

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Bilateral Relations between China and Russia

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Abstract: *The current Russian-Chinese relations are officially defined by the parties as relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction that are entering a new era. The global cost of infectious diseases like the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic is rising as the world becomes more financially integrated. Outbreaks spread faster thanks to urbanization, mass migration, and international trade. They disrupt the economy and basic social functions like schools, health care, and employment. Global trade means the supply of goods from affected areas could be threatened. Investors expect greater returns on new investments the longer an outbreak lasts to compensate for higher risks. This article offers recommendations for strengthening bilateral relations between China and Russia.*

Keywords: China-Russia relations; COVID-19 pandemic; economic growth;

The main principles and directions of development are reflected in the Treaty on good-neighborliness, friendship and cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China of July 16, 2001. In total, more than 300 intergovernmental agreements and agreements have been concluded that cover almost all areas of cooperation.

Deepening relations with China is a priority of Russian foreign policy. This course is sustainable, long-term, and meets the objectives of strengthening good-neighborliness and ensuring the development of both countries.

April 26-27, 2019 The President of the Russian Federation took part in the Second high-level forum on international cooperation "One belt, one road" in Beijing. Bilateral talks between the leaders of Russia and China were held, and Vladimir Putin was awarded the title of honorary doctor of Tsinghua University.

On June 5-7, 2019, Chinese President XI Jinping paid a state visit to Russia. The heads of state held talks, as well as a meeting between the Chinese leader and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. They signed joint statements on the development of Russian-Chinese relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction entering a new era, and on strengthening global strategic stability in the modern era, as well as 25 intergovernmental, interdepartmental and corporate agreements. The Chinese President took part in the St. Petersburg international economic forum. The ceremony of awarding XI Jinping the title of honorary doctor of St. Petersburg state University was held.

On November 13, 2019, the heads of state of Russia and China met on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Brasilia. On December 2, 2019, the launch ceremony of the Russian-Chinese gas pipeline was held, which was attended by the leaders of the two countries in a teleconference format. On March 19, April 16, may 8, and July 8, 2020, the heads of

Russia and China held telephone conversations on bilateral relations, the fight against the new coronavirus infection, and the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Victory in the great Patriotic war.

On February 15, 2020, the foreign Ministers of Russia and China held a conversation on the sidelines of the Munich security policy conference. Since the beginning of the pandemic in the fashion industry, between the Ministers of foreign Affairs maintain regular contacts in the phone format.

On June 24, 2020, state Council member and defense Minister Wei Feng he visited Moscow at the head of a Chinese delegation that took part in a parade marking the 75th anniversary of victory in the great Patriotic war.

Russia and China are working closely in the fight against the coronavirus outbreak. On February 5, 2020, the Russian defense Ministry aircraft evacuated 144 citizens of the Russian Federation and a number of CIS countries from Moscow. Wuhan and Hubei provinces on the territory of Russia. 9 February 2020 in the city Russian humanitarian aid with a total weight of more than 23 tons was delivered to Wuhan, which, at the request of the Chinese side, included various medical personal protective equipment. On February 4-7, 2020, a delegation of specialists from the Russian Ministry of health was sent to Beijing to exchange experience in the fight against the virus. Russian specialists from the research Institute of epidemiology and Microbiology. Pasteur and the Russian Ministry of health joined the WHO mission that assessed the situation with the spread of the virus in China.

From the first days of April 2020, Russian aerospace forces aircraft began delivering significant volumes of personal protective equipment purchased in China from Shanghai in batches, including about 80 million medical masks and 700 thousand medical protective suits. On April 2, 2020, the first batch of humanitarian cargo from China weighing 25 tons

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arrived, and on May 17 and 22, 2020, the second batch with a total weight of 103 tons arrived. Russia also received significant amounts of personal protective equipment and medical devices purchased in China. April 11, 2020 a group of Chinese doctors arrived in Moscow at the invitation of the Moscow government to provide advice on how to combat the spread of coronavirus infection.

According to Russian statistics, in 2019, bilateral trade reached 110.9 billion US dollars (+2.5%), including Russian exports to China – 56.8 billion US dollars (+1.4%), imports from China – 54.1 billion US dollars (+3.6%). In the first half of 2020, these indicators amounted to \$ 49.15 (-5.6%), \$ 28.22 billion (-5.3%) and \$ 20.93 billion (-6%), respectively.

2020-2021 has been declared the years of Russian-Chinese scientific, technical and innovative cooperation. As part of this large – scale interstate project, it is planned to organize more than a thousand events-conferences, exhibitions, forums, competitions for joint research projects and educational seminars. The opening ceremony of the Exhibition was held on August 28, 2020 in the format of a teleconference.

China is a key partner of Russia on the world stage. The approaches of both countries to the fundamental issues of the modern world order and key international problems coincide or are close. On this basis, close cooperation in international Affairs is maintained. In addition to regular meetings of foreign Ministers during mutual visits and on the sidelines of international forums, the Russian and Chinese foreign ministries have a system of scheduled consultations at the level of Deputy Ministers and Department Directors. The Russian-Chinese link has firmly established itself among the key factors in maintaining international security and stability, establishing a multipolar world order, democratizing global governance mechanisms, and ensuring the rule of international law.

A. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, the world community faces a new challenge associated with the rapid spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. Restrictive measures aimed at preventing an explosive increase in the incidence of diseases have led to a significant reduction in international mobility, suspension of economic activity in many States and temporary gaps in supply chains, which are expected to cause significant harm to the world economy and the processes of globalization in general. The spread of the pandemic in various regions of the world, especially those with high conflict potential, can lead to a significant aggravation of the security situation. The spread of the disease has also highlighted a number of negative trends in public sentiment, causing a surge in xenophobia towards certain national groups. The pandemic has had an additional negative impact on Sino-American relations: with the spread of the virus that originated in China in the United States, the American side increasingly began to sound accusations against Beijing. At the same time, the epidemic of a new coronavirus infection has shown that Russia and China are ready to help each other not only in words, but also in deeds. On January 31, 2020, Vladimir Putin sent a telegram to Xi Jinping expressing his sincere sympathy and support all

victims of the coronavirus. The Russian side sent humanitarian aid to China, including 23 tons of medical masks, gloves, and protective clothing, as well as sent medical experts.

Although the reliability of the climate of mutual trust that has developed in Russian-Chinese relations has been further confirmed, the COVID-2019 pandemic will significantly hinder practical interaction between the two States. Against the backdrop of a global recession and economic downturn in both countries, in the first quarter of 2020. China's GDP fell by 6.8%, and the Russian economy in 2020, according to various forecasts, will sink by 3-8%. At the end of the year, it is expected to reduce the volume of economic cooperation. The positive trend of progressive growth of trade turnover that has been outlined in recent years will stop, especially given the temporary shutdown of a number of production facilities, difficulties with cargo delivery and falling energy prices. The pandemic will also limit investment interaction: in the new conditions, it is difficult to conclude large transactions and enter the market of the partner state. In addition, restrictions imposed in Russia and China on the entry of foreign citizens have led to an almost complete halt in humanitarian contacts. It is obvious that even with the favorable development of the situation and the gradual lifting of restrictive measures in the second half of 2020, high indicators in the field of tourism and scientific and educational exchanges, which the two countries are proud of, will not be achieved this year. In addition, the quality and effectiveness of educational and cultural cooperation is often reduced in remote formats. The pandemic will also make it difficult for Moscow and Beijing's priority international associations, the BRICS and the Shanghai cooperation organization (SCO), whose summits are due to take place in July 2020. Under the Russian presidency in St. Petersburg. Meetings of associations at the highest level annually become significant events and are accompanied by consultations at various levels in a wide range of areas. A number of events were postponed, but as of mid-May 2020, there was no information about the postponement of the summits themselves. Although video formats are actively used in the context of anti-epidemic measures, the work plans of associations in any case will require significant adjustments.

B. Strategic interaction in global management.

It is important to achieve new results in the economy, security and humanitarian cooperation. In the economic sphere, countries need to help improve the quality and volume of trade, simplify trade procedures, and increase mutual investment through a more favorable investment environment. Should implement large-scale projects to encourage active investment cooperation between SMEs of the two States to expand financial cooperation, to improve the functioning of the settlement system between China and Russia, to increase the share of calculations in national currencies in bilateral trade, to expand cooperation in the field of payment systems and Bank cards, to encourage participation of domestic financial institutions in transactions on the bond market. China and Russia should develop cooperation in the energy sector, in particular in the field of oil and gas production and processing. It is necessary to develop infrastructure connectivity between the

two countries, strengthen cross-border cooperation, facilitate customs procedures, improve the quality and efficiency of logistics services, stimulate cooperation in the field of agriculture and expand trade in high-quality agricultural products.

China and Russia should jointly improve the global governance system and cooperate to build a community of common destiny for humanity. China and Russia continue to support fair WTO reforms, protect the interests of developing countries, and promote trade liberalization and facilitation. China and Russia are promoting the reform of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, fighting for the right to vote of developing countries, and promoting cooperation within the BRICS framework. The US has taken advantage of the global pandemic to put pressure on its competitors, China and Russia. Unilateralist and protectionist trends are growing, and uncertainty in the development of the world economy is increasing. The implementation of the common task of China and Russia to maintain global strategic balance and improve the multilateral system has become much more complicated.

C. The essence and content of partnerships within pandemic.

Within the framework of the China-Russia comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation entering a new era, it is necessary to constantly promote the development of endogenous cooperation, consistently realize the cooperative potential and strive to achieve practical results, and encourage non-governmental exchanges so that the peoples of the two countries feel involved in the development of China-Russia relations. Recommendations:

- 1) Provide mutual support in domestic policy, jointly resist external forces that use a policy of double standards in relation to the internal Affairs of the two countries, and resolutely prevent actions of third countries aimed at harming the internal stability or territorial integrity of China or Russia.
- 2) Constantly optimize the trade structure of the two countries, promote mutual market opening, and continue expanding the Chinese-Russian electronics trade and high-tech goods, as well as agricultural products and services. In the context of global distribution, a new type of coronavirus infection technology can unlock the potential of cross-border e-Commerce.
- 3) Create a stable energy partnership. China is increasing its purchases of Russian oil to provide Russia with market support to the best of its ability. The use of the Power of Siberia gas pipeline makes it possible to increase the scale of Russian natural gas imports.
- 4) Jointly promote multilateral cooperation in the field of security, economy, trade and other areas in the SCO.
- 5) Strengthen diplomatic cooperation, participate jointly in global and regional governance, strongly oppose unilateralism, and cooperate on a number of important international issues within the UN and other multilateral organizations.
- 6) Against the background of the global recession caused by a new type of coronavirus infection, participate jointly in global and regional governance, resolutely oppose unilateralism and cooperate on a number of

important international issues within the framework of the UN and other multilateral organizations.

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