

## SINO-RUSSIAN PARTNERSHIP: BOOSTING SYNERGIES IN GLOBAL STRATEGY

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**Abstract:** China and Russia are the main driving forces of the transformation of the international order, new forms of globalisation, and anti-hegemonic policies at the global level. Cooperation between both countries has reached an unprecedented level and laid the foundation for a new type of great-power relations, manifesting itself in the conclusion and development of the comprehensive partnership and strategic coordination. Although avoiding the establishment of an alliance, both sides set no limits on mutual interactions, creating a huge potential for building mutual ties. The Sino-Russian strategic relationship is the crucial stabilising element of international relations amid growing volatility and protectionist, unilateral, and hegemonic practices largely advocated by liberal democracies. In the paper, a discourse analysis of the joint declarations adopted by Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin in 2022-2024 is conducted to identify the fundamental elements of the Sino-Russian vision of mutual relations, international affairs, and a reform of global governance. Russia has been a long-term advocate for a multipolar order and the democratisation of international relations, which coincides with China's concept of an equal and orderly multipolar world and multiple initiatives that aim to make global governance more equitable. Both countries have introduced a civilisational perspective to the official discourse, thus affirming the relevance of the idea of multiple modernities and a plurality of modernisation and development paths. The article also addresses certain differences in the strategies of both countries. However, it concludes that the close relationship and strategic trust between China and Russia create conditions for both countries to go in the same direction, strengthening synergies and opening the door to inclusive economic globalisation, universal and indivisible security, democracy in international relations, a multipolar world order, and the community of a shared future for mankind.

**Keywords:** China, community of shared future for mankind, comprehensive partnership and strategic coordination, global governance, multipolarity, peaceful coexistence, Russia.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2024, China and Russia commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their diplomatic relations. The anniversary is celebrated amid growing volatility and tension on a global scale, but also in the moment of tumultuous development of bilateral relations, whose level has reached a historic peak while demonstrating resilience and unprecedented character in terms of their scope and future potential. The Soviet Union, as the legal predecessor of the Russian Federation, became the first country to recognise the establishment of the People's Republic of China and made considerable contributions to the socialist construction in the country (Shen & Xia, 2015). Subsequent disagreements between Beijing and Moscow and the two Communist parties serve as a deterrent example for both the leadership and the people of China and Russia, from which both sides managed to draw positive lessons.

Normalisation of the relations between Beijing and Moscow started back in the 1980s. Despite the gradual improvement of bilateral relations, they were structurally limited by Russia's orientation to the West during the 1990s and in the first decade of the new century and China's increasing participation in neoliberal globalisation and the US-dominated liberal international order. The global economic crisis, the election of Xi Jinping as the general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the return of Vladimir Putin to the presidential office in 2012, and the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis a year later created objective conditions for both countries to elevate their relationship to higher levels. In 2008, China became Russia's largest trade partner, and the role of the socialist neighbour has only strengthened since then (Malle, 2017). However, close economic cooperation is not enough to establish a strategic alignment. The latter requires a broad political consensus and strategic trust, whose construction has been a matter of the last decade. It can be demonstrated in unprecedented defence cooperation (Lukin, 2021), as well as the number of agreements on the further development of bilateral partnership on the highest political level (Lukin, 2018), which made the two countries "not allies but better than allies" (Wang, 2021a). A new chapter of Sino-Russian relations was opened as a consequence of the security crisis in Eastern Europe, which erupted in 2022.

There is a growing convergence between China and Russia in their perspective on international affairs and the normative framework of the emerging multipolar world order. Naturally, both countries have their own

historical experience, interests, and development paths, as well as different socioeconomic systems, but the leaders have reached broad mutual understanding, respect, and trust. The confrontational actions carried out by the United States and their allies based on their obsolete geopolitical thinking and ideological prejudice have contributed to the unprecedented rapprochement between both major powers (de Acosta & McCarthy, 2024). Paradoxically, the strategy aimed at the concurrent containment, deterrence, and encirclement of China and Russia fails to meet the goals even from the Western zero-sum point of view since it helps the Sino-Russian comprehensive partnership to deepen while accelerating the emancipation of the world majority. China, Russia, and many other forward-looking countries keep pace with the times, adapt to the changing conditions of a new era, and work together to be active subjects in the construction of a new world order.

All these challenges and profound changes unseen in a century are reflected by the Chinese and Russian leaders and addressed in the Joint Statements adopted by both sides on the occasion of the annual meetings between President Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. The Sino-Russian consensus manifests itself at the level of discourse and political practice. The last three Joint Statements include concepts and strategies of both countries, creating a synthesis and space for synergies. The evolution of the official political discourse in China and Russia reveals the existence of mutual influence and acceptance of each other's concepts. This would be impossible without understanding and convergence between the two major powers. Importantly, the shared perspective withstands the test of the Ukraine crisis and the consequent strengthening pressure on both Moscow and Beijing by the Western powers. The continuity of discourse over the last three years reaffirms the existence of a fundamental consensus and shared interests despite the objectively different positions of both countries in the international order.

### **2022: SINO-RUSSIAN “NO-LIMITS FRIENDSHIP”**

The Joint Statement adopted on February 4, 2022, in Beijing, ahead of the start of the XXIV Olympic Winter Games, is divided into six sections, proceeding from a general description of the status quo to dealing with the issues of global development, security, and governance, international

relations, and world order (Президент России, 2022). The importance of the 2022 document lies in the fact that it demonstrates the commitment of both countries to jointly promote a progressive reform of global governance while insisting on the basic principles of the current international system with the United Nations (UN) Charter at the core. In this regard, both China and Russia, on the one hand, and the United States (US) and its allies, on the other, seek to change structurally the mechanisms and operation of international relations and global governance. However, while Beijing, Moscow, and other countries of the world majority tend to develop further the fundamentals of the current international system, the world minority apparently endeavours to revise the basic norms of the UN-based system. Somewhat paradoxically, Western actors have recently been more revisionist than the rising powers or Russia.

From the point of view of China and Russia, the world is experiencing a profound transformation, marking the beginning of a new era. This concept became an essential element of the political discourse under Xi Jinping's leadership. This transformation includes phenomena such as multipolarisation, economic globalisation, development of the information society, cultural diversity, and transformation of global governance and the world order. The world is seen as increasingly interrelated and interdependent, contrasting some de-globalisation tendencies and unilateral and protectionist strategies largely adopted by Western countries, including decoupling, derisking, and friend-shoring (Pilkington, 2024).

It is worth noticing that the first section of the Joint Statement is dedicated to explaining the attitude of both countries toward democracy and human rights. Contrary to the universalist discourse of liberal democracies that reduce democracy to the Western political model and human rights based on liberal anthropology, resulting in individualism, the Eurasian major powers insist on the plurality of democratic models and conceptions of human rights. At the turn of 2021 and 2022, China and Russia accelerated their efforts to counter the universalist Western discourse and provide the international community with an alternative that would comply with the interests of the world majority. It can be demonstrated in an article by Anatolii Antonov and Qin Gang, ambassadors to the United States, published in *The National Interest* in November 2021. The two diplomats denounced Washington for stoking ideological confrontation and misusing "value-based diplomacy" to

provoke divisions on a global scale (Antonov & Qin, 2021). At the same time, the authors declared that both China and Russia were democratic states (Antonov & Qin, 2021).

The wording of the article corresponds to that of the Joint Statement adopted less than three months later. While accepting democracy as a universal value, the document denies the one-size-fits-all template of both the transition to democracy and of democracy itself. Similarly, human rights are universal, but their concrete forms must reflect the specific conditions of each country. China and Russia tend to have a holistic approach to human rights, including civil, cultural, economic, political, and social ones. In a sense, China made great contributions to the promotion of social rights due to its struggle for the eradication of poverty. Both countries embrace democracy, equality, freedom, justice, and peace as universal human values but perceive them as a whole and criticise Western countries for denying the fundamental significance of social rights for the cause of human rights as such. The pluralist perspective on universal human values corresponds with the civilisational paradigm, which has been recently integrated into the official political discourse in both countries and highlights the diversity of cultures and civilisations (Zemanek, 2024).

The culturalist framework is intertwined with the recognition of development and modernisation as key drivers in ensuring the prosperity of societies in the world. Modernisation paths and development trajectories as universal imperatives are defined in particularist terms in the sense that there is no universal pattern for all. It is in stark contrast to the Western outlook, entailing Western modernity based on capitalism and liberal democracy as the only possible models. However, both Chinese and Russians are aware of the inherently exclusive and unequal nature of the Western model and its projection on a global scale since it maintains the dominance of the world minority, producing poverty, wealth gaps, and relations based on one-sided dominance. Moreover, Western universalism has destructive effects on local social patterns and cultural peculiarities, resulting in alienation and negative repercussions in relation to globalisation. In this sense, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) provides a new form of cooperation, being an efficient instrument of inclusive economic globalisation and building the community of a shared future for mankind. Russia gradually recognised the importance and win-win character of the Belt and Road Initiative and supported the

China-proposed Global Development Initiative, and both sides agreed on linking the BRI and Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) (Zemánek, 2020). These commitments are reiterated in the second section of the 2022 Joint Statement.

Of no lower significance are security-related issues, which are addressed in the third section. Unlike the bloc security asserted by Western powers, China and Russia advocate security that is universal, comprehensive, indivisible, and lasting. This concept of security goes against the logic of military alliances and exclusive groups of countries, which are largely influenced by Cold War mentality with its zero-sum philosophy and fuel geopolitical rivalry and confrontation. The idea of universal and indivisible security has a wide range of practical effects. It helps us to understand the negative attitude of both China and Russia towards NATO and emerging military groupings in the Asia-Pacific region such as AUKUS, which are explicitly targeted by the Joint Statement. The criticised geopolitical mentality behind NATO necessarily implies that the security of a group of countries is reached at the expense of the security of other states, which is unacceptable as it fails to protect the core interests of others. Sino-Russian criticism of NATO with its exclusive security is even more important in light of the war, which broke out as a result of NATO expansion and disregard for Russia's core interests only a couple of days after the adoption of the joint declaration.

An important part of the Sino-Russian security approach is the opposition to external interference in their internal affairs and subversive activities in adjacent regions. This position has been shaped by rich experience with colour revolutions provoked or directly orchestrated by Western actors to destabilise target countries (Global Times, 2021). From the point of view of liberal democracies, such a position can be evaluated in terms of spheres of influence, as each country has the right to take sides. To put it specifically, Ukraine can join NATO if it considers such a choice to be in its own interest. Although this argument may be plausible within the liberal framework, it is incorrect from the perspective of China or Russia. The reason is that the allegiance to the principle of universal, comprehensive, indivisible, and lasting security disqualifies unilateral security, for each country should build its security in harmony with the core interests of the others and respect a multilateral and holistic approach to security affairs. Through this prism, Ukraine's integration into NATO seems utterly problematic, if not

unacceptable, and the same applies to strengthening efforts to export NATO-like military alliances to Asia-Pacific, weaponisation of space, arms race in outer space, unrestricted development of global anti-ballistic missile defence system, proliferation of nuclear weapons and any weapons of mass destruction, or military interventions without a due decision of the UN Security Council.

The last section of the Sino-Russian declaration deals with the task of a new world order and global governance. Both countries highlight the central coordinating role of the United Nations and defend the UN-based international system, which emerged after World War II (Sakwa, 2023). Advocating the construction of a *new type* of international relations and the community of a shared future for mankind, they build on and follow the principles and norms of the current international system based on international law, in contrast to Western countries, which enforce a *rules-based order*. The comprehensive partnership between Beijing and Moscow represents a new type of major-power relations that serves as a model for others to follow to eliminate the outdated Cold War approach. The partnership is based on mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Famously enough, the Joint Statement speaks of “no-limits friendship” with no forbidden areas of cooperation (Zhao, 2022). Even though the sides gradually toned down the *no-limits* wording, as it had been misinterpreted as the recognition of China’s support for the Russian military operation, the nature of the comprehensive partnership did not change. The major-power relationship is based on non-alliance, non-confrontation, and not targeting any third party. Both sides stress that the Sino-Russian relationship is a strategic choice corresponding to the fundamental interests of the two peoples, in line with the multipolarisation and democratisation of international relations and of great value in maintaining global strategic stability (Xinhua, 2024). In this regard, China has supported Russia’s bid to establish a just multipolar order and embraced the concept of multipolarity itself. At the same time, the Chinese argue that multipolarity must be linked to multilateralism and global governance to avoid fragmentation of the international system, de-globalisation, unilateral approaches, protectionism, and the emergence of mutually exclusive blocs (Wang, 2021b).

## 2023: CONTINUITY OF SHARED COMMITMENTS

President Xi Jinping officially visited Russia in March 2023 after Vladimir Putin's trip to Beijing a year earlier. On that occasion, both sides issued the Joint Statement on March 21 (Президент России, 2023b). The international situation changed considerably in the meantime, which impacted the content of the joint declaration. Unlike the previous document, the "no-limits friendship" was omitted, but both sides adhered to comprehensive partnership and strategic coordination while committing to deepen it further. The 2023 Joint Statement is composed of nine sections, being more practice- and task-orientated than the 2022 document. In general, it demonstrates a high degree of continuity by elaborating on previous concepts and policies rather than revising them.

Regardless of the crisis in Eastern Europe, both sides appreciated the level of bilateral relations and called each other a priority partner while continuing to describe the comprehensive partnership in terms of a new model of relations between major powers. According to the two sides, the dynamic of irreversible historical tendencies, such as the emergence of a multipolar world order and the rise of developing countries and regional powers, is accelerating. China and Russia denounced hegemonism, unilateralism, protectionism, the *rules-based order*, and the narrative of a clash between *democracies* and *autocracies* disseminated by liberal democracies. While supporting each other's core interests, including sovereignty, territorial integrity, security, and development, both countries have committed to advancing the multipolar world order, economic globalisation, and democratic international relations, developing a more just and rational global governance.

The first section of the Joint Statement is followed by the areas and priorities of bilateral cooperation, which largely correspond to those set by the Joint Statement on the Occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation, adopted on June 28, 2021 (Президент России, 2021). The tasks cover a wide range of areas, from politics and security to economy and culture, focusing on linking the development of the EEU, the BRI, and the Greater Eurasian Partnership. Nevertheless, the tasks of joint cooperation do not limit themselves to the Eurasian macroregion but go far beyond. Russia embraced China-proposed initiatives, i.e., the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilisation Initiative, which constitute three pillars of the community of a shared future for



mankind. The latter is based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, which are to be materialised in accordance with the needs of the current historical stage. This formulation is included in the 2023 Joint Statement, which indicates that Russia could be open to the updated perspective on peaceful coexistence (compared with Xi, 2024).

The emphasis on true multilateralism manifests itself not only in the joint support for organisations such as the UN, the Group of 20 (G20), the BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), or the World Trade Organisation (WTO), but also on the approach towards global security, including non-proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, arms control, and aversion to militarisation of new domains and weaponisation of economic ties as well as new technologies, and also toward information and communication technology (ICT) and artificial intelligence (AI) issues. China and Russia are in favour of a multilateral and transparent global system of governance over the Internet while adhering to the principle of national sovereignty in the field. This approach embodies the spirit of the new world order and the community of a shared future for mankind, interconnecting inclusive, democratic, open, equal, transparent, and rational multilateralism with a global perspective and respect for the sovereignty of each country (Tian, 2020).

## **2024: HEGEMONISM AND NEOCOLONIALISM IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

On May 16, 2024, on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations, the two sides issued a Joint Statement on deepening relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic coordination, entering a new era (Президент России, 2024). Compared to analogous declarations from previous years, the ten sections of the 2024 Joint Statement are more explicit about and more critical of the hostile policies enforced by the US and its allies, paying more attention to security-related issues.

Both China and Russia are obviously aware of the strategic risks produced by the malign activities of the declining hegemon, and the tough rhetoric signals that the confrontation, stirred up by some Western countries, could result in fatal clashes, including the nuclear war (Гребенников, 2022; Ministry of National Defence of The People's Republic of China, 2024; Soldatkin & Osborn, 2024). China and Russia appeal to nuclear powers to hold special

responsibility for maintaining strategic stability and adhere to the Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races from January 3, 2022, the first statement of the five nuclear-weapon states of its kind. The two major Eurasian powers call for a global commitment to preventing the militarisation of outer space and jointly denounce Washington's "destructive and hostile double containment policy" and US attempts to reach decisive military superiority (see also Zemánek, 2023). Instead of arms race, hegemony, Cold War mentality, exclusive security, and bloc confrontation, they continue to promote the principle of equal and indivisible security, allowing for the security interests and concerns of all parties as the only viable path toward just and lasting peace.

It also applies to the Ukraine conflict, whose main cause is seen in the expansion of NATO, the long-term disregard of Russia's concerns, and the exclusive and bloc approach to security. For the first time, the recent document addresses not only hegemonism but also neocolonialism, both of which are identified with some Western countries. In contrast to *rules-based order*, chronic interference in the internal affairs of other countries, including but not limited to legal actions and confiscation of sovereign assets, politicisation of economic relations, and protectionism leading to fragmentation of the world economic system, China and Russia reiterate their commitment to the protection of national sovereignty, the construction of a stable and sustainable economic system based on inclusive economic globalisation, the democratisation of international relations, the construction of a just and rational multipolar world, and last but not least the implementation of international justice.

The strong emphasis on sovereignty, on the one hand, and shared security, development, and stability, on the other, runs like a red thread through the Joint Statement embedded in the notion of justice. The Chinese side appreciates Russia's positive efforts in all these areas. Both countries agree on the significance of bilateral cooperation for the socio-economic development and modernisation of China and Russia and its positive effects on the stability and sustainability of the world economic system and inclusive globalisation. Furthermore, bilateral defence cooperation and a high level of mutual strategic trust are considered to contribute to regional and global security.

The document says that the promotion and linking of the Russia-proposed Greater Eurasian Partnership and the China-proposed BRI create conditions for sustainable sovereign socioeconomic development of Eurasian countries, which combines sovereignty with modernisation and presents a macroregional Eurasian perspective in the role of bilateral relationship, whose priorities for the period up to 2030 were agreed on by the presidents on March 21, 2023 (Президент России, 2023а). However, a stronger emphasis on Eurasia does not weaken the global perspective on a wide array of issues with the protection of the current international system at the core. In this regard, the two sides support the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations as one of the important practical instruments at the UN level.

### SINO-RUSSIAN CONSENSUS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Discourse analysis of official documents enables us to identify the fundamentals of the Sino-Russian shared vision of global governance and world order. The two sides claim allegiance to the post-war international system based on the UN Charter and international law (*law-based order*) and the principles of peaceful coexistence, which shall be updated according to the current conditions. At the same time, they promote a progressive reform of global governance based on democratisation of international relations, inclusive economic globalisation, multipolarity, and true multilateralism, as well as justice and rationality, in contrast to unilateralism and protectionism attributed to liberal democracies. Similarly, the US-proposed *rules-based order* is denied, as it undermines the law-based UN-centred international system and imposes ever-changing rules set by a few countries on others. Therefore, Western policies are seen as a continuation of hegemonism and neocolonialism aimed at maintaining the dominance of the US and anchored in the false universality and a sense of superiority of the Western socioeconomic model (see Yeros & Jha, 2020).

Contrary to this neocolonial approach, China and Russia adhere to a civilisational paradigm, which has recently become an integral part of the political discourses in both countries. The paradigm implies the recognition of multiple modernities, multiple democracies, and multiple conceptions of human rights, diversity of civilisations, and equality between them. However,

this cultural relativism is merged with the notion of universal human values such as democracy, equality, freedom, justice, and peace. In this line of reasoning, universality arises from the agreement between members of the international community in harmony with the principles of inclusivity, equality, multilateralism, and participation rather than from an essentialist perspective, which is typical of Western mentality (Blumczynski, 2019; Delanty, 1995). The civilisational paradigm enables each country to choose its own path of development and implementation of human rights in accordance with local conditions, needs, and traditions. Importantly, it is accompanied by a holistic approach to human rights that requires the inclusion of all categories of human rights. There is no doubt that the perspective promoted by China and Russia is responsive to the interests and aspirations of the Global South, developing countries, and the world majority (CGTN, 2024).

The overlaps with the countries of the world majority can be observed in many regards, starting from the reform of global governance and ending with the emphasis on equality of civilisations and countries, sovereign and common development and modernisation, and international justice. The aversion to hegemonism and neocolonialism is accompanied by a comprehensive criticism of unilateralism, protectionism, politicisation, and weaponisation of economic relations and legal instruments, and a divisive and confrontational narrative about a clash between democracies and autocracies, which constitutes an integral part of Western discourse and creates strategic dilemmas for many countries. In addition, references to the principles of peaceful coexistence produce an allusion to the Bandung Conference, linked to developing countries in Africa and Asia and the Non-Aligned Movement, whose participants wanted to pursue an independent foreign policy and development without taking sides while opposing colonialism and neocolonialism (Dinkel, 2019). This philosophy and aspirations are present in the current Sino-Russian joint efforts.

The proxy conflict between Moscow and Washington and its allies in Ukraine accelerated Russia's pivot to the East, including China, opening the door to deepening strategic trust between Beijing and Moscow and a better reception of China-proposed global initiatives by the Russian side. Concurrently, the open confrontation accelerated Russia's efforts to counter hegemonism on a global scale. This tendency manifested in the evolution of the political discourse, in which the criticism of neocolonialism became

prominent. The article by President Vladimir Putin in *Rodong Sinmun* denounces the “rules-based order” imposed by the US as a global neocolonial dictatorship, contrasting it with a multipolar world order based on justice, mutual respect for sovereignty, and consideration of each other’s interests (Putin, 2024). The ruling United Russia party, in turn, initiated an international movement against neocolonialism, which has been joined by almost twenty political parties, including the Communist Party of China (United World International, 2024). The recent evolution of Russian foreign policy shows some revival of the tradition of Soviet anti-imperialism and support for national liberation movements. This continuity was explicitly admitted by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov, who drew parallels between the Soviet Union’s struggle against the global expansion of the West and Russia’s current role in international politics (Lavrov, 2024). This move can lead to stronger synergies between China and Russia but also to possible disagreements if realist geopolitical tendencies on the Russian part outweigh a cooperative and constructive approach toward the solution of international conflicts (see Wang, 2024).

Sino-Russian comprehensive partnership and strategic coordination is conceptualised in terms of a new type of major-power relations with the principles of non-alliance, non-confrontation, and not targeting any third party in the core. Both countries advocate universal, comprehensive, indivisible, and lasting security, which is in contradiction to the Western approach to security typical of bloc thinking and exclusive alliances. From this perspective, China and Russia oppose NATO, AUKUS, and US militarism, which sows discord, seeks decisive military superiority, preserves the Cold War mentality, and follows zero-sum logic. The two major powers share the same interpretation of the causes of the conflict in Eastern Europe, being concerned by the expansion of NATO and NATO-like military groupings around the world, which inevitably fail to comply with the principles of equal, indivisible, and universal security, as they deliver security to some countries at the expense of the others. Such geopolitical thinking is perceived as obsolete, even though some realist-leaning concepts can be found in the Sino-Russian documents as well, with the global strategic stability and international and regional balance of power in the first place.

The political interactions between China and Russia, including the political declarations adopted by the supreme leaders, show recognition of each

other's initiatives and strategies and the willingness to link them to create positive synergies. The agreement on the conjunction of the EEU and the Silk Road Economic Belt (BRI) in 2015 marked the beginning of this process, followed by an agreement on the complementarity of the BRI and the Greater Eurasian Partnership in 2019 (Novikov & Bocharova, 2024). Furthermore, both sides share an interest in promoting instruments such as the G20, the BRICS, the SCO, APEC, or the WTO to carry out reforms of the global governance system. Russia voices its support for the China-proposed Global Civilisation Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, and the Global Security Initiative, as well as the overarching normative vision of the community of a shared future for mankind. Beijing, in turn, has embraced Russia's concept of democratisation of international relations and, particularly, that of a multipolar world order, even though there are certain differences at the discourse level. Whereas Russia usually speaks of a *just multipolar order*, China has introduced the notion of an *equal and orderly multipolar world* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The People's Republic of China, 2024).

The question is whether the Russian side adapts its strategy and tactics to the new paradigm enshrined in the vision of the community of a shared future of mankind. The transition to the new world order requires that each country adopt innovative and forward-looking approaches while keeping pace with the times. A return to the traditions of Soviet foreign policy on the Russian part can yield positive results but also strengthen zero-sum attitudes and escalate the geopolitics-driven confrontation. China is moving from the Cold War-born negative coexistence to a positive and harmonious coexistence based on shared destiny, common development and prosperity, joint governance, and all-win solutions rather than a mere *modus vivendi* (王义桅, 2024). The close relationship and strategic trust between China and Russia create conditions for both countries to go in the same direction.

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