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## Размышления Си Цзиньпина о дипломатии и китайско-российских отношениях в контексте крупных изменений в международном порядке

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**Аннотация.** Современные международные отношения сталкиваются с «глубочайшими изменениями, невиданными за столетие». Эволюция международного порядка является наиболее важной характеристикой этого процесса. Как репрезентация понимания Китаем эволюции международного порядка, «Идеи Си Цзиньпина о дипломатии» считаются главным руководящим принципом современной китайской дипломатии. Они наглядно отражают фундаментальные взгляды Китая на международные отношения, политику крупных стран и международные институты, а также оказывают значительное влияние на развитие китайско-российских отношений. Основными характеристиками современной эволюции международного порядка являются формирование сложной биполярности в структуре власти, изменение доминирующих идей и диверсификация систем многостороннего сотрудничества. Столкнувшись с серьёзными изменениями в международном порядке, Китай считает, что мир вступает в период турбулентности, в котором будет продолжаться процесс перехода власти, в течение которого КНР необходимо и дальше участвовать в глобальном управлении. В «Идеях Си Цзиньпина о дипломатии» отстаивается руководящая роль партии в принятии внешнеполитических решений и выделяются три основные концепции: сообщество единой судьбы человечества, дипломатия крупных стран с китайской спецификой и новый тип международных отношений. Китай и Россия в дальнейшем продолжают поддерживать всеобъемлющее стратегическое партнёрство и координацию в новой эпохе. В то же время, столкнувшись с изменениями в доминирующих идеях, страны могут активизировать сотрудничество в области построения «сообщества единой судьбы» в новую эпоху. В ответ на изменения в многосторонних системах Китай и Россия могут способствовать их дальнейшему альянсу, тем самым развивая «новые типы международных отношений» на многостороннем уровне. Поскольку обе страны занимают значительное место в международной системе, эффективное расширение сотрудничества между Китаем и Россией принесёт большие геополитические и геоэкономические выгоды всему евразийскому региону. В дополнение к этому, взаимодействие и сотрудничество между странами неизбежно сформируют новую модель международной политики в XXI веке.

**Ключевые слова:** мысли Си Цзиньпина о дипломатии, китайско-российские отношения, глубокие изменения, невиданные за столетие, международный порядок.

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## Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy and China-Russia Relations in the Context of Major Changes in the International Order

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**Abstract.** Current international relations are facing “profound changes unseen in a century”. The evolution of the international order is the most important characteristic of this process. As a representative thought of China's understanding of the evolution of the international order, “Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy” is considered the main guiding principle of contemporary Chinese diplomacy. It prominently reflects China’s fundamental views on international relations, major-country politics, and international institutions, and will also have a significant impact on the development of China-Russia relations. The main characteristics of the current evolution of the international order are the formation of a complex bipolarity in the power structure, changes in dominant ideas, and diversification of multilateral cooperation systems. Faced with major changes in the international order, China believes that the world is entering a period of turbulence in which the process of power transition will continue, during which China needs to further participate in global governance. The Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy advocates the leadership role of the party in China’s foreign policy decision-making and points out three core concepts: a community with shared future for mankind, major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, and a new type of international relations. In the future development of China-Russia relations, both countries will continue to uphold a comprehensive strategic partnership and coordination for the new era. At the same time, when faced with changes in dominant ideas, China and Russia can engage in closer cooperation on how to build “a community of shared future” in the new era. In response to the changes in multilateral systems, China and Russia can promote further alliance, thereby developing “new types of international relations” at the multilateral level. As major countries in the international system, the effective expansion of China-Russia cooperation will bring great geopolitical and geo-economic benefits to the Eurasian region. In addition, the interaction and cooperation between the two countries will inevitably shape the new pattern of the international politics in the 21st century.

**Keywords:** Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, China-Russia relations, profound changes unseen in a century, international order.

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## Introduction

The acceleration of international order evolution is an important characteristic of international relations in the 21st century. As President Xi Jinping pointed out, “The changes in the world, the times, and history are unfolding in unprecedented ways”<sup>1</sup>. As a representative thought of China's understanding of the evolution of the international order, “Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy” is considered the main guiding principle of contemporary Chinese diplomacy. It prominently reflects China's fundamental views on international relations, major-country politics, and international institutions. The profound changes in the international order, which have not been seen in a century, are undoubtedly one of the most important propositions of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy. From the perspective of international relations, “the profound changes unseen in a century” are mainly reflected in three aspects. First, from the perspective of power distribution, the international power structure dominated by the West has been severely challenged, and the world's power center is shifting from the Atlantic-Europe region to the Indo-Pacific region. The growth of emerging economies, represented by the BRICS countries, indicates this shift. Second, from the perspective of major-country relations, today they are more competitive than cooperative. This is prominently manifested in the strategic competition between China and the United States, as well as between Russia and the United States, and Russia and Europe, which poses more challenges to the security of the major-countries' peripheries. In this context, China-Russia relations are a stabilizing factor in major-country relations. Third, from the perspective of institutional guarantees, China believes that the world still lacks effective international cooperation systems for the Global South countries, and as such is willing to become a contributor in this field.

The transformation of major-country politics is a key element in promoting the evolution of the international order. As important major countries in the current international system, the foreign strategies and policies of China and Russia are the crucial factors in shaping the international order. The Russia-Ukraine conflict, which broke out in February 2022, is an important manifestation of the current international order transformation, as well as a significant moment in Russia's foreign

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<sup>1</sup> 习近平提出，促进世界和平与发展，推动构建人类命运共同体 [Си Цзиньпин выступил с идеей содействия миру и развитию во всём мире и построения Сообщества единой судьбы человечества]. *中华人民共和国中央人民政府* [Госсовет КНР], 16.10.2022. (На кит.). URL: [https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-10/16/content\\_5718834.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-10/16/content_5718834.htm) (дата обращения: 27.05.2024).

policy shift. Sergey Karaganov, a renowned Russian scholar, believes that this crisis represents “the end of Russia’s period of trying to integrate into the international order established by the West” [Karaganov 2022]. Russia’s “Pivot to the East” strategy has also entered a new development period due to the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the transformation of the international order. Since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russia has consolidated the cooperation with traditional Eastern strategic partners such as China, India and Iran, as well as strengthened its activities in multilateral systems such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. For China, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have increasingly reinforced the concept of “profound changes unseen in a century”. Dealing with these changes will be a core issue for China’s diplomacy. The strategic partnership between China and Russia is the core pillar of China’s major-country diplomacy. In this process, China-Russia cooperation and the development of bilateral relations will become increasingly crucial in China’s foreign strategy.

### **The Main Characteristics of the Evolution of the Current International Order**

“International order” is an important concept in the study of international relations. Western, or so-called mainstream international relations theorists, as well as many scholars from non-Western countries and those from critical theory, have extensively explored the theoretical and empirical aspects of international order. In this section, the paper first discusses the research conducted by the scholars from the English school, who have had the most significant impact on the study of international order. It then reviews the various discussions and definitions put forth by the scholars of Western international relations theories. Following this, the paper outlines the discussions on international order by the scholars from non-Western countries and other critical theorists. Finally, it provides an “eclectic” summary of the elements of international order.

As a relatively important branch of the Western international political theory, the English school has conducted many theoretical and empirical studies on international order, making outstanding contributions to the advancement of research in this field. The representative figure of the English school, Hedley Bull, in his work “The Anarchical Society” systematically explained core issues such as the concept of international order. He stated that “international order is the pattern of behavior that seeks to achieve the fundamental or primary goals of the society of states or international society”. He also defined international order as “the arrangement or pattern of international activity that pursues the fundamental, primary, or universal goals of the society of states”. Bull believed that the main foundation of international order is the different states, and the international pattern and the “goals” to be pursued are its important elements [Bull 2003]. Barry Buzan discussed the transformation and evolution of international order from a historical perspective. He stated that “the social and material foundations of power underwent a dramatic change in the 19th century, and this global transformation established the international system we still inhabit today. This system is markedly different from the pre-modern system that preceded it” [Buzan, Zhou Guiyin 2015]. This indicates that Buzan, as a representative scholar of the English school, believed that the elements of international order include both social and material foundations. Additionally, global elements are a crucial part of international order. When changes in the social and material elements are encompassed within the spatial scope of “globality”, the international system and international order will undergo fundamental changes. Ian Clark also explored the issue of international order. He pointed out: “From the perspective of historical

practice, international order is essentially a dynamic process of interaction between the practices of maintaining the hierarchy and dominance of the international system and pursuing its reform” [Yan Jiaojiao 2022]. This shows that Ian Clark introduced the concept and perspective of “hierarchy” in the study of international order. He believed that the elements of international order are the international system and the various actors that either maintain its hierarchy or pursue its reform, along with their interactions.

The so-called mainstream international political theories generally refer to realism, liberalism, and constructivism. Within these three major theories, numerous sub-theories have emerged, such as classical realism, neorealism, and neoclassical realism within realism, and neoliberal institutionalism within liberalism. Scholars of these three major international political theories have conducted detailed discussions on international order from their respective perspectives. They have also, to some extent, absorbed and integrated compatible viewpoints from other schools and theories. For instance, while realism primarily emphasizes the core element of power in international politics, it also considers the importance of ideas and institutional elements. Similarly, scholars from these theories have approached the topic of international order in a comparable manner.

Realist scholars mainly discuss the definition and elements of international order from the perspective of power. However, some of them also address the ideas and institutional issues related to international order. This indicates that, while recognizing power as the core and foundational element of international order, realist scholars also acknowledge the rationality and the importance of elements such as morals, norms, and ideas to varying degrees. Edward Carr, a typical representative of realism, argued that power is the primary element of international order, but moral factors are also significant. In his book “World Order”, Henry Kissinger stated: “World order reflects the concept held by a region or civilization of an unbiased arrangement and distribution of power that it deems universally applicable. International order refers to the application of these concepts in large parts of the world – large enough to affect the global balance” [Kissinger 2015]. This shows that Kissinger also considered power or the arrangement of power to be an important factor in international order. Liberalist scholars primarily discuss international order from the perspective of institutions but still recognize the importance, and even the significance of power issues. In his book “After Hegemony”, Robert Keohane pointed out: “International regimes should not be seen as constituting a new international order that transcends states. Sovereignty remains a constitutional principle among the elements of the international system” [Keohane 2012]. He argued that international regimes should be understood alongside sovereignty, both being important elements of international order, with state sovereignty remaining the foundation for building and advancing international regimes and institutions. Constructivist scholars have discussed international order less frequently, often examining it from the perspective of ideas, norms, and other elements outside of power. Despite discussing international order less than realist and liberalist scholars, constructivist discussions on various issues related to international order, particularly the emphasis on the importance of ideas and interstate relations in international politics, provide a strong critique of related issues in liberalism and realism. This constructivist perspective offers a unique theoretical angle that contributes to the debates on the “convergence” of neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism.

Scholars from non-Western countries and those from critical theory perspectives have also engaged in discussions on various issues of international order, drawing from their respective

theoretical traditions and specific national and cultural backgrounds. Chinese scholars, based on Chinese experiences and Western mainstream international political theories, have proposed numerous insights and discussions concerning international order. Yan Xuetong, in his book “Leadership and the Rise of Great Powers”, pointed out that “since the international pattern is composed of the power structure of major countries and their strategic relationships, the leading country with more allies than its opponents has more opportunities to reshape the international order according to its own intentions. The international order can be divided into structural order and normative order” [Yan Xuetong 2020]. Zhao Tingyang, drawing from the ancient Chinese concept and philosophy of “Tianxia” (All-under-heaven), constructed what he calls the “imagined world order” of “Tianxia order”. He argues: “In order to free the world from the domination of hegemonic systems and to prevent future high-tech wars or comprehensive technological despotism, we need to create a new Tianxia system, a world order that belongs to everyone in the world, thereby transcending the hegemonic logic of the modern era” [Zhao Tingyang 2015].

As mentioned earlier, regardless of the three major mainstream international political theories or various critical theories, all schools have a certain basic consensus on the realities and state of international politics and have absorbed and summarized theories from other schools. This paper attempts to provide an “eclectic” summary and definition of the basic concept of international order. It suggests that international order is the realistic state of international politics formed by sovereign states, based on the power distribution pattern among these states, and constrained by dominant norms and institutional arrangements recognized by all sovereign states. This state is also influenced by numerous non-sovereign political actors. In this definition, the paper still regards sovereign states as the most important actors in international politics, thereby distinguishing “international order” from the broader concepts of “global order” and “world order”, which encompass more actors. At the same time, the paper identifies three main elements of international order: power distribution pattern, dominant norms, and institutional arrangements, with the power distribution pattern being the dominant one. Dominant norms and institutional arrangements exert corresponding constraints on the behavior of countries and the international order. Although the paper still considers states as the most important actors in the international order, it does not exclude non-sovereign political actors, such as multilateral organizations, from the international order. In fact, it believes that these actors also influence the development and transformation of international order to some extent. In certain regions, non-sovereign actors have a uniquely significant impact on local order.

Currently, the international order is undergoing noticeable changes in the following three elements.

Firstly, the power structure in international politics is shifting with the rise of several emerging countries. The international political landscape is experiencing significant changes as the power dynamics among countries shift and evolve. Represented by China, the “Third World” or “Global South” countries are increasingly rising and becoming powerful forces in the international order and its transformation. These countries have transitioned from being excluded from the Western-dominated liberal international order, particularly by the United States, to gradually integrating into the international order and actively promoting its transformation today. The fundamental reason for this change is the relative increase in the power of the Third World or Global South countries and the relative decline in the power of Western countries led by the United States.

Secondly, the dominant norms within the international order are also undergoing transformation. On the one hand, the trend of integrating politics and economy under the context of major-country competition is deepening. The essence of this integration lies in the increasing complexity and global nature of international political issues. Under such conditions, the dominant norms of the international order are likely to undergo a transformation towards political-economic integration. One of the main driving forces behind this shift is the U.S. perception and judgment of China and the global landscape. In the Biden administration's new "National Security Strategy" report, the U.S. directly identified the current era as an "age of competition" and defined the next decade as the "decisive decade". The Biden administration believes that geopolitical competition and global issues mutually influence and transform each other, making security threats more complex. Only by better harnessing the dynamics of the age of competition and striving to win can various threats and challenges be addressed [Wu Fan, Sun Chenghao, Cai Yang 2023]. This perspective continues the Trump administration's attitude towards international dynamics and relations with other major countries and sets the tone for the power structure of the international order for some time, further advancing the development of dominant norms toward political-economic integration.

On the other hand, with the growing importance of non-traditional security issues, especially the worsening global climate problems, countries worldwide have reached a consensus on the severity of climate and ecological issues. Various domestic documents reflect this consensus. Moreover, related conventions and international institutions are also results of the transformation of dominant norms towards emerging governance concepts. In climate governance, the Global South countries are increasingly playing their roles and making contributions. Furthermore, the potential and need for cooperation between the Global South and Global North are also deepening. Studies on climate case laws and climate-related international and domestic laws in the Global South point out that "some climate decisions in the Global South are novel and far-reaching in their findings and remedies provided to claimants. These cases can serve as models for similar cases elsewhere in the Global South" [Peel, Lin 2019]. This demonstrates that there is a certain interactive relationship between the dominant norms of global order and the behavior of state actors. When dominant norms shift, they influence how state actors perceive international order and shape their responses. Once a large number of state actors recognize the new dominant norms, their foreign policies and actions in international politics reflect the transformed dominant norms of the international order.

Finally, with the changes in the power structure and dominant norms, the subsequent transformation is seen in the institutional arrangements based on these elements. The most significant transformation is the development and enhancement of the international speech power of the Global South countries. There are increasing international organizations and institutions led by the Global South countries, with BRICS being the most representative. From June 2009 to January 2024, BRICS established regimes and expanded twice, evolving into a global organization that includes China, Russia, India, Brazil, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Iran, and Ethiopia, covering Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America. "The historic expansion of BRICS has led to qualitative changes in the composition, cooperation regimes, and functional roles of the BRICS cooperation regimes" [Zhai Kun 2023]. The BRICS regimes, encompassing more countries, better represent the common interests of the Global South and their pursuit of international regimes and new international order led by themselves.

## Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy in the Context of Major Changes in the International Order

The most significant characteristic of current international relations is that the world is undergoing dramatic changes. The primary task of Chinese diplomacy is to respond to these changes and leverage the opportunities they bring to shape China's significant role in the new international order. Broadly speaking, the current changes in the international order that China faces include the following features.

First, the world is entering a period of turbulence. As Xi Jinping stated in his speech at the National Security Work Symposium on February 17, 2017, “To understand the national security situation and maintain national security, we must grasp the rules based on the major changes in the international order” [Feng Weijiang, Zhang Yuyan 2022]. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China also elaborated on the major changes occurring in the international order and its future direction: “On one hand, the historical trend of peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit is unstoppable. The popular will and the general trend determine that the future of humanity will ultimately be bright. On the other hand, acts of hegemony, bullying, and zero-sum games pose serious threats. The deficits in peace, development, security, and governance are worsening, presenting unprecedented challenges to human society. In the future, the direction humanity will take depends on the choices made by the peoples of various countries”<sup>2</sup>.

Secondly, China needs to strengthen its participation in international governance. The Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China, the establishment and development of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank led by China, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) regime initiated by ASEAN are effective practices of emerging major countries in pursuing a new international order and promoting international institutions led by themselves. These initiatives have driven the diversification and competitive development of institutional arrangements during the transformation of the current international order. It is worth noting that RCEP, a regional institution in East Asia, is also a significant reflection of changes in institutional arrangements during the transformation of the international order. Countries such as Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines, traditional allies of the United States, are now actively seeking institutional arrangements and related policies that align more closely with their economic development interests and are more independent rather than following the United States. This transformation of institutional arrangements also reflects the trend of power distribution pattern shifting towards the Global South and the Global East. China hopes to play a more important role in this process.

Given China's increasingly complex surrounding environment and diplomatic landscape, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy undoubtedly becomes the fundamental principle for advancing major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era and peripheral diplomacy. Overall, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy can be divided into two levels. At the decision-making logic level, Xi Jinping emphasizes the leadership of the Party in China's diplomacy, stressing that the leadership of the Communist Party of China is the fundamental guarantee of Chinese diplomacy

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<sup>2</sup> 习近平：高举中国特色社会主义伟大旗帜 为全面建设社会主义现代化国家而团结奋斗——在中国共产党第二十次全国代表大会上的报告 [Си Цзиньпин: Высоко неся великое знамя социализма с китайской спецификой, сплочённо бороться за всестороннее строительство модернизированного социалистического государства. Доклад на XX съезде КПК]. *中华人民共和国中央人民政府* [Госсовет КНР], 25.10.2022. (На кит.). URL: [https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-10/25/content\\_5721685.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-10/25/content_5721685.htm) (дата обращения: 27.05.2024).



and that major diplomatic decisions should be coordinated and promoted by the Central Committee. This thought also emphasizes the importance of the sinicization of Marxism for Chinese diplomacy and that Chinese diplomacy should serve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

As for the policy-practice level, especially concerning China's understanding of the contemporary international order, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy primarily comprises the following three core concepts.

First, the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. According to most Chinese scholars, major-country relations are the fundamental force driving changes in the international system. In major-country diplomacy, China emphasizes the non-confrontational nature of China-U.S. relations, the stability of China-EU relations, and the cooperation between China and Russia. The U.S. has already regarded China as its main competitor, and this view is unlikely to change in the short term. In his China policy speech in May 2022, Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated that China-U.S. relations would remain competitive for the next decade<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, China's primary goal is to keep China-U.S. relations from crossing the “guardrails” and prevent competition from escalating into a full-scale confrontation. For relations with Europe, China emphasizes the continued development of stable, predictable economic and cultural ties, promoting exchanges between the two major markets.

China-Russia relations are the most stable factor among major-country relations. The current partnership-based, non-alliance cooperation between the two countries provides maximum flexibility and room for adjustment. Both China and Russia believe that their cooperation does not target third countries. Therefore, despite the impact of Western sanctions and international situations on pragmatic cooperation between China and Russia after February 2022, Beijing continues to regard bilateral relations as a “model of new major-country relations”<sup>4</sup>, and their future remains the most stable among all major-country relations.

Second, a community with a shared future for mankind. As China's comprehensive national strength rises, it can exert greater influence on the transformation of the international order. The most important area is the construction of international institutions. China believes that the lack of effective cooperation mechanisms for developing countries and the Global South is a significant flaw in the post-Cold War international institutional arrangements. In recent years, China has proposed multiple cooperation frameworks. Among them, representative achievements include the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). For China, within the framework of the “community with a shared future for mankind”, countries can form more effective interdependence through stronger institutional ties, thereby changing the “zero-sum game” and “security dilemma”. This concept is derived from Chinese classical philosophy and China's practical experience in post-Cold War interactions with East Asian countries. With the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy increasingly targeting China, China has also focused more attention on neighboring regions. The emergence of new regional economic cooperation multilateral frameworks, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), is a result of this focus.

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<sup>3</sup> Antony J. Blinken. The Administration's Approach to the People's Republic of China. *Department of State*, May 26, 2022. URL: <https://www.state.gov/the-administrations-approach-to-the-peoples-republic-of-china/> (accessed: 27.07.2024).

<sup>4</sup> Си Цзиньпин. Упорно двигаться вперёд, к новым перспективам дружбы, сотрудничества и совместного развития Китая и России. *Российская Газета*, 20.03.2023. URL: <https://rg.ru/2023/03/20/uporno-dvigatsia-vpered-k-novym-perspektivam-druzhby-sotrudnichestva-i-sovmestnogo-razvitiia-kitaia-i-rossii.html> (дата обращения: 27.05.2024).

Third, the new type of international relations. In the face of the rapid evolution of the international order, existing interstate relations, especially those between major countries, are increasingly unable to address the challenges of the 21st century. Therefore, countries need to establish sustainable bilateral relations, namely a “common and sustainable security concept”. Unlike other Chinese leaders, Xi Jinping views active participation in global governance as a crucial source of China's legitimacy in the international system. Consequently, China has shown a more proactive attitude towards addressing global issues than before. For example, the Chinese government has set goals to peak carbon emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060<sup>5</sup> to address the development of the field of climate change. At the same time, China also pays more attention to rule-making in new international governance areas, including cyberspace, maritime, Arctic, and digital fields. From the U.S. perspective, China's increasing involvement in international governance poses a challenge to its global hegemony. As a result, current China-US strategic competition has become more focused on emerging industries such as high technology, industrial chains, and the formulation of industrial regulations.

As the guiding principle of China's foreign policy today, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy reflects the impact of 21st-century international order changes on China's overall foreign relations. As an indisputable major country in today's international system, changes in China's diplomatic philosophy will undoubtedly shape the transformation of the international order, profoundly affecting all of China's foreign relations, including China-Russia relations.

### **China's Diplomacy and China-Russia Relations in the Context of Major Changes in the International Order**

Under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, the following aspects are considered key directions for the future development of China's diplomacy in response to the rapidly evolving international order.

First, the major-country relations. Major-country relations directly affect the stability of the world order and are the most critical direction of China's diplomacy. China places great emphasis on stabilizing China-U.S. relations. The U.S. has come to regard China as its sole long-term systemic competitor. Despite China's increasingly firm responses to the strategic competition posed by the United States, it still hopes to stabilize China-U.S. relations in order to create a favorable development environment. China also views its relations with Russia as a model of major-country relations, advocating for the continued deepening of strategic cooperation with Russia. For Beijing, the China-Russia strategic cooperation is vital for the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Second, relations with neighboring countries. Compared to previous Chinese leaders, Xi Jinping pays the most attention to China's diplomacy with its neighbors. Beijing considers neighborhood diplomacy as its primary task. The Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is the most significant potential risk in China's neighborhood diplomacy. China hopes to encourage North Korea, South Korea, and the United States to maintain relatively stable relations, as this concerns

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<sup>5</sup> 力争 2030 年前实现碳达峰, 2060 年前实现碳中和——打赢低碳转型硬仗 [Всеми силами стремиться достичь пика выбросов углерода к 2030 г., а к 2060 г. достичь углеродной нейтральности – победить в тяжёлой борьбе за низкоуглеродную трансформацию]. 中华人民共和国中央人民政府 [Госсовет КНР], 02.04.2021. (На кит.). URL: [https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2021-04/02/content\\_5597403.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2021-04/02/content_5597403.htm) (дата обращения: 27.05.2024).

the security of China's northeast region. Additionally, China advocates for stable and predictable bilateral relations with neighboring countries such as Japan and India, aiming to minimize the adverse effects of the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy on China's regional security.

Third, a community of shared future for mankind. The “community of shared future for mankind” is the most prominent achievement of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy. Beijing advocates replacing the Western-led universal values with the common values of all humanity, emphasizing development and security. In terms of development, Beijing continues to push for economic globalization and multilateralism in economic activities, with Xi Jinping placing a strong emphasis on green and low-carbon development. In the report of the 20th National Congress, President Xi has repeatedly emphasized on environmental issues. In the security domain, China advocates for a transparent and sustainable security framework in Asia, especially East Asia, while opposing the formation of alliances that create a zero-sum game world.

As for China-Russia relations, Russia is undoubtedly China's most crucial external partner. Changes in China's diplomatic concepts and the evolution of the international order will collectively shape China's policy towards Russia. In addition, the development of China-Russia relations must align with the characteristics of the changing international order to maximize the benefits of the partnership. The new shocks brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict since 2020 have further impacted the international order. In this context, China-Russia relations should seek new cooperation topics to maintain the stability of the strategic partnership amid the evolving international order.

The stable and friendly development of China-Russia relations is seen as a key factor in China's diplomacy and plays a unique role in promoting Eurasian integration. After the Ukraine crisis in 2014, the Chinese government actively responded to Russia's “Greater Eurasian Partnership” proposal and reached a consensus to establish a comprehensive Eurasian partnership<sup>6</sup>. Amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the accelerated transformation of the international order, how China and Russia enhance political trust and effectively improve their cooperation levels in the intense Eurasian geopolitical competition is not only crucial for the development of Russia's “Pivot to the East” strategy but is also an important consideration for China's future diplomatic layout.

Firstly, maintaining the continued development of the China-Russia strategic partnership will be a key component of “major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics” in the face of changes in the international power structure. In the political domain, China and Russia need to reach a consensus on further deepening their cooperative relationship during the transformation period of the international order to ensure the healthy development of the new type of major-country relations between the two countries. The sanctions imposed on Russia by the U.S. and European countries after the Russia-Ukraine conflict have not only heightened the threats Russia faces in the geopolitical security field but also profoundly affected the overall geopolitical competition landscape in the Eurasian region. The strengthening of the U.S.-Japan-South Korea trilateral cooperation and the enhanced geopolitical status of Central Asia have made regional political competition more complex, impacting the overall foreign strategy and national security of China and Russia. Against this backdrop, the cooperation between China and Russia to achieve mutual benefits and maintain regional stability will provide a solid foundation for the international

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<sup>6</sup> 中华人民共和国和俄罗斯联邦联合声明 [Совместное заявление Китайской Народной Республики и Российской Федерации]. *新华网* [Синьхуа], 26.06.2016. (На кит.). URL: [http://www.xinhuanet.com//politics/2016-06/26/c\\_1119111908.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com//politics/2016-06/26/c_1119111908.htm) (дата обращения: 27.06.2024).

order. Firstly, in opposing U.S. regional hegemonic actions, it is important to further prevent the “NATO-ization” of the Asia-Pacific region. The increased power projection of NATO in the Asia-Pacific region after the Russia-Ukraine conflict threatens the common security interests of China and Russia and increases the anxiety of Eurasian countries regarding the geopolitical security environment. With Japan and South Korea clearly aligning with NATO and the U.S.-Japan-South Korea trilateral relationship strengthening in the military domain, maintaining the stability of the development space in the Eurasian region is crucial for both China and Russia. Secondly, in deepening cooperation among countries in the Eurasian region, both China and Russia are willing to expand their cooperation scope. Under the backdrop of Russia facing comprehensive suppression by the “collective West” and the Biden administration's implementation of the “Indo-Pacific Strategy”, strengthening cooperation with Central Asia, ASEAN, and other regions and major countries on the basis of China-Russia friendly cooperation is the key to promoting the “Greater Eurasian Partnership” and stabilizing the healthy development of major-country relations in the region. Facing common fundamental interests, China and Russia signed a joint statement in 2023 on deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership in the new era, emphasizing that the two countries have a non-alliance, non-confrontational, and non-targeting third-country relationship model. They will continue to jointly build the “Belt and Road” Initiative and the “Greater Eurasian Partnership”<sup>7</sup>.

Secondly, in light of the changes in dominant ideologies, China and Russia can engage in closer cooperation on building a “community of shared future” for the new era. In the economic domain, the alignment of the China-Russia Belt and Road Initiative with the Eurasian Economic Union can deepen economic ties between the two countries while promoting the “Greater Eurasian Partnership”. The Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union, as external strategies of China and Russia, both aim to integrate the resources of Eurasian countries and maintain regional development stability. Especially in the context of long-term comprehensive suppression by the West after the beginning of the special military operation, the alignment and cooperation initiatives between China and Russia can alleviate the complexity of Russia's economic development situation under sanctions to some extent and further promote the implementation of integration in the Eurasian region. Additionally, the alignment of economic cooperation initiatives between China and Russia highlights the importance of cooperation in mitigating existing development obstacles and consolidating regional economic and security environments in the context of the international order transformation. Chinese scholars believe that China and Russia can enhance their cooperation in the Eurasian region by building regimes and expanding topics in response to new realistic challenges [Chen Xiaoqin, Zhang Tingting 2023]. Under the context of comprehensive economic and trade, semiconductor, and other sanctions imposed on Russia by the U.S. and Europe, as well as the global green development concept of climate governance, topics such as strengthening the “de-dollarization” process, exploring high-tech research and development cooperation, and promoting green energy cooperation are crucial. On the one hand, these efforts can accelerate China's economic growth and enhance mutually beneficial cooperation with the countries along the Belt and Road. On the other hand, they can help Russia bypass Western sanctions to some extent through its

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<sup>7</sup> Совместное заявление Российской Федерации и Китайской Народной Республики об углублении отношений всеобъемлющего партнерства и стратегического взаимодействия, вступающих в новую эпоху, в контексте 75-летия установления дипломатических отношений между двумя странами. *Администрация Президента России*, 16.05.2024. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/6132> (дата обращения: 16.06.2024).

“Pivot to the East” strategy, thereby deepening China-Russia relations and jointly promoting the “Greater Eurasian Partnership”, which holds significant strategic importance.

Thirdly, facing changes in multilateral systems, China and Russia can promote further alignment to develop the “new-type international relations” at the multilateral level. For a long time, in the liberal international order established and led by the United States, many international institutions and regimes created and dominated by the U.S. were the only options available to countries globally. Currently, the emergence of “diverse and competitive multilateral institutions” has become another significant feature of the international order transformation. With the rise of the emerging market countries and the collective ascent of middle powers, a series of new regional and multilateral cooperation regimes are providing more institutional participation options for the Global South countries. As the power structure shift, the reform and transformation of the existing international regimes and institutions is an inevitable trend in their historical development. Some existing international regimes and institutions have become outdated relative to today’s international political realities. For example, many international institutions founded by the Western developed countries are still controlled and managed by these countries, with limited influence for emerging major countries. These outdated international institutions failed to meet the needs and demands of emerging countries. The Asia-Pacific region is currently witnessing the emergence of multiple regional cooperation mechanisms, including RCEP, CPTPP, and IPEF. The diversity of cooperation mechanisms is restructuring industrial and value chains across East Asia and the entire Eurasian region. Furthermore, promoting a global partnership platform based on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS will facilitate the establishment of well-ordered and predictable international relations.

### Conclusion

The outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis marks a further acceleration in the transformation of the international order. In this era of change, strengthening the strategic partnership between China and Russia will contribute to maintaining stability in their relations. Several aspects of cooperation are particularly important for China-Russia collaboration in this changing era.

Firstly, jointly promoting multipolarity in the world. Advancing multipolarity is a significant goal in China's foreign policy. It is also a crucial area for interaction between China and Russia. In the recently released National Security Strategy Report by the Biden administration, both Russia and China are seen as threats to the U.S. hegemony<sup>8</sup>. The United States has also designated the coming decade as a critical period of major-country competition. Therefore, jointly promoting multipolarity and preventing the United States from further compressing the strategic space of China and Russia through the “NATO-ization” of the Indo-Pacific region will be an important area of future cooperation between them.

Secondly, jointly maintaining strategic stability in the Eurasian continent. With the rise of populism and hegemonism, strategic stability in Eurasia is facing severe challenges. Beijing and Moscow are the key forces in maintaining stability in Eurasia. Both countries can work together within frameworks such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS to uphold regional stability. Additionally, a positive China-Russia-India triangular relationship is beneficial for Eurasia.

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<sup>8</sup> National Security Strategy. *White House*, Oct 12, 2022. URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf> (accessed: 27.06.2024).

Thirdly, expanding cooperation in emerging fields. Both Beijing and Moscow recognize that climate change issues will significantly impact future international political developments. Therefore, while continuing cooperation in the field of traditional energy, China and Russia should accelerate joint research and utilization of non-traditional and renewable energy sources. Moreover, facing U.S. pressure in high-tech fields, both countries can expedite their collaboration in high-tech domains.

As major countries in the international system, the effective expansion of China-Russia cooperation will bring great geopolitical and geo-economic benefits to the Eurasian region. Meanwhile, in a changing world, the areas of cooperation between China and Russia should also evolve to reflect changes in the international order. As the world undergoes “profound changes unseen in a century” and is guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, China's foreign policy is consistently aimed at upholding global peace and stability. In this context, the cooperation between China and Russia is facing new issues and opportunities. Their interaction and cooperation in these new areas will undoubtedly shape a new pattern of international politics in the 21st century.

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