> It is stipulated in the "Sino-Russian Good-Neighborly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation" signed by the two countries in July 2001 that the two countries respect each other's choice of the road for development and support each other's policies in safeguarding national unification and territorial integrity. The treaty emphasizes that the differences between each other can only be solved peacefully in accordance with the United Nations Charter and other generally-recognized principles and norms of international law. The

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<sup>1</sup> *People's Daily*, June 1, 2002, P3.

treaty also points out that the two countries will carry out cooperation in economic, trade, cultural and other fields and will further expand coordination in international affairs. It is also mentioned that both countries will make efforts to strengthen the leading role of the United Nations and its Security Council in international affairs. These principles actually constitute the basis of the strategic partnership between China and Russia. They serve the fundamental interests of both countries. Therefore, even if there is not the factor of the United States, these principles will also be included in the treaty. But the foreign and security policies pursued by the Bush administration since it took office have obviously promoted the strategic coordination between China and Russia on a number of major international issues.

### **Cooperation between China and Russia in the Fields of Economics, Military Technology and Humanity**

As has been discussed in the above, after the September 11 incident, coordination between China and Russia in international affairs remains to be an extremely important aspect of their strategic partnership. But since the September 11 incident, there has been an important change in the security policy of the United States and both U.S.-Russian and U.S.-Chinese relations have been markedly improved. The leaders of both China and Russia believe that the anti-terrorism war of the United States has given their countries a strategic “breathing space” and that they should make use of this opportunity to speed up the development of their respective domestic economy and further strengthen economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. They hold that, under the new situation, further strengthening economic and trade cooperation between the two countries should be the priority in Sino-Russian strategic partnership.

A long-term problem existing in Sino-Russian relations is that the development of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries lagged far behind that of their political cooperation. In most of the years of the 1990's, trade turnover between the two countries ranged only between US\$ 5 billion and US\$ 6 billion, which was only about 1/10 of the trade turnover between China and Japan or between China and the United States. Obviously, such a situation did not conform to the economic potential of the two countries. The leaders of both China and Russia were aware that without a faster development of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, the strategic partnership of the two countries would have no solid foundation. After President Putin took office and especially after China and Russia signed the good-neighborly treaty of friendship and cooperation in July 2001, the two countries began to take more effective measures to boost their economic and trade cooperation. In the sixth regular meeting between the prime ministers of the two countries, which was held in St. Petersburg on the eve of the September 11 incident, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji said that after several years of exploration and practice, the two sides had gained a better understanding about how to deepen their economic and trade cooperation. He said that the two countries were really highly complementary to each other in the field of economics and trade and that establishing a cooperative relationship based on equality and mutual benefit would bring real benefits to both countries. During that meeting, the prime ministers of the two countries discussed concrete fields of cooperation including the construction of oil pipelines between China and Russia, aviation and aerospace, peaceful use of nuclear energy, joint development of new and high technologies, etc. and signed several agreements and

contracts including the contract about purchasing five Russia-made Tu-204 civilian planes by China and the general agreement on conducting feasibility studies of the construction of Russia-China oil pipeline, which starts from the city of Angarsk in Russia's Irkutsk area to the city of Daqin of China's Northeast. Zhu said that after a period of mutual adaptation the Sino-Russian car of friendship and cooperation had begun to enter the expressway.<sup>1</sup>

In 2001 bilateral trade between China and Russia hit a record high of US\$ 10.7 billion, and the volume in the first eight months of this year totaled US\$ 7.64 billion, a growth of 14.4 per cent over the same period last year. In the past year, most of the cooperation projects decided by the sixth regular meeting of the two prime ministers have been implemented or have gained major progress. In August 2002, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji and his Russian counterpart Mikhail Kasyanov held their seventh regular meeting in Shanghai. During this meeting, the two leaders attached great importance to economic and trade cooperation between the two countries and considered it to be an important component part of the strategic partnership of the two countries. The two sides focused their discussions on the major projects that would be of great significance to further developing the strategic partnership between the two countries, such as energy, aviation and aerospace, nuclear energy, telecommunication and information technologies, natural resource exploration, ecology and transportation. The two sides decided to take joint measures to expedite the implementation of these major projects. Cooperation in the fields of energy and high technologies will be the priorities of economic and trade cooperation between China and Russia in the years to come. It is expected that after the completion of the Russia-China pipeline in 2005, Russia, in the following 30 years (from 2005 to 2035) will be able to supply China with a total amount of about 700 million tons of crude oil (about 20 million to 30 million tons every year). This will lay a solid foundation for Sino-Russian economic cooperation in the decades to come. The two sides also said that they fully support corporations in the two countries to carry forth Sino-Russian natural gas cooperation in the strategic pipeline project linking China's gas-rich western region with the country's eastern parts. Kasyanov announced that Russia is willing to take an active part in the development of China's west. He had also revealed on the eve of his visit to China that Russia is considering a plan to cooperate with China in developing the economy of Russia's Far East and Siberia.<sup>2</sup> During his visit, Kasyanov was told by Chinese leaders that China will not be an obstacle to Russia's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) and that China will not restrict the import of steel products from Russia. During the seventh regular meeting, Premier Zhu Rongji said that economic and trade cooperation between China and Russia has already entered the expressway and that economic and trade relations between the two countries have already entered a new period in which they are developing in a parallel with the development of political relations between the two countries.<sup>3</sup> Kasyanov also said when interviewed by *People's Daily* correspondents in Moscow on the eve of his visit to China that Sino-Russian strategic partnership in the economic field has already become a fact today.<sup>4</sup>

After the September 11 incident, Sino-Russian military technological cooperation has

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<sup>1</sup> *People's Daily*, September 9, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Lu Yansong and Ma Jian: "Bright Future of Russo-Chinese Economic and Trade Cooperation", *People's Daily*, August 20, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> "Chinese and Russian Prime Ministers Held Their Seventh Meeting", *People's Daily*, August 23, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> *People's Daily*, August 20, 2002.

continued to develop. Despite the pressure of the United States, Russia has not only continued to provide China with sophisticated weapons in accordance with the agreements signed in the past years, but has raised its military technological cooperation with China to a new level. In May of this year, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov paid a visit to Beijing and signed with his Chinese counterpart a series of agreements related to military and military technological cooperation between China and Russia. The details of the agreements have been kept as a secret. But media reports have revealed that the two countries signed a number of arms sales contracts this summer, according to which, Russia will supply China with two new 956EM Sovremenny destroyers (China already got two of such destroyers previously), eight Kilo submarines and S-300F naval air defense systems. Russia is also going to sell some 30 Su-30MK2 fighters equipped with X-31A supersonic anti-ship missiles to China. In August this year, Russia delivered the first 10 of 40 Sukhoi Su-30MKK fighters that China ordered last summer and offered China a license to assemble military helicopters. Besides, according to news agencies, expansion on Sino-Russian cooperation in the field of military technology will also envisage a gradual transition from simple export trade to joint scientific research and development of new types of armaments and military hardware.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that in the past few years Russia's arms sales to China has amounted to more than U.S.\$ 1 billion annually, which constitutes nearly 40 per cent of Russia's total export of weapons and equipment. It is clear that Russia's arms sale to China has played an extremely important role in the maintenance and development of Russia's military-industrial complex. As has been indicated in the above, the Russian leadership also values highly Russia's strategic partnership with China. So, both for political and economic reasons, Russia is very unlikely to stop or reduce its military technological cooperation with China no matter how hard the United States may try to convince Russia to curb arms sales to China. It also proves that, despite closer ties between Russia and the United States since the September 11 incident, President Putin has still placed Russia's national interests in the first place.

Expansion of cooperation in the field of humanity between China and Russia is another prominent feature of the development of Sino-Russian relations since the September 11 incident. The Chinese-Russian Good-Neighborly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation has laid a solid foundation for further developing cooperation in the field of humanity between the two countries. Such cooperation has become an important component part of the Sino-Russian bilateral relations and has important significance for further deepening and developing their good-neighborly and friendly relations. In July 2002, Chinese Vice-Premier Li Lanqing visited Moscow and co-chaired the third session of the China-Russia Cooperation Committee on Education, Culture, Health and Sports with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Valentina Matviyenko, which achieved fruitful results. The two sides decided that on the basis of the present four sub-committees of education, culture, health and sports, the existing tourism cooperation group be upgraded to tourism cooperation sub-committee and two working groups of film cooperation and media cooperation be set up in the committee so as to promote the expansion of mutual understanding and exchanges between the peoples of the two countries. Exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in science and technology, education, culture and other fields of humanity have been extremely frequent in

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<sup>1</sup> See Lyuba Pronina, "Arming China Makes U.S. Nervous", *Moscow Times*, August 22, 2002 ; "Sino-Russian Ties a Dilemma for America", *Taiwan News*, July 19, 2002 (<http://www.taiwansecurity.org/News/2002/TN-071002.htm>) and Itar-Tass, Moscow, May 29.

the past year and more. For instance, In June this year, a delegation of the Chinese Academy of Social Science headed by President Li Tieyin visited Moscow, Vladivostok and some other Russian cities and signed a number of agreements on strengthening academic exchanges and cooperation with Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow University and a number of other research institutions. Also in June this year, a Sino-Russian forum of science and technology was held in Moscow to further promote the exchanges and cooperation in the fields of science and technology between the two countries. In July, Chinese Education Minister Chen zhili held talks with her Russian counterpart in Moscow on the expansion of educational cooperation between China and Russia. Both sides agreed that educational exchanges between the two countries should be expanded and special efforts be made to enhance friendship and cooperation between young people of the two countries. The two sides also decided to set up joint graduate schools in a number of selected universities in both countries, actively conduct cooperation in training artists and give mutual support to the activities of the language study centers in both countries. In October this year, the Sino-Russian media cooperation working group held its first session in Beijing, in which a working plan regarding cooperation in education, culture, health and sports was formulated. The state broadcasting and television departments of the two countries also signed an agreement in Beijing in October this year regarding cooperation in broadcasting and television between the two countries.

The last but not the least important is the fact that since the signing of Sino-Russian Good-Neighborly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and September 11 terrorist attacks, political dialogue and high level exchanges between China and Russia have reached a level never obtained in the past, and mutual political trust between the two countries has been further deepened. Since then, President Jiang Zemin and President Putin have already met four times. And President Putin is coming to Beijing to hold the next summit meeting with Jiang Zemin very soon. The heads of state of the two countries have also maintained frequent contact through the “hot line” linking the Kremlin and Zhongnanhai. The prime ministers of the two countries have also met two times since then and their regular meeting mechanism has functioned very well. More than ten sub-committees under this regular meeting system have also been working in a orderly way and have done a lot of practical work. Besides, the parliaments of the two countries have also kept frequent contact and there have also been frequent exchanges between regional and local governments of the two countries. All this has played an extremely important role in enhancing mutual political trust and promoting constant development of the strategic partnership between the two countries.

### **Problems and Prospect**

There are still some problems in Sino-Russian relations. In my view, two problems are most prominent. First, economic and trade cooperation between the two countries still is not in keeping with the real potential of the economies of the two countries. Particularly, cooperation in the fields of production and investment between the two countries is still in a very low level. Secondly, mutual understanding and trust between the peoples of the two countries are still not in keeping with the level of the strategic partnership between the two countries, which has already been reached. Many people in Russia are still, more or less, worried about a “Chinese threat”. The

leaders of the two countries are fully aware of these problems and have already taken effective measures to solve them as we have seen in the above. So, I have no doubt that strategic partnership between China and Russia will continue to develop because it serves the fundamental interests of both countries and is also conducive to promoting peace and stability of the world.