**Power Games among China, USA and Russia: To What Direction Will Their Relations Change in the Future**

**Wang Xiaoquan**

**The author is a researcher at the Institute of Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Shanghai University**

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**Summary**

**The China-US-Russia triangle game is the most important triangle game that determines the future world order. Looking from the fundamental interests, power balance and strategic trends of China, the USA and Russia, the China-US-Russia triangle will exist for a long time in the future, and China and Russia will jointly transform the world order dominated by the United States throughout the entire process of the interaction of the China-US-Russia triangle games. Due to China's rapid rise, China's unique strategic culture will have a profound impact on this triangle, giving it new characteristics in its operation rules and finally China will achieve the ending of this triangle power game.**

**Chapter 2. Characteristics of the China-US-Russia triangle**

**1. The characteristics of the China-US-Russia triangle are similar to those of the China-US-Soviet triangle in the Soviet times.**

　　The China-US-Russia triangle is a continuation of the China-US-Soviet triangle, and therefore has some of the same characteristics as the China-US-Soviet triangle:

First, the China-US-Russia triangle and the China-US-Soviet triangle are the most important triangles that determine the direction of the evolution of the world pattern.

The formation of the China-US-Russia triangle comes at a time when the world is becoming more multipolar and entering a major change that has not happened in a century.

Europe and Japan have a clear tendency to be independent of the United States, and emerging countries such as the BRICS are rising collectively. The strategic cooperation between China and Russia is not based on alliances, but is more flexible and more effective.

Given that the US alliance system is splitting up, China and Russia may reach a strategic consensus with some of the US allies, form a "strategic partnership", and jointly promote the transformation of the world pattern.

Secondly, the essence of the China-US-Russia triangle is still contains a game of core national interests.

The United States is trying to weaken the sovereignty of China and Russia, thereby weakening the development potential of the two countries. The dispute between the Western values ​​promoted by the United States and the Eastern values ​​of justice and interests promoted by China and Russia is essentially a dispute over sovereignty, development paths, and fundamental national interests.

Again, at present, the most powerful country, the United States, is still trying to divide the world market, trying its best to "decouple" from the Chinese economy, excluding China from the negotiations on the "Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement", and hindering the construction of the "Belt and Road".

Thirdly, the United States, the most powerful party in the Sino-US-Soviet triangle, vigorously promoted the free market economic model, while the Soviet Union promoted the planned economic model.

But both China and Russia implemented market-oriented reforms in the 1990s, and Russia even used "shock therapy". However, liberal market economic reforms do not conform to the national conditions of China and Russia. By summarizing the experience and lessons of market economic reforms, China and Russia both attach importance to strengthening the role of the government and state-owned economy, attach importance to macroeconomic regulation and development planning, and gradually formed a development model with national characteristics that is different from the liberal market economic model of the United States.

**Therefore, the game between the United States, China and Russia has become a game of development models.**

**2. The characteristics of today’s China-US-Russia triangle are different from the China-US-Soviet triangle**

　　First, the gap in economic strength between China and the United States today is smaller than that between the Soviet Union and the United States in the past, and it is shrinking rapidly. In 1975, when the Soviet Union's economy was at its peak, its GDP was only 40.6% of that of the United States, while China's GDP in 2019 reached 66% of that of the United States. China has become the engine of world economic growth, contributing one-third of world economic growth.

Secondly, the US and the Soviet Union competed for hegemony in an environment of segmented world markets, while China and the US struggled in an environment of unified world markets and highly integrated economies.

China firmly opposes the division of the world market and anti-globalization, and firmly opposes hegemony. Both China and Russia advocate the establishment of a new world economic order, democratization of international relations, and diversity of world civilizations.

　　Thirdly, China today has a more obvious strategic advantage in the China-US-Russia triangle :

First, the strategic culture of the United States and Russia is similar, and they are used to tit-for-tat competition. Although the structural contradictions between China and the United States are far greater than those between Russia and the United States, the degree of confrontation between Russia and the United States is far greater than that between China and the United States.

**The United States has pushed Russia towards China thus, USA is greatly constrained by Russia, so when dealing with Russia USA has to use a large amount of resources that would instead be used to deal with China. Thus USA has lesser sources when dealing with China.**

　　Second, China has a different strategic culture from the United States and Russia. China is better at keeping a low profile and striving to form a united front with most countries. Even under heavy pressure from the United States and other Western countries, China still strives to develop relations with the West, making it impossible for the United States to reach a consensus within the alliance system on implementing a tough policy toward China as it did against the Soviet Union. Some Western countries have joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, rejected the United States' request to exclude Huawei's 5G technology, and highly recognized China's measures to fight the COVID-19 epidemic, all of which have dealt a heavy blow to the United States' attempt to isolate China.

　　Third, China, the United States and Russia are in the same world market. The United States cannot divide and isolate China into regional camps. Any sanctions against China will cause great side effects and will directly damage the interests of American companies and people.

　　Chapter 4 . Future Development Trends of the China-US-Russia Triangle

　　The China-US-Russia triangle is the most important triangle that determines the future world order. Judging from the fundamental interests, power balance and strategic trends of China, the United States and Russia, the China-US-Russia triangle will exist for a long time, and China and Russia will jointly transform the world order dominated by the United States throughout the entire process of the interaction of the China-US-Russia triangle. Due to China's rapid rise, China's unique strategic culture will have a profound impact on the triangle, giving it new characteristics in its operation rules and ending the triangle.

　　1. The China-US-Russia triangle will exist for a long time

　　As a status quo power, the structural contradictions between the United States and China and Russia cannot be changed. The United States will not tolerate China and Russia, especially China, which may surpass its position as the world's number one economic power in the future, as it does some authoritarian small countries. Otherwise, it will be difficult for the United States to maintain its global monopoly profits, and its world hegemony based on this will no longer exist. In the case that it is absolutely impossible for the United States to abandon its alliances and then give up its global hegemony, and the asymmetry of benefits and costs of most allies in the alliance system remains or even worsens, the United States is trying to continue to maintain or even strengthen its global alliance system and force its allies to increase their strategic investment in the alliance system. Another option is to intentionally or unintentionally promote the deterioration of the regional and even global security environment, or to actively create an external enemy for this alliance that is enough to pose a major security threat to its allies (at least in a psychological sense).

The purpose of the United States's efforts to sell the Western democratic system to China and Russia is to dissolve the leadership of its opponents and even overthrow their regimes, support domestic capital forces and local forces, and finally form an oligarchy and national division. Both China and Russia have glorious history and culture. It is difficult for Western democratic concepts to take root in the societies of the two countries. The people of the two countries value strong governments rather than weak governments, and the governments value collective rights rather than individual rights. Both China and Russia attach importance to maintaining political and social stability and strengthening the government's ability to govern the country.

China has set the overall goal of comprehensively deepening reform as "modernization of the national governance system and governance capabilities." Putin has completely abandoned Yeltsin's strategy of total Westernization and established a development model with the characteristics of "centralization, nationalism, sovereign democracy, national spirit, market economy, and rule of law." The development model of China and Russia is in line with their national conditions, but not in line with the strategic interests of the United States. The United States regards the measures taken by China and Russia, such as regime consolidation, economic regulation, information control, and national defense construction, as challenges to American values ​​and national interests. The US National Security Strategy points out that "China and Russia are trying to shape a world that is opposed to American values ​​and interests." The development models of China and Russia are suitable for their national conditions, and serve as a model and guide for other countries to follow a development path that suits their national conditions. This will greatly weaken the international influence of the American model.

Judging from the current trend, the decline of US hegemony continues to accelerate, but in terms of comprehensive national strength and world influence, the United States is still a world superpower. After China became the second strongest power, the United States comprehensively increased its strategic containment of China. However, under the condition of high economic integration between China and the United States, this policy must be "hurting the enemy by a thousand and hurting itself by eight hundred".

Therefore, the game between China and the United States will show the characteristics of increasing friction, fighting and talking, talking and fighting. Russia advocates a multipolar world, regards China as a "strategic ally" to transform the world order, and regards strategic cooperation with China as cooperation between two major civilizations. Russia has always maintained policy independence, focusing on exerting global influence in its most advantageous security field, and disrupted the US security layout in the Middle East by intervening in Syria, Iran and other issues.

　　In the process of forming a new world order, the United States will encounter a strong impact from China in the economic field and a strong impact from Russia in the security field. China strives to accumulate small victories into big ones and exchange space (the "Belt and Road") for time. The deepening of strategic cooperation between China and Russia will effectively make up for the shortcomings of both sides in economic and security capabilities. The power comparison between China, Russia and the United States will be a long-term process. Even if the United States becomes the second strongest party in the future, as long as its strength is not far enough from the strongest party, it will still compete fiercely with the strongest party to seize world hegemony, and the China-US-Russia triangle relationship will therefore exist for a long time.

　　2. China and Russia carry out non-alliance but cooperation on “economic and security (political) coordination”

The United States cannot crush China economically or Russia in terms of security, so USA focuses on using security means to attack China's economy and economic means to attack Russia's security.

China's international economic expansion capabilities are relatively strong, but its international security protection capabilities are relatively weak. The United States cannot stop China from improving its position in the international industrial chain and the construction of the "Belt and Road" through economic means. Its policy of "decoupling" from China's economy is difficult to gain widespread support because it causes huge losses to other countries. If Western countries provide technology, capital, and markets to China, and developing countries provide resources, markets to China or serve as a transit station for Chinese goods to bypass the high tariff barriers imposed by the United States on China, the US policy of suppressing China will fail. Therefore, the United States must force most countries to follow its "decoupling" from the Chinese economy, and for this purpose it will inevitably increase political pressure and security threats.

On the one hand, it creates various troubles for China and uses international discourse power to discredit China; on the other hand, it stirs up trouble in China and its important partner countries, forcing many countries to choose between mutually beneficial cooperation with China or ensuring regime security. If China does not quickly strengthen its security capabilities, it may be isolated in international economic cooperation, which will in turn increase domestic economic pressure, trigger social problems, and provide an opportunity for the United States to undermine political security.

　　Russia's international security capabilities are strong, but its economic security capabilities are weak. The United States once tried to attack Russia's international security capabilities by instigating "color revolutions" in Georgia, Ukraine and other countries and subverting the regimes of Syria and other countries, but was strongly counterattacked by Russia, which in turn strengthened Russia's international security status and role. As a result, the United States vigorously attacked the Russian economy and joined the West to impose sanctions on Russia, focusing on the three lifeline industries of finance, military industry and energy, which led to a difficult situation for Russian companies and worsened the national finances, thereby limiting its international security capabilities and exacerbating social problems. This provided the United States with an opportunity to undermine Russia's political security.

　　China and Russia attach great importance to security interests and economic interests. China attaches more importance to strengthening economic cooperation with Russia, while Russia attaches more importance to strengthening security cooperation with China. Only "integrated economic and security (political) cooperation" can complement each other's advantages. Without the support of China's economic power, it is difficult for Russia to maintain a strong security capability in the long run. Without the support of Russia's security forces, China's economic interests in many fulcrum countries of the "Belt and Road" will suffer losses due to the emergence of "color revolutions" or even wars. As the United States increases strategic containment pressure, China is increasingly paying attention to strengthening security cooperation with Russia. Russia realizes that long-term lag in economic development will affect national security interests and attaches more importance to economic cooperation with China.

The "coordinated economic and security (political) cooperation" between China and Russia may become the core content of the China-Russia comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in the new era.

That is, China and Russia will form a fair, equal, mutually beneficial, balanced, large-scale and sustainable economic community of interests through strategic and planning docking and cooperation on major projects. At the same time, they will set common goals for security cooperation and carry out in-depth security cooperation. Deepening economic cooperation will safeguard the international security capabilities of the two countries. Deepening security cooperation will safeguard the economic cooperation between the two countries, especially the multilateral economic cooperation projects jointly led by the two countries, from being destroyed by hostile forces. This will enable the economic and security cooperation between the two countries to complement each other's advantages and interact in a benign manner, ultimately forming an economic and security community.

　　The China-Russia Economic and Security Community will jointly promote the multipolarization of the world and economic globalization, support multilateralism and new organizations and mechanisms for international multilateral cooperation, oppose interference in the internal affairs of other countries, maintain the stability of the global arms control system, jointly combat the "three forces", deepen security cooperation in new strategic frontiers such as space, cyberspace, and the Arctic, deepen cooperation in key economic, trade, and technological fields with large plans, large projects, and large enterprises as the fulcrum, and support each other on major international initiatives and concepts proposed by both sides, such as the "Belt and Road", "Community of Shared Future for Mankind", "New Security Concept", and "Greater Eurasian Partnership".

　　3. China and Russia are promoting new economic globalization and a multipolar world

**China is promoting a new type of economic globalization through the Belt and Road Initiative. Its characteristics are different from those of the US-style economic globalization:**

China follows the concept of cooperation for mutual benefit, win-win and common development rather than maximizing national interests; China allocates production factors more reasonably on a global scale rather than seeking monopoly control by its own country; China respects the economic sovereignty of other countries, China emphasizes equal cooperation between countries and the connection of strategies, policies and plans, rather than trampling on the sovereignty of other countries, bullying the weak with the strong, and plundering the economies of other countries through the promotion of economic liberalization.

China also pursues the balance and stability of the world economic system rather than creating and taking advantage of crises to make huge profits. Therefore, the new type of economic globalization is in line with the interests of most countries.

Russia agrees with the "Silk Road Spirit" and is willing to work with China to promote the new type of economic globalization. The US's perverse actions of anti-globalization, splitting the world market, and provoking camp confrontation will be difficult to get a response.

The most important way for China and Russia to weaken the US's dominance in the world order is to promote a multipolar world. Gabuev, a senior researcher at the Carnegie Moscow Center, pointed out: **"Russia's ideal international social structure is a multipolar world. Russia does not want to side with the US and China and co-manage the world. The emergence of two far-leading countries is different from the situation of 'the United States is the only superpower'. The US and China will not coordinate and urge countries to change their systems and formulate global rules. In the field where the US and China compete, Russia, Japan, Germany and other 'second-tier players' still have room to exert influence. Thanks to the competitive relationship between the US and China, Russia can sit at the same table with other major countries to participate in decision-making."**

As early as 1997, China and Russia proposed that "the two sides will work hard to promote the development of a multipolar world and the establishment of a new international order in the spirit of partnership", emphasizing that "the vast number of developing countries and the non-aligned movement are important forces in promoting a multipolar world and establishing a new international order."

The multipolar world advocated by China and Russia is not a world of multiple hegemonic powers, but a harmonious world where large and small countries treat each other equally and develop together on the basis of democratization of international relations.

Multilateral international organizations such as the United Nations will play a greater role. China and Russia's active promotion of a multipolar world will help Europe improve its international status and gain new development opportunities, and will help strengthen cooperation between China, Russia and Europe. Therefore, the differences between the United States and Europe will increase simultaneously as the United States increases its pressure on China and Russia.

　　4. China and Russia lead the transformation of the order in the Eurasian continent

Eurasia is the world's largest geographical plate with the largest area, the largest population and the greatest development potential. Whoever can control Eurasia can dominate the world. Therefore, Eurasia has become the most intense region for the China-Russia-US triangle game. The United States' control over Eurasia continues to decline under the decline of its hegemony. The world power center represented by China, Russia, the European Union and India is rising in Eurasia.

The relationship between the United States and Europe has been weakened by the increasing isolationism and egoism of the United States, and the trend of independent diplomacy and independent defense in Europe is becoming increasingly obvious. The United States has tried hard to pull India into the Indo-Pacific strategy, but India has always attached importance to policy independence, and as a developing country, it has many similar or similar propositions with China on the transformation of the world order and will not easily serve as a strategic tool of the United States. The Doklam confrontation made China and India see each other's unwillingness to use force, and thus strengthened the mechanism for managing differences. India's joining the SCO provides a new platform for China-India cooperation. China and Russia do not seek to dominate Eurasia, but are committed to peaceful coexistence with Eurasian countries and work together to promote peace, stability and common development in the region. The degree of strategic understanding between major powers in Eurasia will become increasingly higher, and it will become increasingly difficult for the United States to strategically contain China and Russia in Eurasia by provoking relations between major powers, and it may be marginalized in the process of economic integration in Eurasia.

　　Central Asia, Mongolia and the Korean Peninsula are the common peripheries of China and Russia. If China and Russia manage the "common periphery" well, the strategic influence of the two countries can be superimposed, forming a geostrategic basis to counter the United States. With the 2015 "China-Russia Joint Statement on the Docking of the Silk Road Economic Belt Cooperation and the Eurasian Economic Union" as a symbol, China and Russia have formed a strategic consensus on managing the "common periphery", that is, respecting the sovereignty of countries in the region, working together to maintain peace, stability and common development in the region, and being open to cooperation with countries inside and outside the region. The policies of the two countries on the "common periphery" will be more coordinated.

　　The SCO is the core platform for China and Russia to transform the order of the Eurasian continent. China and Russia are committed to enhancing the status and role of the SCO in the regional governance system, and strive to promote the SCO to form common values, equal consultation and mutually beneficial cooperation mechanisms, and fair and just cooperation rules, and promote them to more regions in Eurasia.

China and Russia each have their own plans and priorities for the construction of the Eurasian governance system. Russia proposed to jointly launch an international initiative with China for "security and economic (political) integrated cooperation", which is the "Eurasian Comprehensive Partnership" proposed in the 2016 "Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation". Russia hopes to jointly promote the rise of the Eurasian geopolitical plate and transform the Eurasian order with China through the "Eurasian Comprehensive Partnership". The implementation of the "Eurasian Comprehensive Partnership" is conducive to the integration of the Eurasian continent and the promotion of cooperation between China, Russia and Eurasian countries.

The "Joint Statement of the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation on the Joint Feasibility Study of the Eurasian Economic Partnership Agreement" (2017) replaced "Eurasian Comprehensive Partnership" with "Eurasian Economic Partnership", but this does not conform to the original intention of the Russian side. The reason why Russia accepted the term "Eurasian Economic Partnership" is that it hopes that it will eventually develop into a "Eurasian Comprehensive Partnership". Sooner or later, China and Russia's "economic and security (political) integrated cooperation" in Eurasia will return to the direction of "Eurasian Comprehensive Partnership".

　　5. China’s strategic culture will end the China-US-Russia triangle

A multipolar world is not a world of multiple hegemons, but a unity of diversity. Only when the world's power centers seek "unification" rather than "hegemony" can human society be free from war and achieve common development. To achieve this , a new dominant common value system different from the Western value system is needed.

The Western value system is exclusive and attempts to achieve the so-called "end of civilization", which does not meet the needs of a multipolar world. China achieved "great unification" as early as the Qin Dynasty and has long-term experience in governing the world. What it has shown in the long river of history is not a nation-state, but a civilization form. Chinese civilization emphasizes harmony and balance rather than maximizing interests; traditional Chinese culture is an organic combination of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Confucianism emphasizes order, Buddhism emphasizes cause and effect, and Taoism emphasizes laws.

The three coexist harmoniously and can coexist with other religions. Therefore, the Chinese value system with a profound accumulation and a long history can get rid of the Western binary opposition model. The Chinese strategic culture it nourishes has three characteristics compared with the American strategic culture: non-violence and non-hegemony, tolerance and openness, and solidarity.

　　Under the influence of the Chinese value system and strategic culture, China has proposed a transformation idea for the world order against the American (Western) value system: in terms of security, it has changed from an absolute security model to a mutual protection model, which is embodied in the "new security concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable"; in terms of economy, it has changed from a monopoly model to a mutual benefit model, which is embodied in the "Silk Road Spirit" based on the principles of "joint consultation, joint construction and sharing" and respecting cooperation, peace, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning, mutual benefit and win-win; in terms of culture, it has changed from a conflict model to a mutual learning (mutual tolerance) model of "respecting the diversity of civilizations". As China's national strength grows, the Chinese value system and strategic culture will have a greater impact on the China-US-Russia triangle relationship, and thus end the triangle relationship. In this regard, it can be analyzed from the following two aspects:

**First, the strongest power and the weakest power will continue to maintain strategic understanding and in-depth cooperation.**

At present, China has adopted a moderate policy of establishing a "new type of major power relationship" with the United States, but its intention and strength to impact the United States' dominance in the world order are rapidly increasing.

China is expected to become the strongest party in the Sino-US-Russia triangle in the medium and long term. China pursues mutual benefit and win-win results and respects Russia's role as one of the poles in the multipolar world. Sino-Russian relations have internal driving forces and their relations nature of "partnership and cooperation without alliance". After long-term strategic cooperation, the two countries will achieve a high degree of economic integration, a high degree of mutual trust in security, and a high degree of political mutual understanding.

According to the historical law that the weakest party determines the balance of power in the triangle, the in-depth strategic cooperation between China and Russia will inevitably accelerate the decline of the United States.

The situation in which the relationship between the strongest party and the second strongest party and the weakest party is better than the relationship between the second strongest party and the weakest party appeared in the Sino-US-Soviet triangle in the 1980s, and the strongest party eventually defeated the second strongest party. Although Kissinger discovered this law, he could not change the direction of Sino-US relations and Russian-US relations, and therefore could not change the fate of the United States' defeat.

Second, as the most powerful party in the future, China does not seek world hegemony or monopoly interests in the world order, and China respects the reasonable national interests and strategic demands of the United States. The structural contradictions of the China-US-Russia triangle relationship will weaken as China's strategic position improves.

After the United States loses its monopoly on the world economic order, it will take a long time to adjust its economic development model, and its national strength will decline at an accelerated rate. China's national strength will rise at an accelerated rate as the United States' strategic containment capability continues to weaken.

When China's national strength reaches a point which can force the USA to completely abandon its monopoly on the world order, the USA will instead seek mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation with China and Russia, and the structural contradictions of the China-US-Russia triangle relationship will gradually weaken or even disappear. The zero-sum game nature of the triangle game relationship will give way to mutually beneficial cooperation and will be replaced by a trilateral relationship rather than a new triangle power games relationship.

After that, the world order will take on a new look, and the world will evolve in the direction of "great governance under heaven."