

**THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE SINO-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN THE MILITARY
SPHERE (2015-2017):
CREATION OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM**

Smotrytska Maria A.

SmotrM_S@mail.ru

Master student of the Political Science Department,
Central China Normal University,
Wuhan, the P.R. of China

Master student of the International Relations Department,
V.Stefanyk Precarpathian National University,
Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine

Анотація

Сучасні взаємини Росії і Китаю носять характер стратегічного діалогу. Діалог двох країн підтримується на різних рівнях двостороннього і багатостороннього взаємодії, а військово-технічне співробітництво Росії і Китаю є одним з головних компонентів російсько-китайського стратегічного партнерства, яке відображає політичні та економічні інтереси двох держав. Предметом дослідження автора є вивчення взаємодії Російської Федерації і Китайської Народної Республіки у військовій сфері. У даній статті зачіпаються основні вектором співпраці двох країн. Проаналізовано документи в сфері військово-технічного співробітництва, прийняті в 2015-2017 роках. Особливу увагу приділено китайсько-російським навчанням «Морська взаємодія 2016 \ 2017», а також реакції на них головних акторів сучасних міжнародних відносин. Автором був зроблений прогноз подальшого розвитку військового чинника в російському векторі зовнішньої політики КНР і представлені основні вигоди від розвитку китайсько-російського співробітництва в даній сфері.

Ключові слова: військова справа, військово-технічне співробітництво, КНР, Росія, морські маневри, "Морська взаємодія 2016 \ 2017", США, міжнародна безпека

Abstract

The current Sino-Russian relations is a strategic partnership. The dialogue between the two countries is supported at various levels of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and military-technical cooperation between Russia and China is one of the main components of the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership that reflects the political and economic interests of the two states. The subject of the author's study is the study of the interaction of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China in the military sphere. This article deals with the main vectors of cooperation between the two countries. The documents in the field of military-technical cooperation adopted in 2015-2017 are analyzed. Particular attention is paid to the Sino-Russian naval exercises "Marine interaction-2016 \ 2017", as well as reactions to them from the main powers. The author made a forecast for the further development of the military factor in the Russian foreign policy vector of China and presented the main benefits from the development of Sino-Russian cooperation in this field.

Keywords: *military affairs, military-technical cooperation, China, Russia, maneuvers, "Maritime interaction-2016 \ 2017", the USA, international security*

In the 21st century, Russia and China are building multi-vector cooperation and the military-technical element in this regard occupies one of the key roles.

In recent years, China and Russia have conducted a number of military exchanges. In 2015 the Russian media have published information on the sale of new Russian weapons to China. These high-profile events have caused worldwide interest in the pace of development of strategic partnership relations between the two countries.

The 2015 year became a fruitful in the military-technical aspect for the Sino-Russian tandem. In November, the official representative of the Ministry of Defense of China, Wu Qian, at the press conference of the Ministry for the first time commented on the joint Chinese-Russian cooperation project for the

creation of the Su-35 fighter. He stressed that the negotiations have already reached "intermediate results", thus indirectly responding to the Russian newspaper Kommersant's announcement that two countries have signed a contract for the sale of 24 Su-35 fighters. At the same time, Rosoboronexport General Director Anatoly Isaikin has repeatedly stated that Russia and China have signed an export contract for the delivery of S-400 air-to-surface missile systems, and China would be the first foreign country to receive these complexes at its disposal [1].

In 2015, a number of Sino-Russian agreements on armaments were signed. During the Moscow Air Show (MAKS 2015) in August 2015, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin publicly responded to a question from journalists, describing four existing projects of Russian-Chinese cooperation. He told about the creation of a base on the Moon, developing of joint helicopters, building of a large wide-body aircraft and exporting S-400 systems to China. Also in May, China and Russia for the first time conducted naval exercises in the European waters of the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Many Western officials, however, saw this as a demonstration of solidarity after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. Thus, based on all these military activities and in terms of such a military-technical cooperation, 2015 can be quite deservedly called "productive" for both Russia and China.

The development of military and military-technical cooperation, in which the PRC shows interest in obtaining Russian new defense technologies and advanced methods of training military personnel for action in special conditions, has intensified in 2016. At the International Military Technical Forum "Army-2016", which was held in early September, 2016 in Kubinka (Moscow region), the Chinese delegation expressed interest in training its representatives at the International Special Forces Training Center in Chechnya [2]. The demonstration of close cooperation between the Chinese and Russian naval forces also continued. During the naval exercise "Maritime interaction-2016" on September 12-19, the Chinese and Russian sides worked out joint actions of their ships, raising the level of coordination of actions. Based on the composition of the participants and educational issues, the Chinese side was interested in the Russian experience in organizing antisubmarine defense and landing operations [3].

An important role in the Chinese-Russian dialogue in 2016 was given to the problem of international security. It was noted that China and Russia created a common front against Western expansionism and the arms race. Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russian President V. Putin unveiled a press release following a meeting in Beijing on June 25, condemning "the desire of individual states and military-political alliances to achieve a decisive military and military-technical superiority that would allow them to freely use force or threat of using force to advance their interests on the world arena" [4].

It should be understood that we are talking about American initiatives in the South China Sea and the strengthening of American alliances in the Asia-Pacific region, the American projects for the development of anti-missile defense in Europe (Aegis Ashore) and Asia (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense).

Thus, the joint statement "On Strengthening Global Strategic Stability", signed by China and Russia, coordinates and aligns the views of the two countries on some hot international problems and sensitive issues, expresses the desire for joint protection of global stability, control of international crisis phenomena. Wei Dongxiu, the military columnist of the People's Republic of China, commenting on the document, said that the statement mentions the problem of deploying anti-missile defense and actions to contain and encircle Russia with the help of missile defense¹. The document also touched on the problem of US use in the APR of destroyers with the Aegis system for conducting anti-ballistic missile tests and military exercises, and strengthening of US missile cooperation with Japan and South Korea [5]. According to Wei Dongxiu, China and Russia also expressed concern about the US militarization of space². Thus, these statements provide an opportunity to assume that in future China and Russia will undertake some joint coordinated and concerted actions to maintain peace and security not only on the sea and land, but also in space.

The military-technical dialogue between the two countries in 2016 was not limited to declarations and agreements. In June, Russian and Chinese warships entered the sea coastal zone of the Senkaku Archipelago near the territorial waters of Japan [6]. In September 2016, Russia and China launched the naval exercises "Maritime interaction - 2016", which lasted eight days. Beginning from 2012, it was the fifth Sino-Russian maneuvers from the "Maritime Interaction" series, as well as the largest-scale naval exercises in the framework of the Sino-Russian military cooperation [7]. These naval exercises have caused serious resonance around the world. Thus, the Japanese authorities opposed the exercises, justifying their position by

¹ The USA, having deployed the Patriot PAC-3 anti-aircraft missile system in Eastern Europe and moved Aegis shipborne systems to land, delivered them to the countries of Eastern Europe, thereby restraining Russia.

² The US is launching space-based unmanned vehicles X-37B into space, besides, the US army is striving to place weapons in space.

the fear of a threat to the national security of their state [8]. The United States and some of its allies called on China to implement the court decision on the South China Sea and accused Beijing of trying to assert its claims by force, expressing its concern over the Russian-Chinese maneuvers of September 2016 [9].

Nevertheless, according to experts, the Chinese-Russian maneuvers of 2016 demonstrated the fighting forces and the level of the countries. This means that military cooperation on the basis of mutual trust between China and Russia in 2016 rose to a new level.

2017 was no less productive for the two countries. At the beginning of the year, the cooperation between the Russian Federation and the PRC intensified in the international arena. Thus, on February 23, 2017, the representative of the Ministry of Defense of China, Ren Guoqiang, stated at a regular press conference that China categorically opposes the deployment of the US missile defense system THAAD in the Republic of Korea, as this seriously damages the strategic security and interests of neighboring countries, including China and Russia, and violates the strategic balance in the region [10].

In April 2017, China launched its second aircraft carrier, which at the same time became the first aircraft built directly in China [11]. This fact showed the whole world active economic cooperation between the two countries in the military-technical sphere. It was also noted that the next such ship is already under construction, and more and more often information began to appear that in the next 10 years China wants to put into service also nuclear-powered aircraft carriers.

In July 2017, the American media reported that in the military games of Russia and NATO in Europe, a new participant appeared: China [12]. This reaction of foreign media was provoked by the fact that Russia and China launched joint naval exercises within the framework of the "Maritime interaction - 2017" project in the Baltic Sea, which was the most significant demonstration of military cooperation between these major powers in the region [13]. These maneuvers caused no less resonance than the "Maritime interaction - 2016". Despite the fact that the countries in words expressed "warm greeting", in reality they seriously worried about the presence of China in the water area of the European "inner sea". NATO expressed the view that China thus seeks to expand its military presence zone. In this regard, the military expert reported that Russian-Chinese exercises and exercises conducted by NATO countries are not comparable in scale. In addition, he said that the Russian-Chinese naval exercises are conducted under a certain regulation, and that China firmly adheres to the policy of "non-alignment with the blocs" and is not going to unite with someone against the "third party". Nevertheless, the representatives of the Lithuanian defense informed that they are closely following the joint military exercises of Russia and China that began in the Baltic. According to Vice-Minister of Defense Vytautas Umbrasas, Lithuania hopes that during the exercise all norms of international maritime law will be observed and obstacles to economic activity in the Baltic Sea will not be impeded [14].

Thus, it can be summed up that the level of today's Russian-Chinese relations, reached in military and military-technical sphere, meets modern requirements for ensuring national security of Russia and China. It should also be understood that for China the continuation and deepening of military-technical cooperation with Russia occupies an important place. *Firstly*, it allows modernizing both the military-industrial complex and its individual branches. *Secondly*, the PRC strengthens its geopolitical influence not only in the Asia-Pacific region, but also in the world. *Thirdly*, there is an increase in the level of combat capability of the Chinese army through the supply of new types of weapons, and the conduct of joint military exercises strengthens its combat experience. *Fourthly*, there are socio-economic advantages of cooperation (the possibility of creating joint ventures, participating in the development of new types of weapons, obtaining licenses, etc.).

It should also be noted that at present Russia and China are not part of a joint military bloc, so there are still no clear boundaries for cooperation in the military sphere between the states. Thus, joint maneuvers between countries are conducted after long agreements and are more situational than strategic. Nevertheless, the Chinese side is ready, jointly with the Russian side, to continue to bear the necessary international responsibility, to promote the stable development of bilateral relations, carrying out close cooperation and contacts on international and regional issues. Thus, the transition from cooperation in the field of arms transfers to joint military maneuvers speaks of building relations of a higher level in the field of military security between countries.

REFERENCES:

1. Новый этап в китайско-российском военно-техническом сотрудничестве [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <http://russian.people.com.cn/n/2015/1215/c95181-8990693.html> (Reference date : 15.12.2015).
2. Китай будет обучать своих специалистов в центре подготовки спецназа в Чечне [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: https://ria.ru/defense_safety/20160907/1476314145.html (Reference date : 07.09.2016).
3. 中露合同演習はなぜ南シナ海で行われたのか (Why did the Sino-Russian joint exercise took place in the South China Sea) [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <http://wedge.ismedia.jp/articles/-/7837> (Reference date : 27.09.2016).
4. La Chine et la Russie célèbrent leur rapprochement [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: http://www.lemonde.fr/asiе-pacifique/article/2016/06/27/la-chine-et-la-russie-celebrent-leur-rapprochement_4958837_3216.html (Reference date : 27.06.2016).
5. 专家解读普京访华后的中俄军事合作 (How experts interpret the Sino-Russian military cooperation after Putin's visit to China) [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <http://military.china.com/news/568/20160629/22955510.html> (Reference date : 29.06.2016).
6. 露中の"尖閣急接近" 奇妙な航跡は何を語るか ("Senkaku sudden approach" : What the strange wake tells) [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <https://mainichi.jp/premier/business/articles/20160623/biz/00m/010/015000c> (Reference date : 25.06.2016).
7. Эксперт: Китайско-российские совместные учения в Южно-Китайском море имеют беспрецедентный масштаб [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <http://russian.people.com.cn/n3/2016/0912/c31521-9113967.html> (Reference date : 12.09.2016).
8. 南シナ海で初の合同演習 (First joint exercise in the South China Sea) [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <http://wedge.ismedia.jp/articles/-/7837> (Reference date : 27.09.2016).
9. China, Russia Plan Naval Drills in South China Sea [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-russia-plan-naval-drills-in-south-china-sea-1469707620> (Reference date : 29.07.2016).
10. Китай решительно выступает против размещения в РК системы противоракетной обороны THAAD // Жэньминь Жибао. – 2017. [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <http://russian.people.com.cn/n3/2017/0224/c31521-9181939.html> (Reference date : 24.02.2017).
11. Nové letadlové lodě. Čínský žák předbíhá ruského učitele [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <http://echo24.cz/a/wyvRD/nove-letadlove-lode-cinsky-zak-predbiha-ruskeho-ucitele> (Reference date : 08.04.2017).
12. Russia and NATO war games in Europe see new player: China [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <http://www.newsweek.com/russia-nato-war-games-europe-player-china-630940> (Reference date : 01.07.2017).
13. 中俄军演首次深入“欧洲内海” 北约海军“接力”相遇监视 (Sino - Russian military exercise for the first time in - depth "European sea" : NATO Navy make the surveillance) [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <http://world.huanqiu.com/exclusive/2017-07/11005566.html> (Reference date : 20.07.2017)
14. Литва пристально следит за совместными учениями России и Китая на Балтике [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access : URL: <http://ru.delfi.lt/news/politics/litva-pristalno-sledit-za-sovmestnymi-uchenyami-rossii-i-kitaya-na-baltike.d?id=75308129> (Reference date : 25.07.2017)