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Note from Head CS3

Dear All,

We are happy to publish the seventh issue of the *Sinometer: The China Strategic Monitor*, a monthly magazine by the Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation(CS3), USI.

Today, the world is reeling under two threats, first, the Russia-Ukraine war and the second, the Coronavirus Pandemic. Both these issues have shaken the global scenario to an all new high and has left the other countries what would be their path ahead.

The first section of this issue includes an analysis on the Joint Statement on the International Relations entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development between Russia and China where they highlighted issues like the coronavirus pandemic, multipolarity, regional security, economic globalisation and other mutual challenges.

The purpose of this issue is to give a holistic perspective of China from a world view and analyse the China related issues especially with regard to the Ukraine issue and evacuation of Chinese citizens from Ukraine. The issue also deals with joint space mission between China and European nations and also discusses the 30th anniversary of the China-ROK diplomatic relations.

We hope that the *Sinometer* inspires more students and researchers to look at China with a closer eye.

**Maj Gen RPS Bhaduria, VSM(Retd)
Head, Centre for Strategic Studies and
Simulation(CS3), USI**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NEWS ANALYSIS: RUSSIA AND CHINA: A FUTURE-ORIENTED STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP.....4

NEWS DEVELOPMENTS

PRESIDENT XI’S FOCUS ON BUILDING COMMUNITY TO FACE GLOBAL ISSUES.....7

AUSTRALIA’S CLAIM FOR PLA VESSEL’S LASER DEPLOYMENT7

UNFAVOURABLE OUTCOME OF BEIJING OLYMPICS 2022.....8

CHINESE BLUE PAPER 2022 FOCUSES ON FIRST COMBINED FLIGHT.....8

SINO-EUROPEAN JOINT SPACE MISSION8

CHINA WARNS OF PRESSURE ON FOREIGN TRADE.....9

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER AIMS FOR PEACE IN THE UKRAINE CRISIS9

CHINESE EMBASSY EVACUATES 600 CITIZENS FROM UKRAINE.....9

CHINA AS THE LARGEST INVESTOR IN AFRICA.....10

CHINESE, ROK FOREIGN MINISTER’S VIRTUAL MEETING.....10

CHINA WELCOMES UN HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF TO VISIT XINJIANG.....10

LINK FEST.....11

Analysis

Russia and China: A Future-Oriented Strategic Partnership

Gitanjali Sinha Roy

On 4 February 2022, the Russian President Vladimir Putin visited China to participate in the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics. During this meeting, both the leaders, President Vladimir Putin and President Xi Jinping issued a “Joint Statement on the International Relations entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development” and agreed to work on multiple issues like the coronavirus pandemic, multipolarity, regional security, economic globalisation and other mutual challenges.¹



Figure 1: Russia-China Cooperation. Source: Author's Annotated.

Russia-China Cooperation

Russia and China have close relations with one another as they are immediate neighbours and this is accompanied by centuries old traditions of friendship and trust. Thereby, this makes the relationship between the two countries strong and also proves a greater path for greater partnership. Russia and China have a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination” and they are entering a new era which means that both the countries have reached greater heights in the domain of efficiency, responsibility and aspirations for the future.² Further, the two countries celebrated their “20th anniversary of the Treaty of Good Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation” which were governed by principles of equality, freedom from political and ideological circumstances, considering one another’s interests and also respecting the past interactions.³

¹ Joint statement on the International Relations entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development, *Xinhua Editor*, 2 February 2022. <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/20220203/c11f134fb822487a83a8361d61d9c1af/c.html>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The two leaders spoke about economic and trade relations and greatly focused on business ties. The leaders aimed to emphasis on the multiple resources like finance, industry, technology and human resources and all these would help in their attempt to develop the long-term issues. In 2021, the mutual trade between Russia and China increased by more than a third along with exceeding the record level of 140 billion U.S. dollars.⁴ There are also other important areas of cooperation in the domains of investment, manufacturing, industrial, agricultural, mining, mineral processes and infrastructure construction.⁵ The two countries have had an agreement in 2019 between the Government of Russia and the Government of China on payments and settlements. Further, Russia and China have aimed to achieve a stable economic growth and improve the well-being of their people and also work on strengthening their competitiveness and access their challenges.

In the realm of energy partnership, the two countries aim to cooperate on working towards greater relations. Russia aims to supply oil and gas to China on the long-term bases and also implement large scale joint projects. They have agreed to work on the construction of four new power united at Chinese nuclear power plants with the participation of Rosatom State Corporation which was launched 2021.⁶ The advantage of this sector is that energy security partnership would increase to greater heights between Russia and China and that would benefit them regionally and globally.

Scientifically, Russia and China aimed for the Russian-Chinese Scientific and Technological Innovation in 2020-2021 and together, both the countries worked on opportunities in developing collaborations and partnerships in the domains of information and communication technologies, medicine and space exploration especially projects like the use of national navigation systems and International Lunar Research Station project.⁷ During this meeting, President Putin thanked China for assisting them in launching the production of the Russian Sputnik V and Sputnik Light vaccines in China and thanked China for making the necessary protective equipment available for Russia.⁸

Another point of convergence between Russia and China is multipolarity. The two countries highlighted the US aims to fit everyone into a brief of democracy and both, Russia and China have developed their own take on democracy.⁹ The two countries aimed for a multipolar world where the actions of the US and the other western nations would end up dividing the international system based on their ideology, alliances and blocs which would have a greater impact on the universal centrality of peace and prosperity in the world. Further, the two countries spoke on international organisations like the BRICS, the Russia-India-China Framework, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and multilateral frameworks like G20 where they discussed about international cooperation in the domain of economic growth, vaccine diplomacy and certificates, energy transformation and optimisation and reduction of risks of digitalisation.¹⁰

The two countries focused on Eurasia and actively develop a sub-national cooperation and so, the modernisation of the Baikal-Amur Mainline and the Trans-Siberian Railway.¹¹ Further, by 2024, it believed to increase their capacity in greater volumes in transit cargo and reduced transport time. With the port facilities in Russia is growing, it will only further emphasis on the

⁴ Joint statement on the International Relations entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development, *Xinhua Editor*, 2 February 2022. <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/20220203/c11f134fb822487a83a8361d61d9c1af/c.html>

⁵Ibid.

⁶ Joint statement on the International Relations entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development, *Xinhua Editor*, 2 February 2022. <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/20220203/c11f134fb822487a83a8361d61d9c1af/c.html>

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹ Joint statement on the International Relations entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development, *Xinhua Editor*, 2 February 2022. <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/20220203/c11f134fb822487a83a8361d61d9c1af/c.html>

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

Russian and Chinese economies.¹²

The two leaders also discussed cooperation in the domain of conservation of nature and how together they can work on shared ecosystems especially in areas of local and cross-border cooperation. They also welcomed the initiative of launching new outreach and educational programs to introduce their citizens to the history and present-day linkages between the two countries. They also highlighted the importance of declaring 2022 and 2023 as the Years of Sports Exchanges.¹³

Way Ahead

In the future, Russia and China can work together to deal with the commitment to work in being the uniting factor on the Eurasian region. Both the countries can work together to improve connectivity which would further help the Eurasian Economic Union and the Belt and Road Initiative. They can further work in the domain of creating sustainable development way for the region of Arctic. In the domain of the developmental projects, both the countries worked in providing assistance and resources. Countries can work with China for its initiative of a China-led Global Development Initiative along with the United Nations and other countries. China and Russia can work to supply and provide vaccines to poorer countries and work on epidemiological science and path breaking research and development. Russia has firmly supported China on the Taiwan issue and has always believed in the 'One China Policy'. Both the countries have raised their opinion on the expansion of NATO and concerns over AUKUS and also, affirmed to not use nuclear weapons and promote peace and constructive use of nuclear science.

Conclusion

At present, Russia has declared war on Ukraine and the situation is a catastrophic disaster with the damage on human life and infrastructural. Russia has unleashed fragments of a third World War and many believe that China was in the know-how about Russia declaring war on Ukraine. Unfortunately, both the leaders of Russia and China aim to in their own ways to create disasters and have made the world a difficult place to live in. China unleashed the Coronavirus Pandemic and Russia has declared the war on Ukraine. Though, the friendship between Russia and China has been growing immensely especially in the current times, their main goal is to destabilise the US and the western powers, so as to declare their own ideology and create an alternative ideological base and govern the world on their own rules.

One country which is in the middle of all this chaos is India as India has very good relations with Russia since 1971 and China being its immediate neighbour has a relationship which is hot and cold. Similarly, India in the last few years has become close to the US camp and its allies like Japan and Australia and also strengthen friendship with other European countries like the UK, Germany and France. With India torn in between, many believe that India might be yet again heading towards its stance of being non-aligned especially since India has abstained to vote in the United Nations against Russia. The diplomatic path for India remains rather chalky and only time will tell how India plans to maintain its balance in this multipolar world.

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¹²Joint statement on the International Relations entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development, *Xinhua Editor*, 2 February 2022. <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/20220203/c11f134fb822487a83a8361d61d9c1af/c.html>

¹³Joint statement on the International Relations entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development, *Xinhua Editor*, 2 February 2022. <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/20220203/c11f134fb822487a83a8361d61d9c1af/c.html>

NEWS DEVELOPMENTS

President Xi's focus on building community to face global issues

Chinese President Xi Jinping has aimed for solidarity and cooperation in order to deal with the deadly Coronavirus Pandemic.¹⁴ He emphasised that there was an essential need to appeal for global solidarity in the international community for great health for all.¹⁵ In 2021, China launched 2 billion doses of vaccines for 120 countries and some international organisations.¹⁶

The aim of doing this is to bring out a positive image of China globally as China has faced a huge backlash for the spreading the Coronavirus. Also, during the Pandemic, China was involved in heightened hegemonism and bullying globally especially in areas of the South China Sea, East China Sea and the India-China Border. China has realised that it has faced a global boycott from most countries especially the QUAD members and that has created an economic impact on its supply chain and reduced China's impact as global manufacturing hub.

Thereby, now to change the global wave in its favour, China is working towards creating greater collaborations, consultation, joint contributions and aiming for shared benefits towards developing countries. China is creating an environment of multilateralism along with trying to adhere to the UN Charter.

Australia's claim for PLA vessel's laser deployment

Recently, China made accusations against Australia that it had pointed towards China's PLA Navy Flotilla a laser and also that an Australian aircraft flew very closely to Chinese vessels and provocatively dropped sonobuoys.¹⁷ Chinese authorities also mentioned that Chinese vessels maintained safe, standard and professional actions adhering to the international law and practice.¹⁸

China has opined "We demand Australia to immediately stop the provocative, dangerous actions like this, stop groundlessly blaming China, so as to avoid affecting the overall bilateral and mil-to-mil ties."¹⁹

On the contrary, the Australian Department of Defence opined that the Australian P-8A maritime patrol aircraft detected a laser emanating from one of the two PLA Navy vessels and the illuminating the aircraft while flight over Australia's northern approaches.²⁰ Further, the Australian Media called this event a serious safety incident and Chinese move rather unprofessional and unsafe which would make it also endangered for the lives of the Australian personnel".²¹

It has to be understood that China and Australia are at loggerheads with one another since last year. Australia has mustered up the courage to fight against Chinese economic bullying and so, Australia has started to reduce its dependence on China. Australia also cancelled two major infrastructural projects and this has also angered China. Australia has been instrumental in creating a global boycott against China as well. All this has triggered China even more and China aims to unnecessarily create false allegations against Australia.

¹⁴<https://english.news.cn/20220220/4fd41928b6de4020a7307c03923b59d0/c.html>

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202202/1252761.shtml>

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202202/1252761.shtml>

²¹Ibid.

Unfavourable outcome of Beijing Olympics 2022

Recently, the Beijing Olympics was wrapped and was attended by 20 countries. The Games were boycotted outside of China due to the several human rights issues prevalent in China. President Xi Jinping aims for rejuvenation of China. In order to consolidate his position and show his relevance, the Games was a much-needed thing as most of the countries boycotted it and with economic issues, China needed to reinstate itself globally.²²

It was believed that the Beijing Games would be grand success especially as it would help consolidate President Xi Jinping's position and prove his self-worth but also help garner more friends for China in the diplomatic forums.

Chinese Blue paper 2022 focuses on first combined flight

China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) announced in the blue paper that China has realised that its three firsts in its space station mission in yet another ambitious aerospace year would reach 50 scheduled launches and eventually, the country would reach its first combined flight of six spacecrafts and the first would be in taikonauts and second in the orbit simultaneously.²³

According to the Chinese Blue paper 2022, "a total of six manned missions are planned to fully complete a space station with the Tianhe core cabin as the control center, and the Wentian and Mengtian experimental modules as the main experiment platforms that are attended by crew year-round".²⁴

Further, according to Liu Feng, chief designer of the rocket, "in 2022, in particular, the CASC revealed that it will launch two manned missions with Long March 2F carrier rockets and the Long March 2F Y14 vehicle, which has remained in emergency rescue status at the launch pad as backup for the current Shenzhou-13 mission, is in good operating conditions."²⁵

Though, this space station would face new challenges like module transposition combined work of large and small robotics arms, and cargo exit.²⁶

It is important to understand that China is gaining predominance in the space domain and so, it is taking steps to make efforts in the domain to create more space stations. The future of wars would soon be seen in the space arena.

Sino-European Joint Space Mission

Recently, China and Europe declared their Joint Space Mission, Solar Wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer (SMILE) and successfully carried out the test of its payload magnetometer in Europe.²⁷

Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) spoke about the magnetometer which arrived in the European Space Research and Technology Center (ESTEC)) of the European Space Agency (ESA).²⁸

²² <https://apnews.com/article/winter-olympics-sports-beijing-legislature-mao-zedong-bf3630017349478029d8d9ddfafa03c1>

²³ <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202202/1251888.shtml>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ <https://english.news.cn/20220223/337be81b7e3c4aedb931c9811430c2fe/c.html>

²⁸ Ibid.

This effort would pay result by the end of 2024 and would change the dynamics of joint space mission. It would also change the way the relations between China and the European countries function as Europe is the hub for pathbreaking scientific development and research.

China warns of pressure on foreign trade

On 1 March 2022, a senior Chinese official spoke about China's economy facing multiple challenges internally and globally and this included huge pressure from uncertainty from global trade and less domestic consumption.²⁹ According to the Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao, "Foreign trade, which helped drive the world's second-largest economy last year, will be confronted by uncertain external demand and a high statistical base from 2021".³⁰

The issue is severe as there are labour shortages, the costs of the high value products have increased even more and this has led to pressure on the small and medium sized companies.³¹ Further, the Coronavirus pandemic has also impacted China's manufacturing economy in a very big way ad this accompanied with the global boycott where industries have shifted out of China.

China aims to broaden its markets and create greater avenues for foreign investment in the industrial sector especially in the domains of advanced manufacturing and strategic new industries. By doing this, China would be able to increase its foreign trade and revive its economy.

Chinese Foreign Minister aims for peace in the Ukraine crisis

Chinese Foreign Minister and State Councilor Wang Yi urged "all parties to take due responsibilities and make efforts towards peace on the Ukraine issue, instead of just escalating tensions, creating panic and even playing up war threat" at the 58th Munich Security Conference on a virtual link.³²

Recently, the Russia and China Summit happened and many believe that China was very well aware of Russia's plan of invading Ukraine and this statement by China is only a diplomatic filler to show the world its concerned stance for the Ukraine war.

Chinese Embassy evacuates 600 citizens from Ukraine

400 Chinese students were evacuated from Odessa and 200 Chinese citizens were evacuated from Kiev. Fan Xianrong, the Chinese Ambassador opined that "the Chinese Embassy in Ukraine has carried out a series of works concerning the evacuation and we have set up a 24/7 communication mechanisms by providing additional contact channels".³³ A total of 6000 Chinese nationals have registered for evacuation and soon, all will be safely evacuated.

China has been making several attempts to evacuate its citizens and has been in talks with Russia to help them.

²⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/china-warns-huge-pressure-foreign-trade-economic-challenges-mount-2022-03-01/>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² <https://english.news.cn/20220220/dc6f9e108f4c4064b1541ff4b49a618a/c.html>

³³ <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202203/1253558.shtml>

China as the largest investor in Africa

China has been the largest investor in Africa in the last 10 years and this has led the African economy to a path of improvement in 2021 and this improvement is mainly seen in the external environment which consists of China's active support and other African export market capacity. Also, the number of jobs which has been increased in Africa due to the Chinese is 18,562 jobs a year.³⁴ China and Africa cooperate in fields where they work on reducing poverty, investment, industrial upgradation and economic growth.

The Chinese growth model is taking shape in Africa. Africa, a continent mostly neglected by most countries' benefits maximum from the Chinese investment and Indian investment. Further, Africa is rich in mineral resources and that has led China in a big way in Africa. China has not evolved as the largest investor in Africa but has taken a lead among all the other countries with regard to economic growth, market, investment and infrastructural development in Africa. Coronavirus also saw how China was instrumental in helping African nations and this has also helped China win the trust of the African nations and so, African nations find it easier, sustainable and valuable to invest with China.

Chinese, ROK Foreign Minister's Virtual Meeting

The year of 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and the Republic of Korea and both the countries aimed to look at better relations.³⁵ Both the countries discussed issues of the Ukraine crisis, the Korean Peninsula and also agreed to work on greater cooperation among themselves.

It has to be understood that the relations between the two countries need to strengthen as the Republic of Korea's economy is dependent on China. Also, China maintains excellent relations with North Korea and so, China acts as a balancer between the two Korea's. Also, the region of East Asia can turn volatile any moment with Chinese aggressiveness and North Korea's ballistic missiles testing and so, there is a need to continuously work on building stronger ties between themselves.

China welcomes UN Human Rights Chief to visit Xinjiang

Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is in talks with China for a visit to Xinjiang. The State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi opined "China has long expressed its welcome to Bachelet, and is discussing with Bachelet and her office on the schedule, and Bachelet will see a Xinjiang where peace and stability are maintained and people of all ethnic groups live in harmony during her visit".³⁶

This visit is important as China wants to depict itself as a decent country respecting the Human Rights of people in the Xinjiang region. Also, there has been a lot of global backlashes about Xinjiang towards China and so, China realises that this visit actually is important to rectify its image globally and also in front of multilateral organisations like UNHR and put across their narrative of how the region of Xinjiang is a hub of terrorism and extremism and so, China has been working to look after its citizens by operating surveillance systems.

³⁴ <https://english.news.cn/20220228/f640902f8ba647be9dab9837c035420d/c.html>

³⁵ <https://english.news.cn/20220228/7d7d1a7d009a4d518f6eba6204cfe52f/c.html>

³⁶ <https://english.news.cn/20220220/e0d5335cc27444668e5ea67a1120a2ac/c.html>

LINK FEST

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Beijing Hour	Political	Podcast	http://chinaplus.cri.cn/podcast/list/17	Daily Podcast published by China Radio International
Caixin	Economic, Technology	Newspaper	https://www.caixinglobal.com/	
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China.mil	Security	Website	http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/	Website of the People's Liberation Army
ChinaBrief	Political, Economic, Security, India	Website	https://jamestown.org/programs/cb/	Published by the Jamestown Foundation
Global Times	Political, Economic, Security, India	Newspaper	https://www.globaltimes.cn/	
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NYU Shanghai Centre's China India Biography	India	Website	https://cga.shanghai.nyu.edu/databases/china-india/china-india-bibliography/	A reading list catered to Sino-Indian relations
People's daily	Political, Economic, Security	Newspaper	http://en.people.cn/	
South China Morning Post	Political, Economic, Technology, Security	Newspaper	https://www.scmp.com/	
Sup China	Cultural	Website, Newsletter, Podcast	https://supchina.com/	
White Papers published by the Chinese Government	Political	Website	http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whiteteaper	Contains English translations of all white papers published by the Chinese government
What's on Weibo	Cultural	Website	https://www.whatsonweibo.com/	Started by ManyaKoetse
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