Don’t Wake Up Evil While It’s Quiet
Russia’s Response to China’s Growing Influence in Central Asia

Brian G. Carlson
PhD candidate
Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)

Abstract: As China and Russia grow closer together strategically, they are also seeking to reach an accommodation in Central Asia. After Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt during a speech in Kazakhstan in September 2013, Russia initially reacted warily. However, China and Russia sought to achieve an understanding on this issue, culminating in the May 2015 announcement that the two countries would seek to link the Silk Road Economic Belt with the Eurasian Economic Union, Russia’s integration project in the region. Russia’s apparent willingness to accept China’s growing strength and even predominance in Central Asia poses something of a puzzle. Russia traditionally regards the region as its backyard and seeks to maintain its influence there, as in other post-Soviet regions. It might therefore be expected to resist China’s inroads more strongly, especially in light of the long-term threat that a powerful China could pose. This paper analyzes the calculations behind Russia’s acceptance of China’s growing influence in Central Asia, including the value that Russia places on its overall relations with China, as well as possible ways that Russia could benefit from China’s development of Central Asia.

One of the most intriguing questions about the strategic rapprochement between Russia and China in recent years concerns the future of their relations in Central Asia. Moscow ruled the region for more than a century during tsarist and Soviet times, and post-Soviet Russia has sought to preserve a sphere of influence. For the past several years, however, the strongest challenge to Russia’s influence in the region has come from China, which has rapidly consolidated its presence in Central Asia’s economies. China’s Belt and Road initiative, especially the continental aspect known as the Silk Road Economic Belt, signals China’s long-term commitment to the region, which could come at Russia’s expense. A potential clash of interests in Central Asia could constrain the development of the vaunted Russia-China “strategic partnership.”

To date, no such clash has occurred. The two countries address regional issues within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and regularly stress their shared interests and commitment to regional cooperation. In May 2015, Russia and China pledged to link the Silk Road Economic Belt with the Eurasian Economic Union, the Russian-led regional integration project. Whatever reservations Russian leaders may harbor about China’s presence in Central Asia, they
refrain from voicing them publicly. The united diplomatic front that Russia and China maintain, however, does not conceal the fundamental truth on the ground in Central Asia: China is becoming the dominant external power in the region, and Russia increasingly accepts this new reality.¹

Acquiescence in China’s growing regional influence is not, of course, Russia’s preferred outcome. In 2005, Russian President Vladimir Putin famously called the collapse of the Soviet Union the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century.² Russia would prefer to be the dominant power in Central Asia and, if not to restore the Soviet Union, then at least to preside over a significant reintegration of former Soviet territories, including those in Central Asia.

If Russia were so inclined, it could mount a tough response to the Belt and Road, rather than seek an accommodation with it. Russia still holds many levers of influence in Central Asia and conceivably could adopt a variety of measures designed to thwart China’s growing influence. Russia’s policies toward Ukraine since the fall of 2013 demonstrate its determination to resist not only further NATO expansion to the east, but even a closer association between former Soviet republics and the European Union. Russia could have responded in a similar way to China’s growing influence in Central Asia, or at a minimum it could have criticized the initiative rhetorically, as India has. The analogies are not perfect—China has not sought to draw the Central Asian countries into its own security or economic organizations that exclude Russia, nor does the Belt and Road assist any Russian rival in the way that it does India’s adversary, Pakistan—but nevertheless these two cases present a contrast to Russia’s policies toward China.

**A shifting balance and the search for accommodation**

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia has attempted to maintain and strengthen its influence in Central Asia in several ways. One early attempt, the formation of the Commonwealth
of Independent States (CIS) enabled a “civilized divorce” of the former Soviet republics but failed to garner much loyalty or to achieve much integration. The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) institutionalizes Russia’s leading role in regional security but has never become an effective, fully fledged security alliance. Among the factors that have constrained the CSTO’s influence are the Central Asian countries’ wariness of Russia’s intentions, rivalries among the Central Asian countries, and the eventual withdrawal of Uzbekistan, one of the region’s strongest military powers.³

The focus of Russia’s current efforts at regional integration is the Eurasian Economic Union. In 2010, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus formed a customs union. The following year, Putin revived an older proposal by Nursultan Nazarbaev, the president of Kazakhstan, to create the Eurasian Economic Union. The three countries signed a treaty in May 2014 to establish the union, which went into effect on January 1, 2015. Kyrgyzstan and Armenia subsequently joined. Putin has called for further integration, leading eventually to the formation of a newly christened Eurasian Union that would involve some degree of political integration. Other members, especially Kazakhstan, have insisted that the organization should limit itself to economic, not political, integration.

Alexander Lukin, a leading Russian foreign policy thinker and expert on China, argues that Putin has already succeeded in creating an independent center of power in Eurasia.⁴ Putin’s primary goal is to create a new Russian-led “pole” in a multipolar world. If successful, this center of power could serve as a counterweight not only to Western influence in Eurasia, but to Chinese influence as well.⁵ The customs union’s system of common external tariffs, which required Kazakhstan to raise many tariffs, diverts some regional trade away from China. This issue is especially pressing in Kyrgyzstan, which imports large volumes of cheap Chinese consumer
goods. Within the framework of the SCO, Russia has also blocked Chinese proposals to establish a free trade area and a regional development bank.

Despite these efforts, China’s advance in Central Asia is clear. Beginning in the 1990s, China made large investments in the Central Asian energy sector. The greatest milestones were the construction of oil and gas pipelines extending from the region to China, which spoiled Russia’s aspiration to maintain a monopoly over Central Asia’s energy export pipelines. The Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline opened in 2005, followed in 2009 by a gas pipeline that originates in Turkmenistan and passes through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan before reaching the Chinese border. China’s inroads into the Central Asian energy sector have been so successful that regional energy competition between Russia and China has largely disappeared as a salient issue.

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s call for the creation of the Silk Road Economic Belt, which came during a speech in Astana, Kazakhstan, in September 2013, aroused some anxiety in Russia. Russia’s concerns centered on uncertainty about China’s intentions and about Russia’s place in China’s plans. Russian officials refrained from criticizing the proposal publicly, but such concerns did appear in the Russian media.

The Russian and Chinese governments, meanwhile, embarked on a diplomatic effort to reach an understanding about the relationship between their Central Asian projects. An important first step came in February 2014, when Xi attended the Winter Olympics in Sochi. During his meeting with Putin, the two leaders discussed “joint construction of the Silk Road economic corridor.” By the time of Putin’s visit to China in May of that year, the two sides issued a joint declaration in which Russia expressed its positive appraisal of the Silk Road Economic Belt and of China’s willingness to consider Russia’s interests. These efforts culminated in the joint declaration issued during Xi’s visit to Moscow in May 2015, in which Russia and China pledged
to link the Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Economic Belt. Since then, the Russian expert community has devoted considerable attention to the search for ways to achieve this linkage.

Several factors contribute to Russia’s willingness to accommodate China’s growing clout in Central Asia. These include the value that Russia places on the overall relationship with China, the willingness of China to reach an understanding about the two countries’ interests in the region, the lack of a viable alternative to cooperation with China in the region’s affairs, and the potential for Russia to benefit from China’s presence. The long-term nature of, and uncertain prospects for, China’s ambitious plans also gives Russia considerable lead time to calibrate its response.

The China-Russia strategic rapprochement at the global level

Relations between Moscow and Beijing have grown steadily warmer since the 1980s, when Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev sought and achieved normalized relations with China. This trend continued in the post-Cold War era. At times, especially during the initial years following the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia sought to join the West and paid comparatively little attention to China. Eventually, Russia’s disillusionment with the West pushed it in China’s direction. The two countries share similar views on a wide range of global issues, especially their discomfort with the dominant role of the United States in the international system. This convergence of interests led to the formation of a strategic partnership. The mainstream view in both countries opposes a formal alliance, but the two countries have engaged in tactical cooperation at times to resist U.S. foreign policy.

The Ukraine crisis accelerated the rapprochement between Russia and China. Facing diplomatic isolation and Western sanctions, problems that plummeting oil prices compounded,
Russia turned to China both for diplomatic support and for an economic lifeline. Russia’s “pivot to the East” actually preceded the Ukraine crisis, but the crisis accelerated it. For China, Russia provides an additional counterweight to U.S. power, as well as a safe “rear” at a time when it faces tension in relations with other countries along its periphery. To be sure, the two countries’ interests do not fully converge. China abstained from a UN Security Council vote that would have condemned Russia for its annexation of Crimea. Russia, meanwhile, maintains neutrality on China’s maritime disputes.

A divergence of views on some issues has not, however, thwarted the relationship’s development. A think tank report published in 2016, co-authored by Russian and Chinese experts, argues that, in the security sphere, “both states have closely approached the line that separates strategic partnership from military-political alliance,” though neither state wishes to cross this line. Recent events, in the view of some analysts, offer further evidence that China-Russia relations are growing closer and are becoming increasingly significant in world politics.

Russia joined China in condemning the U.S. decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system in South Korea and in arguing that U.S. policy had provoked North Korea. Furthermore, while officially maintaining neutrality on China’s territorial disputes in the South China Sea, Russia seemed to edge closer to China’s position. President Vladimir Putin supported China’s rejection of the July 2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague that denied its expansive claims. He backed China’s position that outside powers such as the United States should stay out of these disputes. Russia and China also conducted joint naval exercises in the South China Sea in September 2016. “Both sides can carefully avoid the word ‘alliance’,” writes Vasily Kashin, a Russian expert on China, “but this is already something much bigger than ‘good-neighborliness’ or even ‘strategic partnership’.”
The prospect of a geopolitically significant China-Russia bloc—if not a full alliance, then at least a quasi-alliance involving close political coordination—seems more plausible than it did even a few years ago.\textsuperscript{14} Yan Xuetong, a Chinese international relations scholar, argues that China and Russia, both of which face increasing strategic pressure from the United States, should form an anti-Western alliance.\textsuperscript{15} As this alliance takes shape, he argues, China’s influence will continue to grow in Central Asia, and Russia will accept this reality.\textsuperscript{16}

The political consensus in both China and Russia continues to oppose the formation of such an alliance, a point that the two countries reiterate regularly in joint declarations and other diplomatic statements.\textsuperscript{17} Some Russian critics argue that Russia’s pivot to the East, including its outreach to China, has failed to garner the promised rewards, especially in the economic sphere.\textsuperscript{18} Other experts acknowledge that results in the economic sphere have been slow in coming. They argue, however, that the expansion of bilateral economic ties between China and Russia will be a long-term process, and any expectation that China could quickly replace the West as a source of foreign direct investment was unrealistic. More importantly, it is a convergence of political interests, not economics, that provides a solid foundation for the China-Russia relationship.\textsuperscript{19} With both countries facing tension in their own regions, friendly relations with the other are crucial. In this context, Russia cannot afford to introduce tension into its relationship with China by aggressively challenging China’s moves in Central Asia.

\textbf{China’s strategic reassurance of Russia in Central Asia}

Within the context of an overall friendly relationship, China has sought to reassure Russia about its intentions in Central Asia. In his speech in Astana, Xi articulated China’s “Three No’s” in the region: China does not interfere in the region’s domestic politics, does not seek the right of
leadership in the region’s affairs, and does not seek a sphere of influence in the region.\textsuperscript{20} Xi’s message, in the view of Chinese scholars, was intended to offer reassurance not only to the Central Asian countries themselves, but also to Russia.\textsuperscript{21} As China pursues its ambitious aims in the Belt and Road, it recognizes the importance of winning Russia’s support.\textsuperscript{22} If China were to implement the Silk Road Economic Belt in a way that damaged relations with Russia, writes Zhao Huasheng, a leading Chinese expert on Russia and Central Asia, then China would risk “for the sake of a little, losing a lot.”\textsuperscript{23}

Russia and China emphasize that their interests in Central Asia converge to a significant degree. Zhao Huasheng argues that Russia and China share common interests in support for the security of existing borders, the struggle against terrorism, support for regional stability, the effort to limit U.S. and NATO military presence in the region, and opposition to “color revolutions.”\textsuperscript{24} China’s interests in the region, in Zhao’s view, rank in the following order, from greater to lesser importance: first, the struggle against terrorism and the acquisition of energy resources; second, economics and the SCO; and third, geopolitical interests and border security.\textsuperscript{25}

This hierarchy of Chinese interests, Lukin argues, should be acceptable to Russia.\textsuperscript{26} It also establishes the preconditions for a potential “division of labor” in which China would serve as an engine of economic development, with special focus on infrastructural investment, while Russia would continue to play the main regional security role through the CSTO.\textsuperscript{27} It remains unclear whether such an arrangement would be viable over the long run, however. As China’s investments in Central Asia expand, it may be tempted to increase its regional security role in order to protect them. The upheaval in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 prompted some discussion in the Chinese scholarly community about a possible increased role for China in regional security.\textsuperscript{28} In March 2016, during a visit to Afghanistan, the chief of the PLA general staff proposed a regional anti-terrorism alliance
of China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. Russia’s exclusion from this grouping raised some eyebrows in Moscow. The attack on the Chinese Embassy by a suicide bomber in Bishkek in April 2016 underscored China’s security concerns.

Whether or not such a division of labor can serve as the basis for a long-term accommodation of Russian and Chinese interests in Central Asia, the two countries have, to date, confounded expectations that they would fall into a heated strategic rivalry in the region. To the extent that a great game is being played in Central Asia, Zhao Huasheng writes, the players are Russia and the United States, whose geopolitical interests in the region clash. The lack of a strategic rivalry in Central Asia between China and Russia, he writes, is a function of both the positive state of their overall relationship and their lack of competing geopolitical interests. Because China is focused on economic development rather than expanding its geopolitical influence in Central Asia, Russia does not perceive China’s regional policies as threatening.

Influential Russian scholars affiliated with the Valdai Discussion Club endorse this view, arguing that Russia-China relations in Central Asia can develop a positive-sum character, as opposed to the zero-sum nature of Russia’s interactions with the West in this region. In the long term, however, geopolitical influence tends to follow economic influence. If China were to shift to a policy of more overtly seeking an enhanced geopolitical position in Central Asia, then Russia might be forced to adjust its strategy.

**If you can’t beat them, join them**

Even if Russia were determined to block China’s growing economic influence in China, it has few options for doing so, at least in terms of normal economic competition. Russia is simply unable to compete with China, the world’s second-largest economy, in the economic sphere. It
cannot match China’s ability to provide capital for investments in infrastructure, consumer goods for import, or markets for export of hydrocarbons and other goods. Any effort to thwart these advantages would be futile and counterproductive, in the view of many Russian officials and scholars.\textsuperscript{32} One Russian scholar, resigned to China’s growing influence, cited the Russian proverb Не буди лихо, пока оно тихо (Ne budi likho, poka ono tikho, or “Don’t wake up evil while it’s quiet”).\textsuperscript{33}

Unable to resist China’s growing regional influence, and unwilling to run the risks associated with attempting to do so, Russia now seeks to benefit from China’s presence. Russian leaders have encouraged the country’s expert community to make extensive study of ways to link the Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Economic Belt.\textsuperscript{34} Russian experts, in turn, argue that Russia should engage in multilateral dialogue with China regarding infrastructure projects. Otherwise, China would be likely to proceed with its plans by pursuing bilateral or even multilateral dialogue with the Central Asian countries, leaving Russia isolated.\textsuperscript{35} Russian experts therefore stress the need to strengthen coordination within the Eurasian Economic Union in order to present China with a united front and to strengthen the union’s bargaining position.\textsuperscript{36}

Cooperation in the development of transportation infrastructure, especially railroads, is one area that Russian officials and scholars view as promising. In view of its ambitious plans for increasing rail shipments to Europe, China will need to expand rail capacity beyond its borders in the coming years. Officials from both Russia and China have expressed interest in linking the Silk Road Economic Belt with the Trans-Siberian Railroad, as well as the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM), another railroad in the Russian Far East. China could strengthen rail connections from its own territory to these lines, either passing directly across the Russian border, or first crossing through Mongolia. However, China has little incentive to rely on this route for shipment of goods
to Europe because its own domestic high-speed rail network already extends westward all the way to the border with Kazakhstan. Instead, efforts to link the Silk Road Economic Belt with the Russian Far East are likely to focus on the transport of goods produced in China’s Northeast to Pacific ports in the Russian Far East for onward shipment to other destinations in Asia, rather than on trade between Asia and Europe. The Russian Far East could also benefit from China’s interest in developing Arctic shipping lanes.37

Expanded Chinese rail shipments to Europe are therefore likely to focus on the first two of three routes—northern, central, and southern—for China’s proposed Eurasian Transcontinental Railroad. The northern route would pass from Xinjiang into Kazakhstan before splitting into two branches. The first branch would pass around the Caspian Sea to the north before entering Russian territory, connecting with Kazan, continuing to Moscow, and then passing through Brest, Belarus, and on to Europe. The second branch would arrive at the Caspian Sea port of Aktau, Kazakhstan, from which cargo would be offloaded onto ferries for the trip to Baku, with onward transport by road to the Black Sea ports of Poti and Batumi, Georgia, or by rail to Kars, Turkey. This branch would closely resemble the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), which was launched in the early 1990s.38 Under this scenario, the second branch of the northern route would bypass Russian territory. However, some versions of this route envision Caspian Sea ferry shipment from Aktau to Makhachkala, capital of the volatile Russian province of Dagestan, with onward transport either by automobile to Tbilisi or by rail to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk and then by ferry to Constanta, Romania.39

The central route, after passing from Xinjiang into Kazakhstan, would continue through Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, and Turkey before arriving in Europe. In addition to its role as a conduit to Europe, this route would also provide rail access for Chinese goods to the burgeoning
Iranian trading ports of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar. The southern route, extending from China through Pakistan, would pass from Kashgar, Xinjiang, through Islamabad and Karachi before terminating at the port of Gwadar. This route relates more directly to the Maritime Silk Road for the 21st Century, the seagoing component of the Belt and Road, than to overland connections to Europe, and is therefore of less interest to Russia than the northern and central routes.

Russia naturally would prefer that the Belt and Road focus on the northern route’s first branch, which would pass through western Russia. This would channel commercial activity through Russia’s own territory, allow Russia to earn transit fees, and improve the quality of rail infrastructure in the European part of Russia. Both the northern route’s second branch, if it were to bypass Russian territory, and the central route stand as competitors to the route through Russia. If China were to focus on either of these options at the expense of the Russian route, then Russia would be left largely on the sidelines of the Silk Road Economic Belt.

Some Russian scholars believe that their country has strong arguments to make in favor of China’s focusing on the line passing through Russian territory. Although this line would be longer than one requiring ferry transport across the Caspian, it would nevertheless be a safer option, in the view of these scholars, considering the risk of political instability in countries along the latter route. Such concerns were, after all, part of the reason that the TRACECA project eventually became moribund. Further complicating the central route’s prospects are its requirements for multi-modal transport, involving not only rail but also transport by ferry and auto. A route passing through Central Asia, Iran, and Turkey similarly would incur significant political risk. Focusing on the northern route through Russian territory, these scholars argue, could ease friction between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Economic Belt. This route would facilitate
increased volumes of Chinese exports, which would compensate for China’s losses from the higher tariffs imposed by the customs union.42

The main downside of the northern route, from Russia’s perspective, is that it would decrease interest in the shipment of goods from East Asia to Europe via the Trans-Siberian Railroad. This, in turn, would hurt efforts to revitalize Siberia and the Russian Far East. However, the Trans-Siberian Railroad’s prospects for becoming a major transcontinental railway are slim in any case. If China were to invest heavily in the northern route, this would at least promote the modernization of the Trans-Siberian Railroad’s western sections.43

Having already built an extensive high-speed rail network on its own territory, China might also consider building a high-speed rail link to Europe. An official document issued by the Chinese government in March 2015 outlining plans for the Belt and Road calls for the construction of a Beijing-Moscow Eurasian high-speed transit corridor.44 During Chinese Premier Li Keqiang’s visit to Moscow in October 2014, China pledged a major investment in the construction of a high-speed rail line between Moscow and Kazan, which could eventually become one link in a Beijing-Moscow high-speed line. However, experts calculate that a high-speed railway linking China with Europe would become profitable only if it could attract 7-8 million passengers per year. The unlikelihood of attracting such a high passenger flow casts doubt on whether such a high-speed line will come to fruition.45 The Moscow-Kazan high-speed rail line is currently frozen because China insists on financing conditions that would make the project appealing to Russia only in the unlikely event that the line became commercially viable.46

During the months following the May 2015 declaration on linking the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Eurasian Union, the two countries made little initial progress toward this goal. In October 2015, the Eurasian Economic Commission, an organ of the Eurasian Economic Union,
took on the task of preparing a “road map” for the union’s interactions with China.\textsuperscript{47} In March 2017, this commission presented China with a list of 40 proposed transport projects.\textsuperscript{48} In the effort to link the two projects, Russian experts identify a divergence of interests between Russia and China. Russia seeks to obtain concrete agreements on infrastructure, trade, and other economic interests in the near term, whereas China’s priority is to simplify the trade and investment regimes between the two sides.\textsuperscript{49} For China, the SCO would be an ideal platform for linking the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Eurasian Economic Union.\textsuperscript{50} However, in addition to Russia’s resistance to the formation of an SCO free trade area and development bank, the impending entry of India and Pakistan could also complicate efforts to make the SCO into the focal point for harmonizing the interests of Russia and China in Central Asia.

Whether any of the infrastructure projects that Russia favors will reach fruition remains uncertain, but for now, Russian leaders are intent on pursuing them. As they do so, the potential geopolitical significance of China’s plans is unlikely to escape their notice. China’s ultimate motivation for implementing the Silk Road Economic Belt could prove to be, in the words of one Russian scholar, “not only future economic benefits, but also geopolitical calculations and hopes of building in Eurasia a ‘base of growth’ for a future great Eurasian power.”\textsuperscript{51} This concern might become acute if overall Russia-China relations were to deteriorate, or if China were to abandon Xi’s “Three No’s” and seek political dominance in Central Asia. Russian policymakers and scholars are also aware of the risk that the Eurasian Economic Union could ultimately be subordinated to China’s plans.\textsuperscript{52} Such concerns are not Russia’s focus at present, however. If China is going to realize its ambitions for the Silk Road in any case, then Russia at least wants to reap some of the benefits.
The ultimate success of the Belt and Road, however, remains uncertain. Chinese scholars view the initiative as a long-term plan, requiring perhaps 30 years or longer. This gives Russia time to calibrate its response. China announced the establishment of a $40 billion Silk Road Fund in 2014, but to date only six deals have been concluded with financing from this source. China appears to have become more cautious about financing costly and economically questionable infrastructural projects abroad since 2015, when the Shanghai Stock Exchange crashed and the risks associated with China’s domestic debt burden became increasingly apparent. Eurasian rail transport is approximately twice as fast as sea transport, but also roughly twice as expensive, calling into question its long-term competitiveness. Most of the goods that China produces for export to Europe originate from factories in coastal regions, rather than in the western parts of the country, making sea transport still more attractive relative to rail shipments.

To date, Russia has reaped only limited benefits from the Belt and Road. The Silk Road Fund’s activities in Russia have been limited to investments in the Yamal LNG project and in Sibur, a Russian petrochemicals company co-owned by Gennady Timchenko, a close friend of Putin’s who is under Western sanctions. The Eurasian Economic Union is still awaiting China’s response to the list of 40 proposed transport projects that the Eurasian Economic Commission submitted in March 2017.

The Belt and Road is, in the appraisal of one Russian scholar, a “political superstructure” imposed on investments that had already begun or were likely to occur in any case. China is likely to make decisions about individual investments on their own merits. Under these circumstances, Russia has an incentive to take a pragmatic approach, focusing on the concrete gains that it can make from individual projects. It does so, however, as part of an overall strategic calculation that
it has more to gain from accommodating China’s efforts than from resisting them, especially considering that resistance might be futile.

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9. Ссовместное заявление Российской Федерации и Китайской Народной Республики о сотрудничестве по сопряжению строительства Евразийского экономического союза и Экономического пояса Шелкового пути, 8 мая 2015 г. [Joint declaration of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China on cooperation in linking the construction of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Economic Belt, May 8, 2015].
10. See several of the sources cited in this paper, including work by scholars affiliated with the Russian International Affairs Council, the Valdai Discussion Club, and the Institute of the Far East of the Russian Academy of Sciences.


25 Ibid. 308-310.


33 Interview with Vladimir Portyakov, Institute of the Far East, Moscow, March 24, 2014.

34 Ivan Safranchuk, a professor at the Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO) said during a U.S.-Russia-China trilateral conference that Russian government officials had encouraged him and other regional specialists to search for any conceivable way to link the two projects. “China-Russia-U.S. Trilateral Cooperation: Responsibilities, Opportunities, and Challenges,” Peking University, Beijing, June 9, 2015. Author’s notes.


43 Ibid, 14.


Сергей Лузянин. От моря до моря? Великий шелковый путь. Российский Совет по Международным Делам. 22 января 2015 г. [Sergei Luzyanin, “From sea to sea? The great silk route, Russian International Affairs Council, January 22, 2015], [http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=5129#top](http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=5129#top)

“The most unpleasant issue for us is that China is becoming a serious centre for integrational processes in Eurasia, which it never was in the past,” said Vladimir Portyakov, deputy director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences. “Instead of linking up the Eurasian Economic Union and the Belt and Road, we may end up with the EEU being subordinated to this Chinese scheme.” Quoted in “Putin-Xi embrace masks misgivings on Belt and Road project,” *Financial Times*, May 14, 2017.


Ibid.