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**CROUCHING BEAR, HIDDEN DRAGON:  
CHINA, RUSSIA, AND SECURITY DILEMMA  
DYNAMICS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

by

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June 2019

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**CROUCHING BEAR, HIDDEN DRAGON: CHINA, RUSSIA, AND SECURITY  
DILEMMA DYNAMICS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The collapse of the Soviet Union left the United States as the preeminent global power. China's rise has marked it as the primary threat to the United States' top position, but its economic rise alone has not been enough, and it found a ready partner in Russia to bolster its balancing efforts. Their mutual resentment of the U.S.-led international order drove them to greater cooperation, and an evolving partnership emerged. On the surface, this partnership appears to be a solid challenger-bloc that poses a significant threat to the United States' top position. However, in the past, instances of great power competition spawned rivalries that escalated into costly back-and-forth exchanges between states that tore partnerships apart. The solidarity of the Sino-Russian partnership is seemingly facing stressors due to competition between them in Sub-Saharan Africa that may test the strength of this relationship. This thesis explores the nature of Sino-Russian competition in Sub-Saharan Africa using the concept of the security dilemma. In doing so, it finds evidence that security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia centered on Russia's growing reliance on the Chinese oil and gas market are becoming an important driver of Russia's activities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Soviet Union shifted the distribution of power from a bipolar to a unipolar system with the United States remaining as the preeminent global power. Despite Francis Fukuyama touting the end of history, other states emerged to balance U.S. power and challenge its primacy.<sup>1</sup> China's economic rise marked it as the primary threat to the United States' position atop the international system; yet, its economic power alone was not enough to balance U.S. power. China found a ready partner to bolster its balancing efforts in Russia after sanctions imposed by the West in the aftermath of its 2014 actions in Ukraine threatened to isolate it from the rest of the world. China stepped in to bolster Russia's economy with investments and increased oil and gas purchases, and Russia returned the favor by providing China with greater access to its advanced weaponry. Their mutual resentment of the U.S.-led international order drove them to even greater cooperation, and an evolving partnership emerged strengthened by a perceived common threat and the desire to create a more multipolar international system. On the surface, this partnership appears to be a solid challenger-bloc that poses a significant threat to the United States' top position.

In the past, however, instances of great power competition have spawned rivalries that escalated into costly back-and-forth exchanges between states that tore partnerships apart and ended in conflict.<sup>2</sup> Though still in the early stages, competitive interactions between China and Russia in Sub-Saharan Africa—including all the states south or partially south of the Sahara Desert—may provide stressors that test the strength of their partnership. Sub-Saharan Africa, with offers of immense natural resources, enormous economic growth potential, and access to strategic points on the Red Sea, is an attractive prize for any state and has recently become a hotbed of great power competition. For China,

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<sup>1</sup> See Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989): 3–18, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24027184> and Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1st ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

<sup>2</sup> See Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Europe after Napoleon* (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1973): 286–310.

its increased activity in Sub-Saharan Africa is the culmination of a long-cultivated effort to ensure its economy has enough fuel to sustain high growth rates, internationalize its corporations, and capitalize on Sub-Saharan Africa's large consumer-base for its export products.<sup>3</sup> Russia, on the other hand, is relatively new to the recent uptick in competition in the region and its activities are less developed. Russia seeks access to additional hydrocarbon resources, in Sub-Saharan Africa, as a backstop to its domestic reserves and to limit the sources available to the European market that it dominates.<sup>4</sup> Also, Russia is taking steps to ensure access to the essential metals and minerals it needs for its industrial sector and is making a concerted effort to increase its economic ties and trade in the region. With so many intersecting activities in Sub-Saharan Africa, it appears likely that competition between China and Russia will flare up to jeopardize the growing partnership between the two in the future. However, under their new relationship dynamics, China and Russia have found ways to avoid competition and increase cooperation in other regions to maintain the strength of their partnership and keep other states out. In Central Asia, for example, Russia concedes to China's economic supremacy in the region in exchange for maintaining its position as the region's primary security provider.<sup>5</sup> This arrangement is not only mutually beneficial for China and Russia, but also relegates the United States to a third-tier actor with minimal influence in the region. To avoid a similar scenario in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is important that the United States understands the potential drivers of competition between China and Russia and develop policy that leverages these potential drivers to disrupt increased cooperation.

One concept that may aid in this understanding is the classic concept of the security dilemma, which acclaimed international relations scholar Charles Glaser holds as "the key to understanding how in an anarchical international system states with fundamentally

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<sup>3</sup> Drew Thomas, "Economic Growth and Soft Power: China's Africa Strategy," in *China in Africa*, ed. Arthur Waldron (Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 2008), 13.

<sup>4</sup> J. Peter Pham, "Back to Africa: Russia's New African Engagement," in *Africa and the New World Era from Humanitarianism to a Strategic View*, ed. Mangala, Jack (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2010), 79, doi:10.1057/9780230117303.

<sup>5</sup> Simon Saradzhyan and Ali Wyne, "Sino-Russian Relations: Same Bed, Different Dreams?" In *Power Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Mapping a Multipolar World*, ed. by Donette Murray and David Brown, 97, (London, England: Routledge, 2018).

compatible goals still end up in competition and war.”<sup>6</sup> First derived from works by Herbert Butterfield and John Herz, the basic premise of the security dilemma, as succinctly delineated by Posen, is “what one does to enhance one’s own security causes reactions that, in the end, can make one less secure.”<sup>7</sup> Security dilemmas are characterized by scenarios in which insecurity leads to escalating competition between states, and possibly war, despite both sides’ status quo or defensive intentions.<sup>8</sup>

Past uses of the security dilemma to explain competitive interactions between states within specific cases are largely evaluative based on historical events or current dynamics between states.<sup>9</sup> Few if any attempt to use the concept to get ahead of states’ activities and predict where and how the security dilemma is likely to manifest between states. The immature nature of the competitive interactions between China and Russia in Sub-Saharan Africa requires an approach to evaluating the security dilemma dynamics between the states that fills this gap. This thesis builds on the methodology used by Liff and Ikenberry to propose a two-level empirical examination that enables both an assessment of current security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia and a prediction of how they could drive competition between the states’ in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>10</sup> Although it is difficult to know how states will react in the future, when making predictions in social sciences, as Kaplan notes, “maximum efficiency derives from a thorough knowledge of the supporting

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<sup>6</sup> Charles L. Glaser, “The Security Dilemma Revisited,” *World Politics* 50, no. 1 (1997): 171, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25054031>.

<sup>7</sup> Butterfield developed similar thoughts as Herz in Herbert Butterfield, *History and Human Relations* (London: Collins, 1951), but it was Herz that coined the term “security dilemma” in John H. Herz, “Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 2, no. 2 (January 1950): 157–80, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2009187>; Barry R. Posen, “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict,” *Survival* 35, no. 1 (1993): 28, doi:10.1080/00396339308442672.

<sup>8</sup> Adam P. Liff and G. John Ikenberry, “Racing Toward Tragedy? China’s Rise, Military Competition in the Asia Pacific, and the Security Dilemma,” *International Security* 39, no. 2 (2014): 57, doi:10.1162/ISEC\_a\_00176.

<sup>9</sup> See for example Robert Jervis, “Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 1 (2001): 36, doi:10.1162/15203970151032146; Liff and Ikenberry, “Racing Toward Tragedy?” 52–91; Thomas Christensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Social Dilemma in East Asia,” *International Security* 23, no. 4 (1999): 49–80, doi:10.1162/isec.23.4.49.

<sup>10</sup> Liff and Ikenberry, “Racing Toward Tragedy?” 52–91.

conditions.”<sup>11</sup> To gain this knowledge, the first level of the empirical examination individually assesses six conditions that indicate the intensity of security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia outside of Sub-Saharan Africa: the degree to which states’ interest are aligned, level of uncertainty/mistrust in the motives of other states, level of communication between states, level of vulnerability to other states’ actions, and the importance of expansion and self-preservation to the security of the states. The second level of the examination applies the knowledge gained from the external evaluation to Sub-Saharan Africa to predict Chinese and Russian activities within the region that could exacerbate existing dynamics between the states.

In exploring the security dilemma dynamics of the Sino-Russian partnership and their potential manifestation in Sub-Saharan Africa, this thesis finds that the potential is high for security dilemma dynamics with China to drive Russian activities in the future. China’s actions to secure its energy resources supply through Russia created an asymmetric vulnerability between the states that favors China and in the long-term decreases Russia’s overall security. Despite mostly aligned interests towards balancing U.S. primacy, security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia could take hold because the states have a shared history that created a deep-seated sense of victimization vis-à-vis one another with underlying fears that could result in misperceptions as to the motives of both states. The effectiveness of the communication processes between the states that could ameliorate security dilemma dynamics is questionable, as both states prefer a level of secrecy in the intentions of their actions. The necessity of economic expansion for Russian and Chinese security and the centrality of self-preservation in this expansion for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Putin regime exacerbates the security dilemma dynamics between the two.

Within Sub-Saharan Africa, Russia’s actions to increase its economic engagement and access to natural resources in the region appear to be balancing reactions to mitigate security dilemma dynamics with China and are not a direct reaction to its asymmetric

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<sup>11</sup> Oscar Kaplan, “Prediction in the Social Sciences,” *Philosophy of Science* 7, no. 4 (1940): 492, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/184546>.

vulnerability meant to decrease China's security. Potential flashpoints that could exacerbate security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia in the future include: China's growing arms sales in the region, Russia's potential entry into Sub-Saharan Africa's high-tech consumer market, and Russia's activities to obtain a greater share of the global hydrocarbon supply through Sub-Saharan Africa.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. First, I outline the underlying logic of the security dilemma, the six conditions of the security dilemma used in the analysis, and factors that serve to exacerbate the dynamics from a third-party perspective. I then use the conditions to construct a two-level empirical test that holistically examines security dilemma dynamics between states outside of a specific location to facilitate predictions within a location under study. Third, I offer an empirical examination of the security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia external to a specified region and offer predictions on how they are likely to manifest in Sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, I conclude with thoughts on how the United States could leverage security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia for its benefit.

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## II. THE SECURITY DILEMMA

Evaluating security dilemma dynamics in the present and using the results to predict their future manifestations is a challenging task, to say the least. Like states trapped in the dilemma, one cannot truly know the motives and intentions of states without the luxury provided by hindsight or intimate knowledge of states' decision-making processes; nor can one truly know how a state will react in the future. However, the rich body of security dilemma literature provides ample support for conditions that at a minimum imply the existence of security dilemma dynamics between states and the processes that exacerbate these dynamics. Thoroughly examining these conditions and processes may facilitate useful predictions for use in policy prescription. This chapter first outlines the logic of the security dilemma to establish a baseline understanding of security dilemma dynamics. It then draws from the literature to identify six conditions that indicate the intensity of security dilemma dynamics between states and explore ways in which the security dilemma could be exacerbated. Last, the conditions derived from the literature are used to construct an empirical test for security dilemma dynamics between states.

### A. LOGIC OF THE SECURITY DILEMMA

The security dilemma is a behavioral dynamic between states in which insecurity breeds competition with escalatory effects potentially leading up and to the point of war that, as Liff and Ikenberry note, states “would prefer to avoid if only [they] could receive credible commitments of the other side’s peaceful, or status quo, intentions.”<sup>12</sup> Jervis’ defines a security dilemma as a scenario in which “the means by which a state tries to increase its security decrease the security of others.”<sup>13</sup>

The logic of the security dilemma stems from the idea that in an anarchic international system, absent an overarching regulatory body, the priority of states must be

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<sup>12</sup> Liff and Ikenberry, “Racing Toward Tragedy?” 58.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma.” *World Politics: A Quarterly Journal of International Relations* 30, no. 2 (1978): 169.

self-preservation.<sup>14</sup> In a self-help system, states seek to increase their power for purposes of obtaining security to ensure their survival. For Herz, this focus on security pushes states to acquire increased power to counteract the power of other states.<sup>15</sup>

Often, however, increases in power and security by one state, as Jervis points out, “inadvertently threatens others.”<sup>16</sup> This is because security is often viewed, if erroneously, as a zero-sum game—increases in one state’s security decreases the security of others. States in a security dilemma are not intentionally pursuing offensive strategies or gains, but instead, are “status quo seekers” looking to protect what they already have.<sup>17</sup> In an anarchic system, however, perceived threats promulgate fear in others, which is difficult to dampen because there is no true method to obtain a level of certainty as to the intentions or future intentions of other states.<sup>18</sup> That is there is no way to determine if their activities are meant to be purely defensive or offensive or that their intentions will not change in the future.

Adding to the uncertainty, the distinction between defensive and offensive activities is not always clear, as they are often interchangeable.<sup>19</sup> For example, obtaining basing rights in one state to protect trade could enable power projection in a future conflict. Consequently, this fear and uncertainty create a situation in which states feel that they must react, or risk being at the mercy of stronger states—relegated to the fate of the weak.<sup>20</sup> These reactions generate what Herz labels a “vicious circle” of balancing and counterbalancing amongst states with each move making the other feel less secure and

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<sup>14</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 110.

<sup>15</sup> Herz, “Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma,” 157.

<sup>16</sup> Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma,” 170.

<sup>17</sup> Liff and Ikenberry, “Racing Toward Tragedy?” 58.

<sup>18</sup> Jervis, “Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?” 36.

<sup>19</sup> Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma,” 187.

<sup>20</sup> References the Melian Dialogue in Thucydides’ *The Peloponnesian War*, in which the Athenians stated to the Melians that “since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must,” taken from Thucydides, Robert B. Strassler, and Richard Crawley, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 352.

perpetuating the cycle.<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, this may be self-defeating and result in the states being overall less secure than before the activation of the security dilemma or further escalated to an unwanted war in a process Jervis labels as the “Spiral Model.”<sup>22</sup>

## **B. IDENTIFYING SECURITY DILEMMA DYNAMICS**

There is extensive literature with aims toward determining the scenarios and variables under which the dynamics of the security dilemma exist. I draw primarily from the seminal works of Robert Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma,” and Charles Glaser, “The Security Dilemma Revisited,” to outline six conditions that indicate the intensity of security dilemma dynamics between states: the degree to which states’ interest are aligned, level of uncertainty in the motives of other states, level of communication between states, level of vulnerability to other states’ actions, and the importance of expansion and self-preservation to the security of the states.<sup>23</sup> Taken together these conditions provide strong support for identifying security dilemma dynamics and can serve as the basis for an evaluation between states. The six conditions are outlined below.

**Aligned Interests:** Determining the degree to which states’ interests are aligned helps to distinguish competitive interactions that result from security dilemma dynamics from those that are the result of conflicts of interest. According to Glaser, in scenarios involving at least one “greedy state” that seeks to make gains beyond security, competition is more likely related to incompatible goals resulting from their pursuit of aggressive gains.<sup>24</sup> States acting greedy is contrary to the logic of the security dilemma in which the escalatory reactions are amongst status quo states. If one state in a competitive scenario is “greedy” and actively seeking gains at the expense of the other state, then the scenario did not result from security dilemma dynamics and is instead a conflict of interest. Likewise,

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<sup>21</sup> Herz, “Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma,” 157.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976): 62–82.

<sup>23</sup> See Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma” and Glaser, “The Security Dilemma Revisited.”

<sup>24</sup> Glaser, 190.

if two states' interests are aligned and potential or actual competition exists, security dilemma dynamics may be at play.

**Uncertainty in Motives:** Identifying the factors that may cause uncertainty in states' perceptions of one another's motives helps to gauge the degree to which security dilemma dynamics may take hold because uncertainty in motives could lead to states misinterpreting actions by others as malign and incite the action-reaction cycle. This is congruent with Jervis' offense-defense differentiation in which the ability to distinguish between offensive and defensive postures and weapons affects the level of uncertainty states have in the motives of other states. When defensive postures and weapons are clearly delineated from those centering on offense, as Jervis notes, "much of the uncertainty about the others intentions that contributes to the security dilemma is removed."<sup>25</sup> States are then able to improve their defensive posture and increase their security without making other states less secure.<sup>26</sup> Often, however, it is difficult to differentiate between offensive and defensive actions or weapons because they may serve dual purposes, depending on the situation involved in the scenario. When the offense-defense divide is not entirely clear, states may misinterpret defensive actions for aggressive actions that activate the security dilemma and decrease the chance of cooperation.<sup>27</sup> For Glaser, the overall information that states have of other states, including historical knowledge and past relationships, influence their perception of others' motives and can either diminish or intensify security dilemma dynamics.<sup>28</sup> For example, if states have a checkered past of animosity or aggression towards one another, the remnants of uncertainty as to each other's motives may still be present—regardless of the current status-quo relationship—and could potentially activate security dilemma dynamics.

**Communication:** The intensity of security dilemma dynamics between states partly depends on their ability to ameliorate the dynamics through transparency and

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<sup>25</sup> Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," 201.

<sup>26</sup> Jervis, 186 – 87.

<sup>27</sup> Jervis, 201.

<sup>28</sup> Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited," 192–93.

reassurance of the intentions of their actions.<sup>29</sup> If little communication and transparency exist between status quo states, their interactions are more likely to be impacted by security dilemma dynamics because the lack of communication perpetuates the fear and uncertainty as to other states' intentions that drive the security dilemma. States with more robust communications have a greater opportunity to convey both the motives behind their actions and their interpretation of the other's motives.<sup>30</sup> This may remove much of the uncertainty between the states, reassure both of their status quo intentions, and dampen security dilemma dynamics.

**Vulnerability:** Security dilemma dynamics are likely more intense when states are vulnerable because vulnerability heightens a state's sense of fear that others will use it to harm the state. This prevents the state from obtaining a level of certainty in its security and increases its urgency to react to others' actions. This is in-line with Jervis' offense-defense balance in which the side that has the advantage determines how vulnerable a state is to an attack, and its ability to gain reassurance of its security. For Jervis, when defense has the advantage—meaning that it is easier to defend, rather than seize territory—defensive postures allow states to achieve a reasonable level of assurance as to their self-preservation that minimizes the effects of anarchy.<sup>31</sup> Conversely, when offense has the advantage states are not assured of their self-preservation and fear of attack makes it impossible to increase security without threatening another state.<sup>32</sup> A high level of vulnerability indicates that the offense has the advantage and that states should react to prevent other states from leveraging this vulnerability.<sup>33</sup> This reaction may make others feel less secure and allow security dilemma dynamics to take hold. Conversely, if states are less vulnerable, they feel more secure, and the security dilemma has less room to operate.

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<sup>29</sup> Consistent with Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma" and Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited."

<sup>30</sup> Liff and Ikenberry, "Racing Toward Tragedy?" 62.

<sup>31</sup> Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," 187.

<sup>32</sup> Jervis, 188–89.

<sup>33</sup> Jervis, 196–97.

**Expansion:** For Jervis, the security dilemma is most intense when “commitments, strategy, or technology dictate that the only route to security lies through expansion.”<sup>34</sup> When this is the case, states that would prefer the status quo must pursue aggressive policies or risk losing ground to other states due to shifts in influence and control over territory.<sup>35</sup> These aggressive actions could generate a reaction in other states, despite all preferring security guarantees.<sup>36</sup>

**Self-Preservation:** Last, the stakes involved in the activities of states is an indicator of the intensity of security dilemma dynamics because states are more likely to be fearful, misperceive other states’ actions, and overreact if survival is on the line. As Jervis argues, self-preservation must be the primary concern of states, and when self-preservation is at stake, it is impossible for another state to increase its security without threatening others.<sup>37</sup> As a result, states feel a heightened sense of threat which causes tension and an urgency to react in response to other states’ actions to ensure their survival. Although the threat to the survival of states in the present international system is low, certain types of governments such as monarchies, authoritarian regimes, and oligarchies, *are* the state and their activities may, in fact, be to ensure the survival of their regimes—which heightens the intensity of security dilemma dynamics.

### C. EXACERBATING THE SECURITY DILEMMA

The security dilemma creates scenarios that are both costly and dangerous for the states involved. Accordingly, much of the security dilemma literature focuses on ways to ameliorate its dynamics. Few if any studies directly address the process by which a third-party state could leverage the dynamics of the security dilemma to inflict costs on

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<sup>34</sup> Jervis, 187.

<sup>35</sup> Jervis, 187.

<sup>36</sup> Jervis, 187.

<sup>37</sup> Jervis, 188–89.

adversarial states. Several scholars, however, propose variants of the security dilemma in which deliberate acts by states exacerbate its dynamics.<sup>38</sup>

Snyder's imperialist dilemma involves states seeking "nonsecurity [sic], expansionist aims," including "political, economic, or ideological influence."<sup>39</sup> In doing so, states, who prefer compromise over war, develop offensive capabilities and engage in posturing to achieve their aims.<sup>40</sup> This, in turn, incites competition over these non-security interests as other states seek to maintain the balance of power.<sup>41</sup> Despite preferring to compromise, the competition continues to escalate because the states are unable to come to an agreement as a result of incompatible security interests.<sup>42</sup>

Expounding on Snyder's work, Collins adds the state-induced security dilemma. The state-induced security dilemma occurs when a state seeking to maintain the status quo purposefully acts aggressively to intimidate other states.<sup>43</sup> According to Collins, the goal is "not to overthrow the existing status quo, but rather to consolidate it by making others too frightened to challenge it."<sup>44</sup> The overall aim of the state is to increase its absolute security "by requiring others to feel insecure."<sup>45</sup> Collins believes that in this scenario the security dilemma can take hold because other states cannot distinguish these types of aggressive acts from those of revisionist states and thus react accordingly.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the

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<sup>38</sup> Tang, however, disputes these claims and instead presents psychological and material regulators as the cause of exacerbated security dilemma dynamics to which third-party states may be able to leverage; see Shipping Tang, "The Security Dilemma: A Conceptual Analysis," *Security Studies* 18, no. 3 (2009): 615, doi:10.1080/09636410903133050.

<sup>39</sup> Jack L. Snyder, "Perceptions of the Security Dilemma in 1914," in *Psychology and Deterrence*, ed. Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 165, 156.

<sup>40</sup> Snyder, 165.

<sup>41</sup> Snyder, 166.

<sup>42</sup> Snyder, 166.

<sup>43</sup> Alan Collins, "State-Induced Security Dilemma: Maintaining the Tragedy," *Cooperation and Conflict* 39, no. 1 (2004): 34, doi:10.1177/0010836704040833.34.

<sup>44</sup> Collins, 34.

<sup>45</sup> Collins, 34.

<sup>46</sup> Collins, 34.

aggressive state inflames the security dilemma through deliberate actions to gain hegemony over other states.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, Roe's regular security dilemma involves states who base their security on the insecurity of others.<sup>48</sup> Roe labels this as "required security: my security necessitates your insecurity."<sup>49</sup> In Roe's regular security dilemma, states are not greedy states attempting to change the status quo but nor are they status quo states because they actively pursue relative gains to increase their security.<sup>50</sup> States involved in this type of security dilemma do not necessarily react out of misperception, but rather out of true incompatibilities.<sup>51</sup>

Wheeler and Booth add their concept of the deliberate security dilemma in which a security dilemma may occur under two circumstances. The first circumstance occurs when a status quo state pursues "deliberately offensive strategies" aimed at deterring an adversarial state, while still claiming to have defensive goals.<sup>52</sup> The "offensive measures" taken are not meant to challenge the status quo, yet the adversarial state is caught in a dilemma because of the contradiction between the other's activities and stated defensive intent.<sup>53</sup> The second circumstance occurs when a revisionist state "adopts a posture designed to lull the target state into a false sense of security."<sup>54</sup> The contradiction in the state's revisionist actions and its conveyed non-revisionist intent, again, activates dilemma dynamics between the states.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Collins, 34.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Roe, "Actors' Responsibility in 'Tight', 'Regular' Or 'Loose' Security Dilemmas," *Security Dialogue* 32, no. 1 (2001): 108, doi:10.1177/0967010601032001008.

<sup>49</sup> Roe, 108.

<sup>50</sup> Roe, 108.

<sup>51</sup> Roe, 109.

<sup>52</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler and Ken Booth, "The Security Dilemma," in *Dilemmas of World Politics: International Issues in a Changing World*, ed. John Baylis and N. J. Rengger (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 31.

<sup>53</sup> Wheeler and Booth, 31.

<sup>54</sup> Wheeler and Booth, 31.

<sup>55</sup> Wheeler and Booth, 31.

Tang, however, disputes the idea of security dilemma variants. He argues that because the origin of the security dilemma is structural and stems from the uncertainty and fear brought on by the anarchic nature of the international system, actions generated by the state cannot cause a security dilemma.<sup>56</sup> Instead, Tang feels that scholars are confusing variants of the security dilemma with its regulators or what Wheeler and Booth call “aggravating factors.”<sup>57</sup>

Tang divides regulators of the security dilemma into two types: psychological and material.<sup>58</sup> Psychological regulators are the factors that affect security dilemma dynamics through cognitive processes and emotions that impact the decision-making of the state, such as fear, uncertainty, misperception, and biases. Material regulators are the observable or measurable factors that increase the severity of the security dilemma, such as geography, vulnerability, and power distribution. Material regulators intertwine with the psychological to exacerbate security dilemma dynamics through a process in which the physical aspects of the dynamics between states creates a sense of danger that poses a threat to something states value. This threat escalates the level of fear and uncertainty that states hold towards the actions of others and causes them to interpret states’ activities as malign and react accordingly. For Tang, this fear and uncertainty are not the structural variables that are the root cause of security dilemmas, but rather are self-generated in a cyclic fashion through misperceptions due to the inability to distinguish states’ intentions.<sup>59</sup> In addition, as Booth and Wheeler point out, fears have “histories, cultures, and politics” which affect how states interpret threats.<sup>60</sup> The interplay of fear and misperception of threats influenced by this knowledge may cause states to overvalue the threat other states pose and misjudge the intentions of their actions—exacerbating security dilemma dynamics.

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<sup>56</sup> Tang, “The Security Dilemma: A Conceptual Analysis,” 597.

<sup>57</sup> Tang, 609–614; Wheeler and Booth, “The Security Dilemma,” 40.

<sup>58</sup> Tang, 615.

<sup>59</sup> Tang argues that, “we should clearly differentiate the causal factors that give birth to the security dilemma from the potential intermediary outcomes that are induced by the security dilemma but at the same time can come back to reinforce the security dilemma through a feedback mechanism” in Tang, 597.

<sup>60</sup> Booth and Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation, and Trust in World Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 64.

The regulators of the security dilemma provide inherent avenues for third-party states to exacerbate dynamics between others by creating or perpetuating the inherent fears and misperceptions of states. As Waltz notes, one of the biggest fears that states have is that their interactions with others will yield unfavorable gains and create a dependency on others.<sup>61</sup> Third-party states could perpetuate this thought by generating a negative threat perception in the eyes of the targeted state through consistently highlighting the asymmetries in the interactions of states through various means of influence such as media, academia, and international forums. This could create doubt in the intentions of other states actions and cause the targeted state to react in kind.

Third-party states could also take actions to increase a targeted state's vulnerability resulting from its dependence on others to exacerbate security dilemma dynamics. When the security of a state is disproportionately tied to another state, the latter has the "offensive advantage" and can harm the state through actions that impact the source of this vulnerability. Keohane and Nye define vulnerability in terms of "the relative availability and costliness of the alternatives" that could alleviate a dependency.<sup>62</sup> States are more vulnerable to the actions of other states if the cost of alternatives is higher for them relative the other.<sup>63</sup> Third-party states could take actions to increase the cost of alternatives for targeted states to deepen their dependency on other states. This would further decrease the security of targeted states and may cause reactions to mitigate vulnerabilities or counter other states' actions that perpetuate the vulnerability in an escalation of the security dilemma.

Last, third-party states could play into states' preconceived perceptions and biases towards other states to increase ambiguity in others' actions that may escalate security dilemma dynamics. Things such as past interactions, shared histories, and biases can perpetuate underlying fears which lead to uncertainty in the motives of states. Third-party states could take actions that uses these fears to sow doubt in the intentions of states actions

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<sup>61</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 106.

<sup>62</sup> Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1989), 13.

<sup>63</sup> Keohane and Nye, 16.

such as accentuating similar ideology or ethnic backgrounds in interactions with targeted states, emphasizing states underlying fears towards others in state rhetoric and policy, or highlighting past negative interactions between targeted states to their leaders and people, which may cause states to misinterpret the intent of others' actions and initiate an action-reaction cycle that exacerbates security dilemma dynamics between the states.

#### **D. EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION FOR SECURITY DILEMMA DYNAMICS**

Liff and Ikenberry are correct when they state that, “the transition from the realm of abstract theory to the empirical world is often treacherous” and “rarely do real-world cases fit neatly into the theoretical boxes in which scholars place them.”<sup>64</sup> This is never truer than when attempting to use theory to evaluate the motives and intentions of states without access to their decision-making process. Nevertheless, this thesis attempts to develop an empirical examination that provides support for its findings by grounding its questions with solid theoretical underpinnings that enable a relatively accurate portrayal of the security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia and their application to Sub-Saharan Africa.

This thesis takes its approach from Liff and Ikenberry, to develop a two-level, seven-question empirical examination based on the previously outlined six conditions of security dilemma dynamics.<sup>65</sup> The first level focuses on gauging the intensity of security dilemma dynamics and identifying ways in which the security dilemma could manifest between China and Russia independent of a specified region. The second level of the examination applies the knowledge gained from the external evaluation to Sub-Saharan Africa to first identify two types of balancing reactions to security dilemma dynamics: those that exacerbate the dynamics and those that mitigate the dynamics. Balancing reactions that exacerbate security dilemma dynamics are reactions to a decrease in security which counters the initial action in a security dilemma in a way which decreases the

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<sup>64</sup> Liff and Ikenberry, “Racing Toward Tragedy?” 63.

<sup>65</sup> Liff and Ikenberry acknowledge that they adapted their approach from Seiichiro Takagi, “Reisengo No Nichibei Domei To Hokuto Ajia” and Sahoko Shiag, “The Security Dilemma and the Strategic Triangle in East Asia after the Cold War”; Liff and Ikenberry, 63–65.

security of other states and could generate a counterreaction. Arms races are an example of this type of balancing in which states attempt to gain a level of superiority over others' military capability. Balancing reactions that mitigate security dilemma dynamics are those that are a reaction to a decrease in security that do not directly counter another state's actions or decrease the other's security but are instead undertaken to increase the state's overall security. An example of this type of balancing is a state increasing its economic capacity without direct harm to other states. Next, the second level uses the external assessment to predict actions by China and Russia within Sub-Saharan Africa that could exacerbate existing dynamics between the states. These levels should not be viewed as mutually exclusive of one another, but rather as part of a holistic assessment. The empirical questions by level follow.

**1. Between China and Russia**

- Are the states' interests aligned? (Glaser)
- Are there factors that cause uncertainty in the states' motives relative to each other? (Jervis, Glaser)
- What is the level of communication between the states? (Jervis, Glaser)
- Where do the security interests of the states intersect and to what degree does this intersection create vulnerability within the state? (Jervis)
- To what degree do expansion and self-preservation impact the security of the states? (Jervis)

**2. Within Sub-Saharan Africa**

- Do the states' actions in the region appear to be a reaction to a decrease in security vis-à-vis the other state?
- What activities by the states in the region could exacerbate security dilemma dynamics between the states?

In the following chapter, I utilize the empirical questions to analyze the current Chinese – Russian relationship and interactions to outline the nature and extent of security dilemma dynamics between the states. My objective is to determine the extent to which

security dilemma dynamics are present in their partnership, how they drive their activities in Sub-Saharan Africa, and predict activities that could exacerbate the dynamics in the region.

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### **III. EVALUATING CHINESE AND RUSSIAN ACTIVITIES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

This chapter first explores the security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia without reference to a specific area. This is done to gauge the intensity of security dilemma dynamics within the relationship and identify factors that may impact the manifestation of the security dilemma within Sub-Saharan Africa. I then proceed to explore possible reactions to security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia Sub-Saharan Africa and activities that could exacerbate the dynamics in the future.

#### **A. EVALUATION BETWEEN CHINA AND RUSSIA**

Evaluating state interactions for security dilemma dynamics in a specific region first requires an appraisal of the external dynamics that may influence those within the specified region. External factors such as the alignment of states' interests, causes of uncertainty in motives, level of communication between the states, and the intersection of their security interests help identify security dilemma dynamics between states by eliminating potential conflicts of interest and providing a basis for spotting areas where the security dilemma is likely to appear. This section evaluates the relationship between China and Russia for these dynamics by answering five distinct questions: Are the states' interests aligned? Are there factors that may cause uncertainty in the motives of the states? What is the level of communication between the states? Where do the security interests of the states intersect and to what degree does this intersection create vulnerability within the states? To what degree do expansion and self-preservation impact the security of the states?

In answering these questions, I find that the potential is high for security dilemma dynamics with China to drive Russian activities in the future. China's actions to secure its energy resources supply through Russia created an asymmetric vulnerability between the states that favors China and in the long-term decreases Russia's overall security. Despite, China and Russia's largely aligned mutual interests centered around balancing U.S. primacy, Russia's decrease in security is likely to generate a reaction from the state. Security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia are likely to take hold because the

states have a shared history that created a deep-seated sense of victimization vis-à-vis one another, with underlying fears that could result in misperceptions as to the motives of both states. Robust interstate communications processes between the states that could ameliorate the security dilemma are present, but the level of transparency within these communications is questionable. Both states prefer a level of secrecy in the intentions of their actions, which decreases the potential of their communications to dampen security dilemma dynamics. Last, the necessity of economic expansion for Chinese and Russian security and the centrality of self-preservation in this expansion for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Putin regime exacerbates security dilemma dynamics between the two. This section proceeds by answering the four empirical questions and is followed by a discussion of the results.

### **1. Are Chinese and Russian Interests Aligned?**

The degree to which Chinese and Russian interests are aligned is an elimination criterion in the evaluation of security dilemma dynamics between the states because it distinguishes security dilemma scenarios from those characterized by conflicts of interest. As Liff and Ikenberry note, states in a security dilemma are “status quo seekers” and do not intentionally engage in offensive activities vis-à-vis other states.<sup>66</sup> If at least one state in a competitive scenario is “greedy” and pursues aggressive actions at the expense of another or if the interests of the states are fundamentally misaligned, this indicates malign intentions on the part of the states and the potential or actual action-reaction cycle is likely a result of a conflict of interest vice security dilemma dynamics. Whereas, if states’ interests are aligned and potential or actual competition exists, then the presence of security dilemma dynamics remains a possibility. In examining the degree to which Chinese and Russian interests are aligned, this section finds that the resentment of the U.S.-led international order drove China and Russia to align their interests in response to what they view as a disproportionate amount of power afforded the United States relative their own. Evidence of which can be found in their increased defense ties and activities in multilateral organizations. China and Russia are not “greedy” towards one another and prefer to take a

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<sup>66</sup> Liff and Ikenberry, 58.

pragmatic approach where potential conflicts of interest exist. As such, security dilemma dynamics are likely drivers of potential or actual competition between the states and not conflicts of interest.

The U.S.-led efforts to punish Russia for the 2008 Russo-Georgian War and its 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine led to a resurgence in cooperation between Beijing and Moscow, with both China and Russia finding in each other a path to thwarting U.S. attempts at policing the world. China readily increased its oil imports from Russia, which dampened the impact of Western sanctions, and Russia increased both the quantity and quality of arms sales to China as it looked to grow its military to match its rising economic power under the constraints of its own Western arms embargo. This relationship continued to blossom as both shared the view that the unequal amount of power yielded by the United States gave it a global reach that encroached on their spheres of influence and presented a threat to their territorial integrity and regimes.<sup>67</sup> They view the revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan in the early 2000s and the toppling of several authoritarian regimes such as those in Iraq and Libya, as demonstrations of the reality of this threat.<sup>68</sup> In addition, the U.S. National Missile Defense agenda unified China and Russia against what they perceive as a blatant attempt by the United States to contain them and limit their ability to defend their interests.<sup>69</sup>

Recently, several scholars point out that this mutual resentment strengthened the Sino-Russian connection with classifications of the relationship ranging from on the verge

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<sup>67</sup> Saradzhyan and Wyne, "Sino-Russian Relations," 91.

<sup>68</sup> Alexander Korolev, "On the Verge of an Alliance: Contemporary China-Russia Military Cooperation," *Asian Security* (2018b): 8, doi:10.1080/14799855.2018.1463991.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Sutter, "America's Bleak View of Russia-China Relations," *Asia Policy* 13, no. 1 (2018): 39.

of a strategic partnership to an unofficial full-fledged alliance.<sup>70</sup> Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized the reason for increased cooperation between the two in 2012 stating that “Beijing shares our vision of the emerging equitable world order.”<sup>71</sup> Likewise, in 2018, after awarding Putin China’s first friendship medal, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated that “in the face of a complex international situation,...China and Russia will increase mutual support and coordination in international affairs and deepen strategic cooperation.”<sup>72</sup> Overall, China’s economic standing affords it a level of power that it feels warrants more considerable influence over the international system, while Russia has always viewed itself as a great power and seeks its “natural” place in the upper-echelon of states. Both of whom view U.S. primacy as standing in opposition to these goals, and the multipolar world they both seek to promote.

As a result of this growing partnership, China and Russia progressively increased their defense ties in ways that indicate they view one another as important partners in standing against U.S. primacy and that neither anticipates a conflict of interest. Both Schwartz and Røseth note that a deepening of the defense relationship between the two occurred in 2016 after Russia began to deliver on several major arms agreements signed in the previous year.<sup>73</sup> In 2016, Russia delivered the first group of a scheduled 24 of Russia’s

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<sup>70</sup> Saradzhyan and Wyne, “Sino-Russian Relations,” 91; Sutter, “America’s Bleak View of Russia-China Relations,” 39; Alexey D. Muraviev, “Comrades in Arms: The Military-Strategic Aspects of China-Russia Relations,” *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 1, no. 2 (2014): 169, doi:10.1177/2347797014536638; Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Gas and Oil Cooperation: Entering into a New Era of Strategic Partnership?* (Oxford, UK: Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, 2015), 40; Alexander Korolev, “Systemic Balancing and Regional Hedging: China-Russia Relations,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 9, no. 4 (2016): 375; Tom Røseth, “Russia’s Energy Relations with China: Passing the Strategic Threshold?” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 58, no. 1 (2017): 48, doi:10.1080/15387216.2017.1304229; Korolev, “On the Verge of an Alliance,” 3, 8; Alexander Korolev, “Beyond the Nominal and the Ad Hoc: The Substance and Drivers of China-Russia Military Cooperation,” *Insight Turkey* 20, no. 1 (2018b): 28, doi:10.25253/99.2018201.02; Tom Røseth, “Moscow’s Response to a Rising China: Russia’s Partnership Policies in its Military Relations with Beijing,” *Problems of Post-Communism* (2018): 1–2, doi:10.1080/10758216.2018.1438847.

<sup>71</sup> Vladimir V. Putin, “Russia and the Changing World,” *Sputnik News*, last modified February 27, 2012, <https://sputniknews.com/analysis/20120227171547818/>.

<sup>72</sup> Ben Blanchard and Denis Pinchuk, “China’s Xi Awards ‘Best Friend’ Putin Friendship Medal, Promises Support,” *Reuters*, June 8, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-russia/chinas-xi-awards-best-friend-putin-friendship-medal-promises-support-idUSKCN1J41RO>.

<sup>73</sup> Paul Schwartz, “Russia-China Defense Cooperation: New Developments,” *The ASAN Forum*, February 9, 2017, <http://www.theasanforum.org/russia-china-defense-cooperation-new-developments/>; Røseth, “Moscow’s Response to a Rising China,” 2.

most advanced fighter jet, the Su-35—making China the first state other than Russia to receive it.<sup>74</sup> This delivery was followed in 2017 by the transfer of the first of six battalions of S-400 air defense systems and several Kamov helicopters and Russian engines for use in Chinese jets and bombers.<sup>75</sup> This weaponry significantly increases China’s anti-access/area-denial capabilities and serves to undermine U.S. military power in Taiwan and the South China Sea and overall decreases the relative power of the United States and its allies vis-à-vis China.<sup>76</sup> This arms transfer also increases China’s military power relative to Russia and could be used against Russia in the event of a dispute on their shared border.<sup>77</sup> Russia’s willingness to transfer weapons that China could use to harm both it and the United States indicates that Russia does not foresee a large-scale conflict of interest with China and instead focus on their shared goal of balancing the United States.

China and Russia’s increased military-to-military cooperation also indicates that the states’ interests are aligned, and they have used this cooperation to signal their solidarity in opposing U.S. primacy. Joint military exercises between China and Russia have steadily grown in both size and scope since the initial development of their “Peace Mission” exercises in 2004.<sup>78</sup> Joint exercises between the states now occur every one to two years and evolved from scenarios focused on revolutions and other political strife to those aimed at third-party states.<sup>79</sup> The latest exercise, VOSTOK 2018, was the largest joint exercise between the two states to date—with between 75,000 and 100,000 Russian troops and around 3,000 Chinese troops participating—and the first to openly highlight scenarios that involved a third-party “enemy” in which combined forces from Russia, China, and

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<sup>74</sup> Elmer Keegan and Liu Zhen, “What Russian Weapons are being Bought by China?” *South China Morning Post*, last edited September 29, 2018, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/2165182/what-weapons-china-buying-russia>.

<sup>75</sup> Schwartz, “Russia-China Defense Cooperation”; Keegan and Zhen, “What Russian Weapons are being Bought by China?”

<sup>76</sup> Røseth, “Moscow’s Response to a Rising China,” 8–9.

<sup>77</sup> Røseth, 8.

<sup>78</sup> Korolev, “Beyond the Nominal and the Ad Hoc,” 35.

<sup>79</sup> Korolev, “On the Verge of an Alliance,” 12.

Mongolia maneuvered against other conventional forces.<sup>80</sup> Though the official purpose of the exercise from the Chinese government was to develop the “China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination,” China’s state-sponsored media published editorials which signal that China views the exercise in terms of solidifying a Sino-Russian partnership to counter the United States, with one op-ed viewing the exercise as part of a broader “reasonable stance” against “hegemonic powers [that] target China and Russia.”<sup>81</sup> For Russia, the inclusion of a state-based opposition force in the exercise and the emphasis placed on the scenario when describing the exercise to the rest of the world, signals to the West and China that it foresees potential opposition to its return as a great power from the United States and views China as a partner to counter this effort and not as an adversary.<sup>82</sup>

Last, Chinese and Russian shared activities in multilateral organizations provide further indication of their aligned interests against U.S. primacy. Both China and Russia view the United Nations (UN) as an essential forum to shape changes to the U.S.-led international system and promote multipolarity and have jointly used it to advance this effort.<sup>83</sup> In 1997 they introduced a “Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World and the Establishment of a New World Order,” which according to Stronski and Ng is as an “early indication of their common resentment of Western dominance” and demonstrates their

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<sup>80</sup> Dave Johnson, “VOSTOK 2018: Ten Years of Russian Strategic Exercises and Warfare Preparation,” *NATO Review*, December 20, 2018, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2018/Also-in-2018/vostok-2018-ten-years-of-russian-strategic-exercises-and-warfare-preparation-military-exercices/EN/index.htm>; Michael Kofman, “Vostok 2018 Strategic Maneuvers: Exercise Plan,” *Russia Military Analysis* (blog), September 10, 2018, <https://russianmilitaryanalysis.wordpress.com/2018/09/10/vostok-2018-strategic-maneuvers-exercise-plan/>.

<sup>81</sup> Sam Majumdar, “Vostok-2018: Russia (with China Making a Guest Appearance) Set for Largest Wargames in over Three Decades,” *The Buzz* (blog), *The National Interest*, August 23, 2018, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/vostok-2018-russia-china-making-guest-appearance-set-largest-wargames-over-three-decades>; Guo Yuandan and Liu Yupeng, “China’s First Participation in Russian “Vostok-2018” Drills Sends Three Signals,” *China Military*, September 22, 2018, [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-08/22/content\\_9260656.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-08/22/content_9260656.htm); Hue, “Scale of Chinese Troops Participating in Russian “Vostok-2018” Drills Makes History,” *China Military*, September 22, 2018, [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-08/22/content\\_9259471.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-08/22/content_9259471.htm).

<sup>82</sup> Jonathan Stevenson, ed., “Russia’s Vostok 2018 War Games,” *Strategic Comments* 24, no. 8 (2018): vi, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13567888.2018.1538274>.

<sup>83</sup> Peter Ferdinand, *The Positions of Russia and China at the UN Security Council in the Light of Recent Crises* (Belgium: European Union, 2013): 19, <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8548d4c3-e486-42e7-9462-7e3ed914a470/language-en>.

willingness to work together to change the system.<sup>84</sup> They often synchronize their standing on issues and use their status as permanent members of the UN Security Council to veto efforts that oppose common interests such as concerns over the sovereignty of other states.<sup>85</sup> A recent demonstration of this occurred when, on four separate occasions between 2011 and 2014, China and Russia vetoed U.S.-backed UN resolutions on Syria that would have enabled a joint effort to remove the Assad regime from power.

China and Russia are also founding and leading members of other multilateral organizations that seek to provide an alternative to U.S.-led security and economic apparatuses including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS. The SCO is quickly becoming a formidable organization and includes four of the top ten most populous countries in the world in China, India, Pakistan, and Russia, all of which are nuclear powers and possess sizable militaries with growing capabilities.<sup>86</sup> In addition, including the organization's other members, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, the SCO states encompass most of the landmass of Eurasia and possess significant energy reserves in the form of oil, natural gas, and coal. The SCO continues to improve relations amongst its members through regular military exercises and cooperation on various economic issues and initiatives and presents an attractive alternative to the U.S.-led security organizations for non-Western states.

The BRICS collective also provides China and Russia with a forum to promote an alternative to U.S. global leadership. On July 7, 2015, the BRICS organization activated its New Development Bank to support “fast, flexible, and efficient” development projects in emerging countries throughout the world.<sup>87</sup> Initiatives such as the New Development Bank provide states with alternatives to condition-based Western investments that often

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<sup>84</sup> Paul Stronski and Nicole Ng, *Cooperation and Competition: Russia and China in Central Asia, the Russian Far East, and the Arctic* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2018): 6, [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP\\_331\\_Stronski\\_Ng\\_Final1.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_331_Stronski_Ng_Final1.pdf).

<sup>85</sup> Ferdinand, *The Positions of Russia and China at the UN Security Council in the Light of Recent Crises*, 13.

<sup>86</sup> “The World Population and the Top Ten Countries with the Highest Population,” Internet World Stats, March 14, 2019, <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats8.htm>.

<sup>87</sup> “Our Work,” New Development Bank, accessed March 13, 2019, <https://www.ndb.int/about-us/essence/our-work/>.

require significant governmental and economic reforms that many states are reluctant to make. This positions China and Russia to gain greater influence and support in developing states and increase their ability to oppose U.S. primacy. The New Development Bank also utilizes the Chinese Renminbi as its primary currency which, Korolev feels “represents an eloquent attempt to break the dominance of the U.S. dollar in global trade, as well as dollar-backed institutions.”<sup>88</sup>

Nevertheless, China and Russia face potential conflicts of interest in their traditional spheres of influence in places such as Vietnam, Central Asia, and the Arctic. China and Vietnam are engaged in a hotly contested dispute over claims to the Paracel and Spratly island chains in the South China Sea. In light of this dispute, Russia continues its arms sales to Vietnam which reportedly included the sale of six new Kilo-type submarines in 2017 and a new sales agreement worth an estimated one-billion dollars in 2018.<sup>89</sup> In addition, Russia’s state-owned energy company, Gazprom, came to an agreement with the Vietnamese government in 2012 to extract natural gas from Vietnam’s continental shelf in the South China Sea, despite requests from Beijing not to proceed.<sup>90</sup>

In Central Asia, China is actively seeking access to the region’s energy reserves and economic markets and has increased its influence through development projects as part of its Belt and Road Initiative. Russia, on the other hand, views Chinese encroachment as contrary to its security and economic interests in one of its most valued traditional spheres of influence.<sup>91</sup> In the Arctic, China and Russia have diverging interests on the ultimate fate of the region. Climate change in the Arctic will likely result in improved access to an estimated 30% of the world’s undiscovered natural gas and 13% of its undiscovered oil and open up the shorter and potentially cheaper Northern Shipping Route from China’s

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<sup>88</sup> Korolev, “Systemic Balancing and Regional Hedging,” 390.

<sup>89</sup> “Vietnam Signs Deals for Russian Weapons worth over \$1bn,” Russia Business Today, September 8, 2018, <https://russiabusinesstoday.com/manufacturing/vietnam-signs-deals-for-russian-weapons-worth-over-1bn/>.

<sup>90</sup> Korolev, “Systemic Balancing and Regional Hedging,” 392.

<sup>91</sup> Korolev, 396.

east coast to European markets in the West.<sup>92</sup> China seeks to “internationalize” the region to allow it freedom of navigation to the European marketplace and to gain access to the region’s oil and gas and has asserted itself as a “Near Arctic State” in the affairs of the region.<sup>93</sup> Russia opposes interference from non-arctic states in determining the region’s fate and looks to economically capitalize on the region by charging fees for the use of the route and ensuring sovereignty over the hydrocarbon resources in its claimed Arctic territory.<sup>94</sup> Russia also views the opening of the Arctic in terms of the negative impact it has on its security in which maintaining sovereignty over its claimed territories within the region is integral to the security of its northern shores.<sup>95</sup>

These potential conflicts of interest between China and Russia, however, are not likely to result in a divergence from their greater interest in countering U.S. primacy, as both prefer to take a pragmatic approach in areas of potential conflict while avoiding areas they cannot.<sup>96</sup> China and Russia rarely criticize each other publicly and instead prefer to find common ground. As Korolev points out, China’s stance in response to Russian activities in Crimea, despite being contrary to its position on an independent Taiwan, were never openly negative and Russia does not criticize China’s stance in the South China Sea despite its relationship with Vietnam.<sup>97</sup> Instead, China chose to prevent the United States from isolating Russia by increasing trade and security cooperation in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea, while Russia signaled its support for China in the South China Sea

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<sup>92</sup> Donald L. Gautier et al., “Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas in the Arctic,” *Science* 324, no. 5931 (2009): 1175, doi:10.1126/science.1169467.

<sup>93</sup> Korolev, “Systemic Balancing and Regional Hedging,” 394; Stephanie Pezard, “The New Geopolitics of the Arctic: Russia’s and China’s Evolving Role in the Region” (testimony, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development of the Canadian House of Commons, November 26, 2018) (Santa Monica: RAND, 2018): 6, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT500/CT500/RAND\\_CT500.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT500/CT500/RAND_CT500.pdf).

<sup>94</sup> Stronski and Ng, *Cooperation and Competition*, 26; Korolev, “Systemic Balancing and Regional Hedging,” 394.

<sup>95</sup> Stronski and Ng, 25.

<sup>96</sup> Korolev, “Systemic Balancing and Regional Hedging,” 387.

<sup>97</sup> Korolev, 389.

by sending naval vessels into contested waters in 2018.<sup>98</sup> In addition, China and Russia continue to work together to foster cooperation in areas where their interests conflict. In Central Asia, Russia has conceded to China's economic role in the region, while China relies on Russia to maintain security.<sup>99</sup> Likewise, in the Arctic, China has increased its investment in Russian infrastructure and partnered with Russia for continued energy exploration in the region.

Overall, China and Russia have largely aligned interests in opposing U.S. primacy, which resulted in increased economic, military, and diplomatic cooperation. Where potential conflicts of interest exist, China and Russia take a pragmatic approach to finding areas for cooperation and avoiding conflict. China and Russia are not "greedy" in relation to each other and are not likely to have malign intent towards one another. As such, security dilemma dynamics are likely drivers of potential or actual competition between the states and not conflicts of interest.

## **2. Are There Factors that Cause Uncertainty in the Motives of China and Russia?**

Identifying the factors that may cause uncertainty in China and Russia's perception of one another's motives helps to determine the degree to which security dilemma dynamics may take hold because uncertainty could lead to states misinterpreting actions by the other as malign and incite the action-reaction cycle. In exploring these factors, this section finds that China and Russia have an arduous past filled with interactions that left the residue of fears which may impact how each interprets the actions of the other. Russia's fear of subjugation and retaliation and both states' fear of encirclement leaves an aura of uncertainty in the collective psyche of the states which increases the probability that security dilemma dynamics are at play in competitive interactions between the two.

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<sup>98</sup> Sam Sholli, "China and Russia THREATEN Japan after 'Enforcing' Claim to South China Sea with Military," *Express*, last edited January 28, 2018, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/910938/china-japan-south-china-sea-russia-vladimir-putin-us-senkaku-islands-diaoyu-islands>.

<sup>99</sup> Saradzhyan and Wyne, "Sino-Russian Relations," 97.

Russia's fear of subjugation and retaliation and both China and Russia's fears of encirclement may cause uncertainty in their perception of one another's actions. Russia's fear of subjugation by China stems from the 13th century CE when the Mongol Empire conquered much of what was to become Russia and subjugated its people for 250 years.<sup>100</sup> In his detailed analysis of Russia's perceptions of China, Lukin found that images of the "yellow peril" emanating from this period are still prevalent in Russia and continues to impact perceptions of China in the 21st century.<sup>101</sup> Russia deeply resents the Mongol rule which left a persistent trepidation of China and the subjugation Russia endured during this period.<sup>102</sup> As a result, Russia is cautious in its partnership with China and is extremely sensitive to the possibility of Chinese subjugation in the form of regional and international hegemony. Although China continues to proselytize its view of a more balanced multipolar system, Russia's fear of Chinese subjugation may cause it to question the true motives of Chinese activities regarding this view. This fear and uncertainty will likely increase as the distribution of power between the two continues to widen in favor of China. Røseth found tacit references to threats posed by China's rise in current Russian strategic documents and an "inherent ambivalence in Russia's security relations with China" despite their increased cooperation.<sup>103</sup> This uncertainty could cause Russia to react to China's activities out of fear that their actions are meant to achieve a level of hegemony over Russia to force it to submit to China's will—inciting security dilemma dynamics.

Russia's fear of retaliation from China may also increase its uncertainty in the motives of China's actions. During periods when Russia possessed the preponderance of power relative to China, it was not always equal in their interactions. In the 1800s, Russia capitalized on several of China's internal rebellions and the Opium War to occupy and

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<sup>100</sup> Tony Brenton, "Russia and China: An Axis of Insecurity," *Asian Affairs* 44, no. 2 (2013): 233, doi:10.1080/03068374.2013.794549.

<sup>101</sup> Alexander Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon: Russia's Perceptions of China and the Evolution of Russian-Chinese Relations Since the Eighteenth Century* (London, England: Routledge, 2015), 188.

<sup>102</sup> Lowell Dittmer, "The Sino-Russian Strategic Relationship: Ghost of the "Strategic Triangle"?", in *Between Rhetoric and Pragmatism: Nationalism as a Driving Force of Chinese Foreign Policy*, ed. Yufan Hao, C. X. George Wei, and Lowell Dittmer (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 87.

<sup>103</sup> Røseth, "Moscow's Response to a Rising China," 4–5.

annex over 1.5 million square kilometers of Chinese territory through what Brenton calls a “series of unequal treaties.”<sup>104</sup> Russia inflicted further costs on China by enabling the Mongol rebellion in 1910 and establishing Outer Mongolia as a Russian protectorate after it broke away from China in 1911. China views the loss of this territory as part of the “Century of Humiliation” from which it derives motivation for its rise to the top of the international system and the reversal of the losses suffered during this period.<sup>105</sup> The territory that Russia annexed, which now encompasses its Far East, are still viewed as Chinese territory by many Chinese nationals and China may want to reclaim this territory in the future.<sup>106</sup> Russian exodus from the region and its failure to develop and modernize the area, coupled with vibrant Chinese cities with over 110 million people pressing on the border heightens this sense.<sup>107</sup> The Russian Far East also contains an abundance of untapped natural resources that China needs to drive its economy. As China continues to increase its power, the possibility of China taking back this area becomes ever more credible in the eyes of Russia and creates greater uncertainty in its perception of China’s motives that could prompt a hostile reaction from Russia.

Similarly, Russia took advantage of China during the Soviet-era, which may also elicit fear of Chinese retaliation that creates uncertainty in its perceptions of Chinese actions. Russia’s preponderance of power over the new Communist People’s Republic of China (PRC) during the Soviet-era allowed it to play a “paternal” or “big brother” role to the fledgling state. China looked to its communist brethren in the Soviet Union for support as it attempted to remake the state in the image of communism after the revolution. However, instead of real support, Soviet Russia took advantage of China by implementing stipulations on aid that were disproportionately unfavorable to China. As Bolton states, the

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<sup>104</sup> Dittmer, “The Sino-Russian Strategic Relationship: Ghost of the “Strategic Triangle”?” 87; Brenton, “Russia and China,” 233.

<sup>105</sup> Suisheng Zhao, “Between Rhetoric and Pragmatism: Nationalism as a Driving Force of Chinese Foreign Policy,” in *Between Rhetoric and Pragmatism: Nationalism as a Driving Force of Chinese Foreign Policy*, ed. Yufan Hao, C. X. George Wei, and Lowell Dittmer (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 244–43.

<sup>106</sup> Saradzhyan and Wyne, “Sino-Russian Relations,” 95.

<sup>107</sup> Stronski and Ng, *Cooperation and Competition*, 18.

Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance that China hoped would provide Soviet support for its rise was “humiliating and debilitating.”<sup>108</sup> Soviet Russia required food as compensation for assistance in amounts that were beyond China’s capacity at the time and caused famine in some parts of China that were the precursor to the “Great Famine.”<sup>109</sup> Soviet Russia also spread the \$300 million loan that was part of the treaty over five years and limited the number of Chinese investment projects to 50, which were much less than those requested by China.<sup>110</sup> China was additionally forced to concede access to Manchuria and Xinjiang’s mineral resources to Russia which prompted Chang and Halliday to view this as “effectively signing away most of China’s tradable assets.”<sup>111</sup> By and large, the so-called Soviet support that the PRC needed in its critical initial stage of development was actually a demonstration of Soviet superiority in which it used its power to take advantage of Chinese weakness. In the current international system, however, the roles are reversed. China now has the preponderance of power relative to Russia and Russia relies on China to prop-up its economy through hydrocarbon resource and weapons purchases. Russia’s fear of retaliatory practices could cause it to view China’s activities as exploitative and result in uncertainty in Russia as to the true nature of the partnership. Russia may, in turn, react under the tension of this fear and uncertainty setting off security dilemma dynamics.

Last, both states’ fears of encirclement may cause uncertainty in the motives of each other’s actions which could incite security dilemma dynamics. Attempts by each state to improve relations with the United States dotted the recent history of the Sino-Russian relationship and incited a fear of encirclement within each other at various points. The first instance occurred during the Soviet Union’s Khrushchev era. Nikita Khrushchev assumed power after the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 and sought reforms which caused the PRC’s

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<sup>108</sup> K. R. Bolton, “Russia and China an Approaching Conflict?” *The Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies* 34, no. 2 (2009): 156.

<sup>109</sup> Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 2005): 310.

<sup>110</sup> Bolton, “Russia and China an Approaching Conflict?” 157.

<sup>111</sup> Chang and Halliday, *Mao*, 368.

leader, Mao Zedong to consider him a traitor to the Stalinist ideology.<sup>112</sup> He denounced Stalin's policies in his 1956 "Secret Speech" at the 20th Soviet Communist Party Congress and made references to normalizing relations with the United States.<sup>113</sup> This heightened the fear of encirclement in China and contributed to the ideological divide and contentious relationship between China and Russia that lasted into the 1980s.<sup>114</sup>

Russia experienced the same fear as a result of China's détente with the United States in the 1970s. Early in the 1970s, the U.S. view of China began to shift as it began to open to the outside world. The Sino-Soviet relationship during this time was still fractured and the United States, under President Nixon, took advantage of this divide and China's newfound willingness to cooperate to improve U.S.-Chinese relations in an attempt to "stretch the Soviet Union on two fronts."<sup>115</sup> Desperately needing increased trade and investments from the West after the disastrous "Great Leap Forward" and a way to contain Soviet power, China reacted favorably to U.S. rapprochement. This triggered Soviet-Russia's own fear of encirclement, and it responded in-kind with its attempt at a détente with the United States—perpetuating the fear.<sup>116</sup>

Russia continued to propagate the fear of encirclement in China throughout the 1990s and into the present as subsequent leaders from Yeltsin to Putin went back and forth between favoring the United States and China. Compounding the issue, China is cognizant of Russia's foreign policy obsession with the West and its European roots, which Brenton feels causes its favor to wane according to where it stands with the West.<sup>117</sup> This may cause China to question the reliability of the Russian partnership which could result in uncertainty in the actions of Russia and cause it to react to prevent encirclement.

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<sup>112</sup> Bobo Lo, *Axis of Convenience Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 25.

<sup>113</sup> Lo, 25.

<sup>114</sup> Brenton, "Russia and China," 235.

<sup>115</sup> Lo, *Axis of Convenience Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics*, 158.

<sup>116</sup> Lo, 158; Brenton, "Russia and China," 235.

<sup>117</sup> Brenton, 239.

For Russia, the fear of encirclement persists as a result of China's economic interdependence with the United States. China's rise was significantly enabled by the current U.S.-led international system that allowed it to become a manufacturing giant and capitalize on the global free-market economy. China is steadfast in its quest to continue its economic modernization and expansion to which the United States is integral. The United States provides China with its largest export market, totaling \$479.7 billion in 2018, secures the sea-lanes that enable China to export its goods and import energy resources, and provides China access to technology and education—all of which are vital to its economic growth.<sup>118</sup> As a result, China is less willing than Russia to more aggressively challenge U.S. primacy in the international system despite sharing Russia's view on multipolarity. This has led some scholars to question whether China would choose Russia over the United States if a conflict between them involved high economic stakes for China.<sup>119</sup> China's unwillingness to more significantly challenge the United States and disrupt their economic ties coupled with NATO's eastern expansion could incite Russia's fear of encirclement that causes it to question Chinese motives and misinterpret its actions as hostile.

Overall, China and Russia's shared history left both with a sense of victimization and level of doubt in their commitment to the partnership that heightens the potential for security dilemma dynamics between the two.<sup>120</sup> Both Russia's victimization at the hands of the Mongol Empire and its own victimization of China during the Soviet era, intertwine to form a sense of fear in Russia that creates uncertainty in the motives of China's actions. China's preponderance of power increases Russia's fear of Chinese subjugation and China disproportionately benefitting from their interactions. Additionally, both states have demonstrated a lack of commitment to the partnership in the past and have chosen the United States over the other at various points. Although China and Russia's opposition to

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<sup>118</sup> Daniel Workman, "China's Top Trading Partners," World's Top Exporters, last modified March 3, 2019, <http://www.worldstopexports.com/chinas-top-import-partners/>; Lo, *Axis of Convenience Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics*, 167.

<sup>119</sup> Lo, *Axis of Convenience Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics*, 167; Røseth, "Russia's Energy Relations with China," 44.

<sup>120</sup> Brenton, "Russia and China," 237.

U.S. primacy contributed to the formation of their partnership, both states have ties to the United States which causes them to fear that the other may switch allegiances and encircle the other—Russia’s heritage and ethnic background and China’s economic ties. As such, the potential for Russia and China to misperceive each other’s actions as the result of uncertainty derived from these fears is ever-present and increases the potential for an action-reaction cycle between the states.

### **3. What Is the Level of Communication between China and Russia?**

An evaluation of the level of communication between China and Russia assists with gauging the potential for security dilemma dynamics between the states because the degree to which states communicate indicates the level of transparency and reassurance between the two, which may ameliorate security dilemma dynamics.<sup>121</sup> States with more robust communications have a greater opportunity to convey both the motives behind their actions and their interpretation of the other’s motives.<sup>122</sup> This may remove much of the uncertainty between the states and reassure both of their status quo intentions, which serves to dampen security dilemma dynamics. For China and Russia, their increased cooperation resulted in a robust interstate communications apparatus in which they have ample opportunity to clarify uncertainties in each other’s actions; however, their secretive nature, the persistent mistrust between the states, and their pragmatism call into question the level of transparency in these interactions and their ability to ameliorate security dilemma dynamics.

In his analysis of the post-Cold War China-Russia relationship, Korolev found that China and Russia developed a robust interstate communications apparatus in parallel with their increased cooperation.<sup>123</sup> This apparatus evolved from the 1993 Military Cooperation Agreement between the states and consists of numerous meetings and interactions

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<sup>121</sup> Consistent with Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma” and Glaser, “The Security Dilemma Revisited.”

<sup>122</sup> Liff and Ikenberry, “Racing Toward Tragedy?” 62.

<sup>123</sup> Korolev, “On the Verge of an Alliance,” 6.

institutionalized across all levels of government within both states.<sup>124</sup> Bilateral consultations now occur up to 30 times per year with a primary focus on shared security issues.<sup>125</sup> One of the most notable bilateral meetings between the two is the Russia-China Consultation on National Security Issues which began in 2004 and involves the heads of the Russian Security Council and the Chinese State Council. This meeting takes place four times a year to address pressing joint national security concerns and promote continued “good neighborliness” between the states.<sup>126</sup> In addition, China and Russia routinely hold separate meetings at multilateral forums to discuss security issues and synchronize their positions. These include not only the highly publicized one-on-one meetings between Putin and Xi but also meetings between a broad array of other top government officials to discuss issues related to their areas of expertise. Often, these meetings result in joint expressions on key security issues meant to convey solidarity to external audiences.

Despite the volume and depth of Sino-Russian interstate communications, the actual amount of transparency in these meetings is difficult to know. Traditionally, suspicion characterizes Chinese and Russian approaches to foreign policy and both states have a history of secretive international relations.<sup>127</sup> According to Pillsbury, China values deception and ambiguity over transparency and the works of Sun Tzu and Mao Tse-tung, two masters of deceptive stratagem, carry significant influence in China.<sup>128</sup> Throughout most of its current rise, China followed Deng Xiaopong’s “hide one’s capacities and bide one’s time” approach to foreign policy.<sup>129</sup> China is often reluctant to disclose the nature of its foreign policy with other states, and seemingly, minor activities such as the amount of foreign aid that China provides to a state is still tightly guarded.

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<sup>124</sup> Korolev, 6.

<sup>125</sup> Korolev, 6.

<sup>126</sup> Korolev, 7.

<sup>127</sup> Walter Laqueur, *Putinism: Russia and its Future with the West* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2015) 198, indicates that Russian and Chinese foreign policy tradition is “dictated more by suspicion than by goodwill.”

<sup>128</sup> Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China’s Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower* (New York: Henry Holt and Co, 2015), 11.

<sup>129</sup> Taken from Deng’s “24-Character Instruction” as quoted in Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), 438.

For its part, Russia carries with it the legacy of the deceptive nature of the Soviet Union, which instilled a culture of secrecy throughout the state. Lo argues that Russia has two “policy milieus”—the real and the virtual—in which the virtual is what the rest of the world sees in its policy documents and press releases, while the real decisions remain secret with little input from most of Russia’s politicians.<sup>130</sup> This secretive nature calls into question both Russia’s willingness to be transparent and the ability of Russian officials to reassure China in their consultations as a result of a lack of actual knowledge of the states’ intent.

China and Russia also maintain a level of mutual distrust, which stems from the deeply rooted history and fears previously discussed, which may also hinder transparency in their communications.<sup>131</sup> In addition, despite the close relationship, China and Russia do not have an actual alliance. In 2016, Fu Ying, the former Deputy Foreign Minister of China, wrote an article for *Foreign Affairs* in which she made it clear that China has no desire to formalize an alliance with Russia and instead wants to focus on “mutually beneficial cooperation.”<sup>132</sup> In line with this statement, Chinese and Russian interactions remain pragmatic and tend to focus on areas of agreement and shy away from those they do not.<sup>133</sup> This could limit the ability of their communications to ameliorate security dilemma dynamics in areas or activities with a less direct line to their shared interests or in which they disagree. Moreover, Smith posits that without the norms, values, and standards that a formalized alliance brings, states who base their partnerships around “each partner’s relative national power, security and prestige in relation to other international actors,” such as the current China-Russia partnership, still view their relationship as zero-sum.<sup>134</sup> This

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<sup>130</sup> Bobo Lo, *Russia and the New World Order*, 1st ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), 4–5.

<sup>131</sup> Lo, *Axis of Convenience Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics*, 35, concludes that a “recurrent theme” in the historical experience of China and Russia is mistrust.

<sup>132</sup> Fu Ying, “How China Sees Russia: Beijing and Moscow are Close, but Not Allies,” *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 1 (2016): 97.

<sup>133</sup> Korolev, “Systemic Balancing and Regional Hedging,” 387.

<sup>134</sup> Martin Smith, *Russia and NATO since 1991 from Cold War through Cold Peace to Partnership?*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 112.

zero-sum mentality makes it less likely that China and Russia are entirely transparent in their communications.

Taken as a whole, China and Russia's secretive natures, mutual mistrust, and pragmatic relationship may limit the level of transparency the states have in their interactions despite ample communications processes. This serves to perpetuate any uncertainties that they may have in the intent of one another's actions. As a result, the likelihood that the states could misinterpret the activities of the other as malign, and react accordingly, is increased despite their overall status-quo intentions.

#### **4. Where Do the Security Interests of China and Russia Intersect and to What Degree Does this Intersection Create Vulnerability within the States?**

Determining the degree to which states are vulnerable to others' actions indicates the intensity of security dilemma dynamics because vulnerability heightens a state's sense of fear that others will use the vulnerability to harm the state. This prevents the state from obtaining a level of certainty in its security and increases its urgency to react to others' actions. Identifying where states' security interests intersect provides a basis for discovering areas in which vulnerabilities may exist.

China and Russia's security interests intersect most prominently in the essentiality of energy resources to their economies. China requires vast amounts of energy resources to fuel its export-based manufacturing economy and is by far the world's largest energy consumer with 1,970 million (metric) tonnes of oil equivalent consumed in 2018.<sup>135</sup> For its part, Russia is a hydrocarbon state and is the third-largest producer of oil, the second-largest producer of dry natural gas, and is one of the world's top producers of coal.<sup>136</sup> In early 2019, the Russian Natural Resources Environment Ministry estimated that Russia's hydrocarbon resources amount to approximately 60% of its gross domestic product

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<sup>135</sup> International Energy Agency, *Key World Energy Statistics 2018* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2018), 20, [https://doi.org/10.1787/key\\_energy\\_stat-2018-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/key_energy_stat-2018-en).

<sup>136</sup> "Russia," U.S. Energy Information Administration, accessed April 4, 2019, <https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/country.php?iso=RUS>.

(GDP).<sup>137</sup> In 2018, revenues generated from the export of hydrocarbon resources totaled \$US 237.6 billion for Russia.<sup>138</sup> In comparison, its next highest revenue-generating export was iron and steel which totaled just \$US 23.4 billion.<sup>139</sup> China's demand for oil and gas is estimated to continue to increase by 1.3% and 4.6% yearly until 2040, and with Russia's extensive oil and gas resources, coupled with the states' proximity, an energy partnership is the natural outgrowth of their relationship.<sup>140</sup> Currently, China is Russia's largest individual customer with over \$US 34.5 billion worth of hydrocarbons purchased in 2018 and Russia is China's largest supplier with an 11% share of its imports.<sup>141</sup> This resulted in what many scholars recognize as an economic interdependence between the states.<sup>142</sup> However, Russia's reliance on China for hydrocarbon sales is increasing as a result of its lack of diversification in its Asia-Pacific customer base and greater competition in both the Asia-Pacific and European markets. In contrast, China ensures that it is not over-reliant on Russia by maintaining access to highly diversified energy sources. As a result, an asymmetric vulnerability favoring China is developing in their relationship that decreases

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<sup>137</sup> "Russia's Natural Resources Valued at 60% of GDP," *The Moscow Times*, March 14, 2019, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/03/14/russias-natural-resources-valued-at-60-of-gdp-a64800>.

<sup>138</sup> Daniel Workman, "Russia's Top 10 Exports," World's Top Exports, last modified February 25, 2019, <http://www.worldstopexports.com/russias-top-10-exports/>.

<sup>139</sup> Workman.

<sup>140</sup> International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2018* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2018), 163, 339; James Henderson, "The Leaders of Russia's Energy Pivot to Asia," in *The Emerging Russia-Asia Energy Nexus*, NBR Special Report 74 (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2018), 4, [https://www.nbr.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/publications/special\\_report\\_74\\_emerging\\_russia-asia\\_energy\\_nexus\\_dec2018.pdf](https://www.nbr.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/publications/special_report_74_emerging_russia-asia_energy_nexus_dec2018.pdf).

<sup>141</sup> UN Comtrade Database (UN Comtrade Database, accessed April 16, 2019), <https://comtrade.un.org/data/>; Trading Economics Database (China Imports of Mineral Fuels, Oils, Distillation Products, accessed April 4, 2019), <https://tradingeconomics.com/china/imports/mineral-fuels-oils-distillation-products>.

<sup>142</sup> Heli Simola, *Economic Relations between Russia and China—Increasing Inter-Dependency?*, BOFIT Policy Brief No. 6 (Helsinki, FI: Bank of Finland, 2016), <https://helda.helsinki.fi/bof/bitstream/handle/123456789/14346/bpb0616.pdf?sequence=1>; Catherine Locatelli, Mehdi Abbas, and Sylvain Rossiaud, "The Emerging Hydrocarbon Interdependence between Russia and China: Institutional and Systemic Implications," *Europe-Asia Studies* 69, no. 1 (2017): 157–170, doi:10.1080/09668136.2016.1274020; Røseth, "Russia's Energy Relations with China," 23–55; Krzysztof Falkowski, "Trade Interdependence between Russia vs. the European Union and China within the Context of the Competitiveness of the Russian Economy," *Quarterly Journal of Economics and Economic Policy* 13, no. 4 (2018): 667–87, doi:10.24136/eq.2018.032.

Russia's overall security and, in turn, could be the source of security dilemma driven competition between the states.

The economic interdependence between Russia and China emerged from Russia's initiative to increase energy exports to the Asia-Pacific after the 2008 global economic crisis amplified Russia's lack of economic diversification.<sup>143</sup> Russia looked to the Asia-Pacific to provide a stable market for its energy resources after the faltering economies of its Western customers resulted in a reduced price and demand for hydrocarbon resources. Throughout the crisis, China's economy remained relatively stable and, from the Russian point-of-view, was the logical entry to the rest of the Asia-Pacific market.<sup>144</sup> The Western sanctions imposed on Russia after its 2014 activities in Ukraine further intensified Russia's push towards China, as the sanctions largely prevented Western companies and Eastern U.S. allies from investing in future Russian energy projects.

Although the Russian push east did technically diversify its customer base to the Asia-Pacific, the ultimate result was a series of agreements that locked Russia into providing China with a majority of its eastern exports for the near future and allowed China to gain shares and influence over Russian oil and gas companies in Siberia and the Russian Far East which combined, increased Russia's reliance on China. One of the first of these agreements was signed in 2007 in which the Chinese Development Bank agreed to loan the Russian state-owned oil company Rosneft and oil pipeline operator Transneft \$US 25 billion to develop Russian eastern oil fields and complete the East Siberia Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline in exchange for providing China 300,000 barrels of oil per day for 20 years.<sup>145</sup> This agreement was amended in 2013 with stipulations that Rosneft would double its oil exports to China via the ESPO until 2041—with China prepaying \$US 70

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<sup>143</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, "Foreign Policy and Relations with the United States," in *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 234.

<sup>144</sup> Røseth, "Russia's Energy Relations with China," 24.

<sup>145</sup> Locatelli, Abbas, and Rossiaud, "The Emerging Hydrocarbon Interdependence between Russia and China," 165.

billion for oil that it would not begin to receive until 2016.<sup>146</sup> The ESPO was supposed to enable Russia to diversify its Asian-Pacific customers by fulfilling its agreement with China via its spur that ultimately terminates in Daqing while accommodating the rest of the Asian-Pacific market via its Kozmino Bay spur on the Russian Southeastern Coast. The Kozmino Bay spur is supposed to allow the transportation of ESPO crude via sea shipping lanes throughout the rest of the Asia-Pacific. However, as a result of China's prepayment, and to keep pace with its increased demand, Russia is required to export much of the crude oil coming from the Kozmino Bay spur to China, along with the oil from the Daqing spur.<sup>147</sup> As a result, Henderson calculated that China purchased 85% of Russian crude oil sold to the Asia-Pacific in 2017 and concludes that Russia's oil diversification "is in reality becoming a dependence on the Chinese market."<sup>148</sup>

China holds a similar agreement with Russia's state-owned natural gas company Gazprom which Røseth states, that except for liquefied natural gas (LNG), "will provide China a near buyer's monopoly on Russian gas exports to Asia."<sup>149</sup> In 2014, Gazprom agreed to export 38 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas a year for 35 years to China upon completion of the Power of Siberia pipeline extending from Kovyktinskoye across the southern portion of the Russian Far East and into China.<sup>150</sup> When it becomes operational in December 2019 and achieves the desired output, the Power of Siberia pipeline will elevate China to the second-largest consumer of Russian gas exports behind only Germany.<sup>151</sup> Renewed talks are also underway to develop the Power of Siberia 2 pipeline which would allow Russia to export added natural gas to China from its fields in the Altai

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<sup>146</sup> Locatelli, Abbas, and Rossiaud, 165; Jake Rudnitsky and Stephen Bierman, "Rosneft's \$270 Billion Oil Deal Set to Make China Biggest Market," *Bloomberg*, June 21, 2013, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-06-21/rosneft-s-270-billion-oil-deal-set-to-make-china-biggest-market>.

<sup>147</sup> Røseth, "Russia's Energy Relations with China," 38.

<sup>148</sup> Henderson, "The Leaders of Russia's Energy Pivot to Asia," 9.

<sup>149</sup> Røseth, "Russia's Energy Relations with China," 42.

<sup>150</sup> "Alexey Miller: Russia and China Signed the Biggest Contract in the Entire History of Gazprom," Gazprom, May 21, 2014, [www.gazprom.com/press/news/2014/may/article191451/](http://www.gazprom.com/press/news/2014/may/article191451/).

<sup>151</sup> In 2018, Germany was the largest importer of Russian gas at 58.5 bcm. The 38 bcm will put China ahead of Turkey, the second-largest importer in 2018 at 23.96 bcm according to "Delivery Statistics," Gazprom, accessed April 11, 2019, <http://www.gazpromexport.ru/en/statistics/>.

region of Western Siberia.<sup>152</sup> In addition, further talks to advance a 2017 agreement to add a Chinese spur to Russia's existing Sakhalin-Vladivostok pipeline along its deep southeastern coast are also making progress and could come on-line relatively quickly once the states finalize an agreement.<sup>153</sup> These new pipelines will reportedly increase China's Russian gas imports to around 80 – 110 bcm per year—decidedly more than Germany's 2018 Russian imports of 53.4 bcm.<sup>154</sup> These pipelines will not provide Russia direct access to the rest of the Asia-Pacific market and instead will elevate China to Russia's most important natural gas customer and further increase Russia's dependence on China.

Furthermore, China is likely to import a majority of Russian LNG in the Asia-Pacific, as well. Russia could diversify its Asia-Pacific customer base through LNG sales, in which gas is cooled to its liquid form and shipped by sea to other states in the region. Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, in addition to China, all received LNG from Russia's Gazprom in 2018 via its Sakhalin terminals in the Far East; however, China is steadily increasing its importance in this market, as well, and will likely dominate Russia's LNG exports in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>155</sup> Driven by its desire to transition from coal to gas as a primary source of energy, China increased its imports of LNG by 52% in 2018, according to the McKinsey Global Institute, and plans to increase its import capacity by four times its current capability by 2030.<sup>156</sup> In a 2018 survey of LNG forecasts, Sandalow et al. found that China is likely to overtake Japan as the world's largest importer of LNG by the end of

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<sup>152</sup> Alex Forbes, "Russia's Hunger for Second Eastern Gas Outlet Grows," *Petroleum Economist*, February 15, 2019, <https://www.petroleum-economist.com/articles/politics-economics/europe-eurasia/2019/russia-s-hunger-for-second-eastern-gas-outlet-grows>.

<sup>153</sup> "Gazprom to Expand Pipeline to China," Interfax, October 3, 2018, <http://interfaxenergy.com/article/32771/gazprom-to-expand-pipeline-to-china>.

<sup>154</sup> Andres Cala, "Russian Gas Pipeline to Curb China's LNG Appetite – Experts," *Montel News*, November 29, 2018, <https://www.montelnews.com/en/story/russian-gas-pipeline-to-curb-chinas-lng-appetite--experts-/958065>.

<sup>155</sup> Sakhalin Energy, *Sustainable Development Report 2018* (Sakhalin, Russia: Sakhalin Energy, 2018), 49, [http://www.sakhalinenergy.ru/en/media/sd\\_report/](http://www.sakhalinenergy.ru/en/media/sd_report/).

<sup>156</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, *2018 Gas & LNG Market Highlights* (Washington, DC: McKinsey Global Institute, 2018), [https://www.mckinsey.com/solutions/energy-insights/global-gas-lng-outlook-to-2035/~/\\_media/3C7FB7DF5E4A47E393AF0CDB080FAD08.ashx](https://www.mckinsey.com/solutions/energy-insights/global-gas-lng-outlook-to-2035/~/_media/3C7FB7DF5E4A47E393AF0CDB080FAD08.ashx); Ariel Cohen, "China to Quadruple LNG Imports – Will U.S. Exporters Benefit?" *Forbes*, January 17, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/arielcohen/2019/01/17/china-to-quadruple-lng-imports-will-u-s-exporters-benefit/#6dffff712102>.

2020 and is expected to be the main force behind the continued growth of the LNG market.<sup>157</sup> Conversely, the IEA forecasts that the demand for LNG in Japan and South Korea will level out with only a slight increase through 2040.<sup>158</sup> China has already begun to secure its LNG imports from Russia, and the state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has an agreement in place with Russian LNG company Novatek to receive 3 million tons of LNG per year for 15 years from its Yamal LNG Project in Russia's Arctic region.<sup>159</sup> This agreement has a similar impact as the pipeline agreements on Russia's diversification in the Asia-Pacific by ensuring that China receives a bulk of the Yamal LNG exported to the region. The Yamal LNG Project relies on the Northern Sea Route to maximize profits in the Asia-Pacific but is currently only trafficable along the Asia-Pacific leg from June to November. Although the Yamal LNG Project has an output capacity of 16.5 million tons of LNG per year, with such a short shipping timeframe, China's guarantee of 3 million tons ensures that much of the LNG exported to the Asia-Pacific lands in China.<sup>160</sup> LNG from Yamal can travel to the Asia-Pacific via the European leg of the Northern Sea Route, but China's agreement is the only one that stipulates a specific destination for Yamal gas, and with China's increased demand much of the new LNG will still likely go to China. Novatek is currently developing a second Arctic LNG project called Arctic LNG 2 which may assist Russia in diversifying its customers in the Asia-Pacific, but agreements for LNG purchases have not been made, and the first train of LNG is not expected to ship until 2023.<sup>161</sup> As such, although LNG holds the potential to increase Russia's diversification in the Asia-Pacific, China's increased demand coupled with a drop off of in demand by other Asia-Pacific states, namely Japan and South Korea,

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<sup>157</sup> David Sandlow, Akos Losz, and Sheng Yan, *A Natural Gas Giant Awakens: China's Quest for Blue Skies Shapes Global Markets* (New York: Columbia/SIPA Center on Global Energy Policy, 2018), 8–9, [https://energypolicy.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/file-uploads/China%20Nat%20Gas%20Commentary\\_CGEP\\_June%202018\\_FINAL.pdf](https://energypolicy.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/file-uploads/China%20Nat%20Gas%20Commentary_CGEP_June%202018_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>158</sup> International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2018*, 171.

<sup>159</sup> "Russia: Novatek, CNPC Finalize Yamal LNG Supply Deal," *LNG World News*, October 22, 2013, <https://www.lngworldnews.com/russia-novatek-cnpc-finalize-yamal-lng-supply-deal/>.

<sup>160</sup> "About the Project," Yamal LNG, accessed April 16, 2019, <http://yamallng.ru/en/>.

<sup>161</sup> "Russia: Total Signs Definitive Agreements for Entry into Arctic LNG," Total, March 5, 2019, <https://www.total.com/en/media/news/press-releases/russia-total-signs-definitive-agreements-entry-arctic-lng-2>.

likely means that Russia's current and future primary gas market in the Asia-Pacific will remain in China, and with it, its level of dependency will likely increase.

Increased competition in the Asia-Pacific and the European market that it has traditionally dominated deepens Russia's reliance on the Chinese hydrocarbon market. Russia is somewhat of a latecomer to the Asia-Pacific market and Japan, South Korea, and India, the region's major hydrocarbon importers, outside of China, turned mostly to the Middle East to meet their energy needs. This left Russia with an uphill battle in its push to gain a foothold in the region. Adding to its difficulties, both Australia and the United States added to the competition in the Asia-Pacific oil and gas markets, and both look to grow their presence in the future. Australia has developed into one of the world's top LNG exporters with 62.7 million metric tons exported in 2018, which is projected to increase to 74.9 million metric tons in 2019.<sup>162</sup> Australia's location gives it easy access to shipping lanes throughout the Asia-Pacific which provides it an advantage over Russia, especially when compared to the Northern Sea Route that Russia depends upon to transport its Arctic supply to the Asia-Pacific market. This enabled Australia to gain significant market shares in the Asia-Pacific, and according to Australia's Office of the Chief Economist, it held 26% of Japanese, 17% of Chinese, 12% of South Korean, and 7% of Indian LNG imports in 2018 and is seeking to increase these shares.<sup>163</sup>

For its part, the United States is poised to make a significant impact on the oil and gas market in the Asia-Pacific as a result of its shale revolution. The shale revolution, in which water, sand, and chemicals are injected into shale rock to fracture the formations and extract deposits of oil and gas, has changed the complexion of the energy market. The United States, once over-reliant on oil and gas imports, benefitted immensely from the shale revolution and has achieved near energy independence. The United States is now the

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<sup>162</sup> Nathan Richardson, "Australia Hikes LNG Export Forecasts for Fiscal 2018, 2019," *S&P Global Platts*, December 21, 2018, <https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/natural-gas/122118-australia-hikes-lng-export-forecasts-for-fiscal-2018-2019>.

<sup>163</sup> Nikolai Drahos, "Gas," in *Resources and Energy Quarterly*, ed. David Thurtell (Canberra, Australia: Office of Chief Economist, 2019), 60, <https://publications.industry.gov.au/publications/resourcesandenergyquarterlymarch2019/documents/Resources-and-Energy-Quarterly-March-2019.pdf>.

world's largest producer of both oil and gas and is projected to be a net exporter by 2020.<sup>164</sup> The major players in the Asia-Pacific are readily welcoming U.S. exports which originate from a more stable partner and are outside of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) purview, who until recently held the almost unrivaled ability to manipulate both supply and price.<sup>165</sup> For Japan and South Korea in particular, U.S. exports represent an opportunity to solidify their already strong alliances with the United States further and reduce their reliance on imports from more geopolitically volatile states such as Iran and Russia. Though the ties are not quite as strong, the scenario is similar for India who maintains a relatively stable relationship with the United States and is drawn closer by contentious relations with the Middle East, the source of much of its energy imports.

The Middle East is also not remaining idle as Qatar, the current largest producer of LNG, looks to increase its production from 77 million tons to 110 million tons a year, with its increased output aimed at the major importers in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>166</sup> Overall, the prospects for Russia to make more than incremental gains in the Asia-Pacific oil and gas market is limited and further pushes it to rely on China.

Europe is also increasingly becoming a more costly market for Russia, which pushes it towards greater reliance on China. As a collective, the European Union (EU) is the largest consumer of Russian hydrocarbon resources with 324.7 million metric tons purchased in 2017 at the cost of \$US 86.6 billion.<sup>167</sup> The proximity of Russia to Europe makes it one of Europe's most economical sources of oil and gas with the various pipelines from Russia keeping prices down relative to other potential sources. Several European states are highly dependent on Russia with the Baltic States and much of Southeastern

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<sup>164</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Outlook 2019 with Projections to 2050* (Washington, DC: U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2019), 10, <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/aeo/pdf/aeo2019.pdf>.

<sup>165</sup> Takeshi Kumon and Shuhei Nakayam, "Asia Turns to U.S. Oil as Shale Producers Open Taps," *Nikkei Asian Review*, February 12, 2019, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Markets/Commodities/Asia-turns-to-US-oil-as-shale-producers-open-taps>.

<sup>166</sup> Hidemitsu Kibe and Nesreen Bakheit, "Qatar Well-Positioned to Meet Asian LNG Demand, Minister Says," *Nikkei Asian Review*, February 21, 2019, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/Interview/Qatar-well-positioned-to-meet-Asian-LNG-demand-minister-says>.

<sup>167</sup> Eurostat Database (Extra-EU\_imports\_total\_and\_from\_Russia\_2018S (1), accessed April 2, 2019), <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/energy/data/database>.

Europe almost entirely dependent on Russia as a primary source for its energy needs.<sup>168</sup> This, however, is starting to change. Prompted by Russia's use of this dependency as political leverage, including shutting off gas to Ukraine in 2006, 2009, and 2014, the EU has taken steps to liberalize its energy market to foster competition and prevent overreliance on any one source.<sup>169</sup> The EU is particularly concerned with natural gas as the regionalized nature of the gas market makes the economic viability of sources dependent on transportation costs, in which Russia has an advantage over other sources. To compensate, the EU is developing an integrated internal energy market with electricity and gas fully interconnected between states.<sup>170</sup> Europe will be able to take advantage of other sources of gas outside of Russia and flex supplies across the EU in a more economical fashion. In the interim, the EU is actively seeking ways to diversify its energy sources which threaten to reduce Russia's shares of the market and increase its reliance on China.

Presently, Russia is facing competition in the European gas market from several sources that could reduce its market share. First, like the Asia-Pacific, increased LNG production is starting to reach the European market. Australia, Canada, and East Africa, amongst others, have all served as new sources of LNG for Europe.<sup>171</sup> U.S. LNG from shale gas is also competing on the European market, and the United States actively seeks to increase its exports to Europe as an alternative to Russian gas. Along with increased exports by the United States, U.S. shale gas has freed up other sources of gas for the European market, such as gas from Qatar, previously exported to the United States.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee, Stephanie Pezard, Andrew Radin, Nathan Chandler, Keith Crain, and Thomas S. Szayna, *Russia and the West After the Ukrainian Crisis: European Vulnerabilities to Russian Pressures* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2017), 34, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1300/RR1305/RAND\\_RR1305.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1300/RR1305/RAND_RR1305.pdf).

<sup>169</sup> European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Policy Framework for Climate and Energy in the Period from 2020 to 2030*, COM(2014) 15 (Brussels: European Union, 2014), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0015&from=EN>.

<sup>170</sup> European Commission.

<sup>171</sup> "Diversification of Gas Supply Sources," European Commission, accessed April 23, 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-security/diversification-of-gas-supply-sources-and-routes>.

<sup>172</sup> Douglas E. Schoen and Melik Kaylan, *The Russia-China Axis: The New Cold War and America's Crisis of Leadership* (New York: Encounter Books, 2014), 197–98.

Several EU states increased their LNG regasification capabilities to take advantage of the increase in supply, and competition for Russia will continue to grow as the integrated market comes online. Once interconnectors are in place, LNG can be transported to easily accessible and economical LNG regasification points along Europe's coast and transferred via pipeline to states where Russian gas currently dominates the market.

The EU is also actively working to increase its access to pipeline sources outside of Russia through its effort to open its Southern Gas Corridor. According to the European Commission, this project “aims to expand infrastructure that can bring gas to the EU from the Caspian Basin, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Eastern Mediterranean Basin.”<sup>173</sup> The Southern Gas Corridor initiative is presently gaining momentum with 17 states participating in the fifth meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council held in February 2019 and gas from the first stage of the project is set to make its way from Azerbaijan to Italy in 2020 via the Trans Adriatic Pipeline.<sup>174</sup> By 2029, the EU seeks to import 20—25 bcm of gas per year through this corridor, with the ultimate goal of increasing this to 80—100 bcm per year.<sup>175</sup> As the output from the Southern Gas Corridor continues to increase, Russia will face significant competition in Europe and particularly in two of its biggest markets in Italy and France, which will further threaten its market share and increase its reliance on China.

Last, a series of significant natural gas discoveries off the coasts of Israel, Cyprus, and Egypt look to make the Eastern Mediterranean an increasingly viable alternative to Russian gas for Europe. Four of the major gas fields alone—the Tamar and Leviathan (Israel), Aphrodite (Cyprus), and Zohr (Egypt) fields—contain around 1.85 trillion cubic meters of gas with a potential output of around 80 bcm per year.<sup>176</sup> In January 2019, Israel,

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<sup>173</sup> European Commission, “Diversification of Gas Supply Sources.”

<sup>174</sup> “TAP Project Milestones,” Trans Adriatic Pipeline, accessed April 23, 2019, <https://www.tap-ag.com/the-pipeline/project-timeline/tap-project-milestones>.

<sup>175</sup> Georgi Gotev, “Commission Eager to see the Capacity of Southern Gas Corridor Doubled,” Euractiv, last modified February 26, 2019, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/azerbaijan/news/commission-eager-to-see-the-capacity-of-southern-gas-corridor-doubled/>; European Commission. “Diversification of Gas Supply Sources.”

<sup>176</sup> “The Eastern Mediterranean’s New Great Game over Natural Gas,” Stratfor Worldview, February 22, 2018, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/eastern-mediterraneans-new-great-game-over-natural-gas>.

Cyprus, and Egypt along with Italy, Greece, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority, came together to form the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) with the goal of establishing a regional gas market and developing new and existing means to export excess reserves to take advantage of these discoveries.<sup>177</sup> With this framework, the region is primed to become a significant exporter of gas to Europe and are taking steps to make this a reality.

In March 2019, Greece, Cyprus, and Israel signed a new agreement as a follow-up to the initial 2018 agreement to develop the EastMed pipeline which will provide gas to Southeast Europe from Israeli and Cypriot reserves via a pipeline that connects Israel, Cyprus, Greece, and Italy.<sup>178</sup> This pipeline is a focus of both the EU and the United States as a means to help Europe diversify its natural gas supply away from Russia. The EU designated the pipeline as a “Project of Common Interest” which means that it considers the project important to meeting its energy goals and entitles it to funding and other regulatory concessions meant to accelerate project completion. The United States signaled support for the pipeline by sending U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to attend the sixth trilateral meeting between Israel, Cyprus, and Greece, where they reached the new agreement. With the backing of the EU and the United States and a renewed commitment from Israel, Cyprus, and Greece, the project is likely to move forward with Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz indicating that construction on the pipeline is expected to start in 2020 and completed around 2026.<sup>179</sup> Once complete, Europe could receive up to 40 bcm of gas per year from the pipeline, which will present even more competition to Russian gas.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> According to Egypt’s Ministry of Petroleum, quoted in, “Eastern Mediterranean Countries Establish Gas Forum,” *Middle East Monitor*, January 15, 2019, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190115-eastern-mediterranean-countries-establish-gas-forum/>.

<sup>178</sup> Stuart Elliott, “Greece, Cyprus, Israel Reavow Support for EastMed Gas Pipeline,” *S&P Global Platts*, March 21, 2019, <https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/natural-gas/032119-greece-cyprus-israel-reavow-support-for-eastmed-gas-pipeline>.

<sup>179</sup> Mirette Magdy, “Talks Underway to Build New Gas Pipeline to Egypt, Israel Says,” *Bloomberg*, January 15, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-01-15/talks-underway-to-build-new-gas-pipeline-to-egypt-israel-says>.

<sup>180</sup> Stratfor Worldview, “The Eastern Mediterranean’s New Great Game over Natural Gas.”

Another option for EMGF gas to reach the European market is through LNG exports. Egypt possesses sufficient LNG processing and export capabilities to make it a distribution hub for the region's natural gas exports and is quickly becoming a new source for Europe.<sup>181</sup> Egypt rapidly put its Zohr gas field, the largest in the Mediterranean to date, into operation in 2017, which allowed it to meet its domestic needs and halt gas imports.<sup>182</sup> Egypt looks to double its LNG exports to over 20 bcm in 2019, with Europe as a prime target for increased sales.<sup>183</sup> Egypt also signed a \$US 15 billion agreement with Israel in 2018 to import Israeli gas over ten years and began talks in 2019 to construct a pipeline that will connect Israel's Leviathan and Tamar fields directly to Egyptian LNG plants.<sup>184</sup> Israel already plans to send 7 bcm of gas a year to Egypt via the existing EMG pipeline once it reaches full capacity in 2020, and the new pipeline could significantly increase this amount.<sup>185</sup> Cyprus also signed an agreement with Egypt in 2018 to build a pipeline to connect its Aphrodite field to Egyptian LNG plants, as well, which was approved by the Egyptian Parliament in January 2019.<sup>186</sup> In addition, Israel is in talks with Exxon Mobile to develop a floating LNG processing capability explicitly aimed at increasing exports from its Leviathan gas field, a portion of which will likely end up in Europe.<sup>187</sup> LNG inherently

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<sup>181</sup> Nick Cunningham, "Egypt: The Next Natural Gas Hotspot," *Pipeline & Gas Journal* 245, no. 7 (2018): 87.

<sup>182</sup> Chris Stephen, "Egypt's Gas Gold Rush," *Petroleum Economist*, February 28, 2019, <https://www.petroleum-economist.com/articles/upstream/exploration-production/2019/egypts-gas-gold-rush>.

<sup>183</sup> Massoud A. Derhally and Jennifer Gnana, "Egypt to Double LNG Export Capacity in 2019," *The National*, April 7, 2019, <https://www.thenational.ae/business/energy/egypt-to-double-lng-export-capacity-in-2019-1.845955>; Clifford Krauss and Declan Walsh, "Egypt Looks to Offshore Gas Field for Growth and Influence," *The New York Times*, March 11, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/11/business/energy-environment/egypt-gas.html>.

<sup>184</sup> Magdy, "Talks Underway to Build New Gas Pipeline to Egypt, Israel Says."

<sup>185</sup> Magdy.

<sup>186</sup> Simon Henderson, "Cyprus Aims to Export Gas via Egypt," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, September 21, 2018, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/cyprus-aims-to-export-gas-via-egypt>; Al-Masry Al-Youm, "Parliament Committee Approves Gas Pipeline Construction between Egypt, Cyprus," *Egypt Independent*, January 27, 2019, <https://www.egyptindependent.com/parliament-committee-approves-gas-pipeline-construction-between-egypt-cyprus/>.

<sup>187</sup> Yaacov Benmeleh, "Exxon is in Talks Over Floating LNG Partnership in Israel," *Bloomberg*, April 10, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-10/exxon-is-said-in-talks-over-floating-lng-partnership-in-israel>;

costs more than pipeline gas and will be a significant determining factor in how competitive Mediterranean LNG will be in Europe. However, the region's proximity to European regasification facilities increases the potential that it will be competitive with Russian gas and Europe has shown a willingness to purchase LNG despite the prevalence of Russian pipeline gas on its market. As such, as LNG capabilities continue to operationalize and exports increase, Mediterranean LNG will likely provide an additional source of competition for Russian gas in the European market—with Egypt providing competition as early as 2019.

Russian gas projects aimed at increasing exports to Europe are also becoming more problematic. The EU is facing pressure both internally and from the United States to decrease its energy dependence on Russia. As a result, two of Russia's new pipeline projects face significant obstacles. Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline, that when complete will traverse the Baltic Sea into Germany, is embroiled in a geopolitical battle that divided the EU and evoked a threat of sanctions by the United States against European companies that participate in the project.<sup>188</sup> The EU reached a compromise in 2019, which likely ensures completion of the project, but future projects are likely to incur more staunch opposition.<sup>189</sup> Likewise, Russia's attempt to supply more gas to Southern and Southeastern Europe through its TurkStream pipeline project has met resistance stemming from the EU's anti-monopoly regulations. These regulations are meant to prevent gas from entering the EU market from sources that own both the gas and its mode of transport. Gazprom owns both a majority stake in the TurkStream pipeline and the gas it intends to push, and the EU is attempting to block its gas from entering Europe.<sup>190</sup> Combined, this makes for an unstable market for Russia, as it will continue to see market shares decrease along with its opportunities for higher throughput to Europe. Russia will likely need to increase the

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<sup>188</sup> Erik Sherman, "U.S. Preparing to Take a Tougher Stance on German-Russian Gas Pipeline," *Fortune*, March 11, 2019, <http://fortune.com/2019/03/11/russia-germany-pipeline/>.

<sup>189</sup> Dave Keating, "Why Did France Just Save Nord Stream 2?" *Forbes*, February 8, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davekeating/2019/02/08/why-did-france-just-save-nord-stream-2/#c39d82560550>.

<sup>190</sup> Dimitar Bechev, "Russia's Pipe Dreams are Europe's Nightmare," *Foreign Policy*, March 12, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/12/russia-turkstream-oil-pipeline/>.

number of concessions it offers European states, such as reduced prices, to maintain its market share in Europe. As a whole, Europe will increasingly become a more costly market for Russia and push Moscow towards greater reliance on China.

For its part, China ensures that it is not overly reliant on Russian energy imports by maintaining access to a diverse number of sources. This diversification hinders Russia's ability to harm China and provides China a greater level of security in the relationship. Although Russia is China's largest individual supplier of hydrocarbons and will continue to increase its exports to meet Chinese demand, China's energy sources are highly diversified, and it has more flexibility to shift between supplies to meet its needs. Collectively, China receives most of its oil and gas from states other than Russia. In addition to Russian pipelines, China has the ability to receive up to 22 million barrels of crude oil and 12 bcm of gas per year from its Myanmar oil and gas pipelines and up to 55 bcm of gas from its Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan gas pipeline—which could increase to 85 bcm upon completion of a planned fourth line.<sup>191</sup> China also receives vast amounts of oil and gas by sea from numerous states including Saudi Arabia, Angola, Iraq, Oman, Brazil, Iran, Kuwait, Australia, Qatar, Nigeria, and Malaysia amongst many others. Furthermore, according to Cole, China used the economic crisis between 2008 and 2009 to significantly increase its global investments in energy sources and by the end of 2013 obtained assets in 29 states and holds oil concessions or investments in oil production capabilities across the globe.<sup>192</sup> China could leverage these assets and accelerate development projects in these areas to compensate for changes in supply. Likewise, China's wealth allows it to readily outbid other states for spot sales of oil and gas as its demand increases or in reaction to decreases in supply. Also, along with its traditional domestic reserves, the U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that China possesses the largest recoverable shale gas and third-largest recoverable shale oil reserves

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<sup>191</sup> Gregory B. Poling, "Kyaukpyu: Connecting China to the Indian Ocean," in *China's Maritime Silk Road: Strategic and Economic Implications for the Indo-Pacific Region*, ed. Nicholas Szechenyi (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2018), 5; Xiangming Chen and Fakhmiddin Fazilov, "Re-Centering Central Asia: China's "New Great Game" in the Old Eurasian Heartland," *Palgrave Communications* 4, no. 71 (June 2018): 4, doi:10.1057/s41599-018-0125-5.

<sup>192</sup> Bernard D. Cole, *China's Quest for Great Power: Ships, Oil, and Foreign Policy* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 143–144.

in the world, which it has yet to tap into fully and they could develop if needed.<sup>193</sup> This diversification of China's energy supplies affords it a level of flexibility that ensures that although it is dependent on Russian oil and gas to a minor extent, changes to the Russian supply would harm China much less than the loss of the Chinese market would Russia.

Overall, Russia is unable to truly diversify its customer base in the Asia-Pacific due to agreements with China that it readily made after the global financial crisis crippled Russia, emptied its monetary reserves, and Western sanctions left it with limited options. Russia is obligated to provide China with most of its oil and gas destined for the Asia-Pacific for the next several decades, and this will likely continue, as pipelines are relatively permanent. The EU and the United States' concerted efforts to break Europe's dependence on Russia coupled with a growing portfolio of competition in the European market continues to perpetuate the herding of Russia's oil and gas towards China, while China has shielded itself from depending on Russia through its diversification and flexibility in this sector.

As a result, a budding asymmetric vulnerability favoring China continues to develop that increases the intensity of security dilemma dynamics between the states. Russian activities that impact China's Russian oil and gas supply would harm China in the short-term, but China could react relatively quickly to compensate for the negative impacts of Russian actions by increasing throughput amongst its many sources. Russia, on the other hand, could not. Its overreliance on China provides it with limited flexibility in the oil and gas market and, as a result, its overall hydrocarbon-based economy. This gives China an offensive advantage in that it is much easier and less costly for China to harm Russia than the converse. Russia is susceptible to any Chinese activities that impact the price of hydrocarbons to which China has a somewhat unique ability to take advantage of. China is probably the only state, other than the United States, that can impact both supply and demand in the hydrocarbon market. As the world's largest energy consumer and individual

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<sup>193</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Technically Recoverable Shale Oil and Shale Gas Resources: An Assessment of 137 Shale Formations in 41 Countries Outside of the United States*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Energy, June 2013), 10, <http://www.eia.gov/analysis/studies/worldshalegas/pdf/overview.pdf>.

energy market, actions that China takes to reduce its consumption would have a significant negative impact on overall global demand and lead to reduced prices and surplus supply. Russia's lack of true diversification means that it would have to provide oil and gas to China at a reduced price while competing with the surpluses of other hydrocarbon states in places like Europe. The surpluses would also sell at a reduced-price and force Russia to either further reduce its prices or cede market share—with both options significantly hurting Russia's economy. China could also use its untapped domestic sources and vast international holdings to increase the global supply of hydrocarbon resources which would also reduce prices and have a similar impact on Russia. Furthermore, Russia is susceptible to any Chinese activities which hinder its ability to diversify its economy through future efforts to expand its shares in other hydrocarbon markets or increase its exports in other sectors. As such, Russia is vulnerable vis-à-vis China and the resulting insecurity increases the probability that it will react to mitigate this vulnerability or to counter China's actions that perpetuate it.

#### **5. To What Degree Do Expansion and Self-Preservation Impact the Security of China and Russia?**

When expansion is required to ensure states' security, status quo states must "act like aggressors" to obtain security or risk losing ground to other states.<sup>194</sup> These aggressive actions could be misinterpreted as malign and generate a reaction in other states, despite all preferring security guarantees.<sup>195</sup> Likewise, when self-preservation is at stake, states are more likely to be fearful, misperceive states' intentions, and react to other states' actions. When both are present in the actions of states, the fear and urge to react is amplified and the intensity of security dilemma dynamics is further increased.

The security of both China and Russia is predicated on economies whose strength arguably requires expansion in current and new markets. China's rise to the second-largest economy in the world resulted from its ability to rapidly expand its share of the global consumer market by capitalizing on its cheap labor to maintain low costs for manufactured

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<sup>194</sup> Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," 187.

<sup>195</sup> Jervis, 187.

goods. As a result, China averaged close to a 10% growth in real gross domestic product (GDP) annually from 1979 to 2017 which afforded it great wealth and enabled it to increase its military strength and global influence.<sup>196</sup> China continues to follow this growth strategy and must further expand into new markets to ensure steady growth. Additionally, China's plan to increase its exports of entirely "Made in China" high-technology products to boost economic growth requires many raw materials that China does not possess domestically, and China must expand its efforts in other states to ensure greater access.<sup>197</sup>

Likewise, Russia must also expand its international economic efforts to ensure its security. As a hydrocarbon exporter, the strength of Russia's economy varies based on the price of oil. The 2008–2009 economic crises hit Russia hard and caused oil prices to remain low. As a result, Russia experienced increased negative or low real GDP growth rates from 2009 to 2018.<sup>198</sup> To shore up its economic strength, Russia must expand its hydrocarbon and arms sales in current and new markets, diversify its revenue streams through global industrial and consumer markets, and acquire access to the raw materials needed to reinvigorate its manufacturing sector.

The survival of both states' regimes, at least in part, depends on their ability to expand economically. The CCP has a social contract with the Chinese people in which it promised wealth, power, and the reinstatement of Chinese greatness, in exchange for unabated controlling governance of the state.<sup>199</sup> The CCP has made progress in reaching these goals and brought millions of people out of poverty while improving the quality of

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<sup>196</sup> Wayne M. Morrison, *China's Economic Rise: History, Trends, Challenges, and Implications for the United States*, CRS Report No. RL33534 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2018), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33534.pdf>.

<sup>197</sup> U.S. Chamber of Commerce, *Made in China 2025: Global Ambitions Built on Local Protections* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), [https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/final\\_made\\_in\\_china\\_2025\\_report\\_full.pdf](https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/final_made_in_china_2025_report_full.pdf).

<sup>198</sup> International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook Database (object name Real GDP Growth; accessed April 30, 2019), [https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP\\_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD/CHN](https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD/CHN).

<sup>199</sup> David Shambaugh, "Chinese Thinking about World Order," in *China and the International System: Becoming a World Power*, ed. Xiaoming Huang and Robert G. Patman (New York: Routledge, 2013), 22; Ashley J. Tellis, "China's Grand Strategy," in *The Rise of China: Essays on the Future Competition*, ed. Gary J. Schmitt (New York: Encounter Books, 2009), 30.

life for the Chinese people. However, China's economic growth slowed, posting a 6.6% growth in real GDP in 2018, and it faces a wealth-distribution gap that threatens the legitimacy of the CCP.<sup>200</sup> A 2018 International Monetary Fund working paper found that, despite a reduction in poverty, China's income inequality is one of the largest in world and access to education and financial services such as bank loans and savings accounts that could help to alleviate the problem are more unequally distributed in China than in most advanced and developing states.<sup>201</sup> This serves as a source of discontent for the Chinese people and poses a serious threat to the CCP's rule. The ability of the CCP to address the wealth-distribution gap and quell this discontent rests on continued economic growth through expansion of its exports to new markets and ability to gain greater access to the raw materials necessary for its planned shift to increase its exports of high-technology products.<sup>202</sup>

Russia's Putin regime made its own social contract with the Russian people based around promises to improve living standards and return Russia to its great power status. The survival of the regime, at least in part, also depends on Russia's ability to fulfill this promise which hinges on its economic expansion. The Russian economy flourished in Putin's first two terms in office from 2000 – 2008, benefiting from a period of high oil prices. Life for the Russian people improved significantly, and Russia was able to reassert itself as a major power in the international system. This, however, did not last as the 2008–2009 economic crises caused increased hardships for the Russian people with Russia's negative or low real GDP growth rates offering little hope for the future. As of 2018, 13.2% of the Russian population fell below the poverty line, and in April 2019, the BBC reported on a survey conducted by the Russian state statistics agency Rosstat, in which 80% of

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<sup>200</sup> International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook Database.

<sup>201</sup> Sonali Jain-Chandra, Niny Khor, Rui Mano, Johanna Schauer, Philippe Wingender and Juzhong Zhuang, "Inequality in China – Trends, Drivers and Policy Remedies" (working paper, International Monetary Fund, 2018), 3, <https://www.imf.org/~media/Files/Publications/WP/2018/wp18127.ashx>.

<sup>202</sup> U.S. Chamber of Commerce, *Made in China 2025: Global Ambitions Built on Local Protections* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), [https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/final\\_made\\_in\\_china\\_2025\\_report\\_full.pdf](https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/final_made_in_china_2025_report_full.pdf).

Russian households felt they had trouble making ends meet.<sup>203</sup> Putin's hostile foreign policy measures, including the annexation of Crimea and bolstering the Assad regime in Syria, temporarily distracted the Russian people from the economic downturn and in the process his appeal to Russian nationalism and the maintenance of Russia's claim to great power status increased his popularity, enabled his reelection in 2018, and bought him time to solve Russia's economic troubles.<sup>204</sup> However, Putin is currently ineligible to run in the 2024 election, and as the face of Russian nationalism, his absence likely means that Russia's economic problems will be a key issue that decides the outcome and level of power his regime retains after the election. The Putin regime must improve the economy before the election which will involve expanding Russia's hydrocarbon and arms sales in current and new markets. It could also mean reinvigorating its once strong manufacturing sector which will require not only expansion into new markets but also expansion to acquire the required raw materials that it does not possess domestically.

With the security of the states and survival of the CCP and Putin regime predicated on economic expansion, the intensity of security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia are likely heightened. This increases the probability that Russia will react to its overreliance on the Chinese hydrocarbon market. Russia's reactions may encroach upon China's economic expansion which could exacerbate the action-reaction cycle of the security dilemma, as both must choose to ensure state security and preservation of the regime over their partnership.

## 6. Discussion

An examination of the Sino-Russian relationship outside of Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that the potential is high for security dilemma dynamics with China to drive Russian activities in the future. China's actions to secure its energy resources supply

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<sup>203</sup> World Bank Group, *Preserving Stability; Doubling Growth' Halving Poverty – How?*, Russia Economic Report 40 (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2018), <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/673631543924406524/RER-40-English.pdf>; Sarah Rainsford, "Kremlin Doubts Figures Showing Russians too Poor to Buy Shoes," BBC, April 4, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47800419>.

<sup>204</sup> Tatiana Romanova, "Russia's Neorevisionist Challenge to the Liberal International Order," *The International Spectator* 53, no. 1 (2018): 84, doi:10.1080/03932729.2018.1406761.

through Russia created an asymmetric vulnerability between the states that favors China and in the long-term decreases Russia's overall security. As a result, Russia may have a heightened sense of fear that China will take advantage of this vulnerability which could combine with other existing fears to amplify tensions within Russia despite the states' aligned interests in response to U.S. primacy and desire to maintain the status quo between them. For Russia, a deep-seated sense of victimization emanating from its shared history with China evokes fears of subjugation, retaliation, and encirclement that may inhibit its ability to gain a true feeling of certainty in the motives of China's actions. The interstate communication processes that could ameliorate security dilemma dynamics between the two are present, but traditionally neither state is transparent with the intentions of their actions, and both states maintain a level of secrecy within their governments which calls into question the ability of communications between them to prevent misperceptions and dampen security dilemma dynamics. Two factors serve to exacerbate this dynamic: the necessity of economic expansion for Russian and Chinese security and the centrality of self-preservation in this expansion. The intensity of security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia are more likely to escalate as it reacts to its overreliance on the Chinese hydrocarbon market and attempts to diversify its economy. This reaction may encroach on China's economic expansion and could exacerbate the action-reaction cycle—as both must choose self-preservation and security over their partnership.

## **B. EVALUATION WITHIN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

This section applies the knowledge gained from the external evaluation to Sub-Saharan Africa to assess whether Russia's current activities in the region appear to be a reaction to security dilemma dynamics with China and predict Chinese and Russian activities within the region that could exacerbate existing dynamics between the states. It does so by answering two questions: Do Russia's actions in Sub-Saharan Africa appear to be a reaction to its decrease in security vis-à-vis China? What Chinese or Russian activities in Sub-Saharan Africa could exacerbate the identified security dilemma dynamics between the states? The first question is meant to identify two types of balancing reactions to security dilemma dynamics: those that exacerbate the dynamics and those that mitigate the dynamics. Balancing reactions that exacerbate security dilemma dynamics are reactions to

a decrease in security which counters the initial action in a security dilemma in a way which decreases the security of other states. Balancing reactions that mitigate security dilemma dynamics are those that are a reaction to a decrease in security that do not directly counter another state's actions or decrease the other's security but are instead undertaken to increase the state's overall security. The second question is asked to prompt a prediction of actions by China and Russia within Sub-Saharan Africa that could exacerbate existing dynamics between the states.

In answering these questions, I find that Russia's actions to increase its economic engagement and access to natural resources in the region appear to be balancing reactions to mitigate security dilemma dynamics with China and are not a direct reaction to its asymmetric vulnerability meant to decrease China's security. Potential flashpoints that could exacerbate security dilemma dynamics between China and Russia in the future include China's growing arms sales in the region, Russia's potential entry into Sub-Saharan Africa's high-tech consumer market, and its activities to obtain a greater share of the global hydrocarbon supply through Sub-Saharan Africa.

**1. Do Russia's Actions in Sub-Saharan Africa Appear to Be a Reaction to Its Decrease in Security vis-à-vis China?**

Russian reactions to its insecurity resulting from its overreliance on Chinese oil and gas purchases could take two forms: balancing actions that exacerbate security dilemma dynamics and those that mitigate the dynamics. Russian actions in Sub-Saharan Africa that would fit the mode of exacerbating actions relative to China include those that aid Russian economic diversification efforts while in some way harming China's economy, or increasing China's reliance on Russian oil and gas by directly preventing China from securing access to sources in the region. For Russia, this may include actions such as blocking Chinese entry into Sub-Saharan Africa's high-tech consumer market or securing exclusive access to essential metals or minerals in the region that China needs for its industrial sector. Mitigating efforts by Russia, on the other hand, would include less contentious actions that do not directly counter or harm China but assist Russia with increasing its economic capabilities. Examples of these types of actions include Russia increasing its exports and economic ties in the region and securing access to natural

resources without preventing China from doing the same. Although Russia likely does not think in terms of security dilemma dynamics with China, it appears that Russia's actions in Sub-Saharan Africa are a part of a concerted effort to diversify its economy and shore up its economic revenue that is reminiscent of balancing actions to mitigate its decrease in security relative China and not a direct counter to Chinese actions.

Russia has increased its activities to strengthen its economic cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa and take advantage of its economic opportunities. In 2017, Russia grew the value of its trade with Sub-Saharan Africa from a very low level in 2010, increasing it from \$US 1.6 billion to \$US 4.2 billion.<sup>205</sup> In 2018, Russia joined the African Export-Import Bank, a pan-African bank established to promote and fund African trade, and made an agreement with Eritrea to construct a logistics center on the Red Sea, both of which position Russia to increase its exports to the region.<sup>206</sup> Russia has also made deals with several Sub-Saharan African states to capitalize on the region's lucrative telecommunications sector and demand for nuclear energy including telecommunications projects in Angola and nuclear power projects in Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, and Zambia. In addition, throughout 2018, Russia made agreements with Angola, Ethiopia, Namibia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe aimed at increasing its economic cooperation with these states.<sup>207</sup> Russia also initiated, planned, and will host the Russia – Africa Summit that is set to take place in late 2019. This summit will link around 3,000 African businesspeople and government officials to their Russian counterparts to further increase Russia's trade and economic relations with African states.<sup>208</sup> When speaking about the summit, Anton Kobayakov, a Putin adviser, was quoted in *Modern Diplomacy*, as saying, "Economies of most African countries develop progressively, and Africa will play an increasing role in the system of

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<sup>205</sup> Judd Devermont, *The World is Coming to Sub-Saharan Africa. Where Is the United States?* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2018), 3, [https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180824\\_Devermont\\_WorldIs\\_ComingFINAL\\_0.pdf](https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180824_Devermont_WorldIs_ComingFINAL_0.pdf).

<sup>206</sup> "JSC Russian Export Centre Joins Afreximbank as Shareholder," AFREXIMBANK, January 22, 2018, <https://www.afreximbank.com/jsc-russian-export-centre-joins-afreximbank-as-shareholder/>.

<sup>207</sup> Kumar Malhotra, "Russia in Africa: Is it becoming a Key Player?," BBC, January 9, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-45035889>.

<sup>208</sup> Kester Kenn Klomegah, "Preparing for the Russia – Africa Summit," *Modern Diplomacy*, March 29, 2019, <https://modern diplomacy.eu/2019/03/28/towards-the-first-russia-africa-summit/>.

Russia's foreign economic relations in the long term, as the region becomes more and more attractive for trade and investment."<sup>209</sup>

Russia also increased its efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa to secure access to the natural resources it needs to expand the industrial and manufacturing sectors that are essential to diversify its economy. Though Russia is one of the most resource-rich states in the world, it lacks or faces depleted reserves of several minerals and metals key to manufacturing a wide assortment of potential export products and arms to include aluminum, bauxite, chrome, chromium, copper, manganese, mercury, nickel, tin, titanium, and zinc. Russian mining companies increased efforts to gain access to these and other mineral resources marked Russia's return to Sub-Saharan Africa and it recently secured mining deals in Sudan (gold), Angola (diamonds), Guinea (bauxite), South Africa (uranium and platinum), and Tanzania (uranium). Russia's highly publicized activities in the Central African Republic are also likely, in part, related to securing access to its large gold, copper, manganese, tin, and uranium reserves. In addition, each of the five states, Angola, Ethiopia, Namibia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, that formally pledged to increase economic cooperation with Russia in 2018, have significant reserves of at least two or more of the minerals and metals that Russia requires and these agreements will likely result in an increase in Russian mining in the states in the near future.

Finally, Russia increased its profit-focused arms sales in Sub-Saharan Africa to shore up its revenue streams. As the world's second-largest arms exporter, arms sales provide Russia with an additive source of income to its hydrocarbon sales and Russia has long used the revenue generated from arms sales as a stopgap during periods of reduced oil prices. Sub-Saharan Africa is an important market for Russia as its instability and familiarity with Russian arms stemming from Soviet-era ties, makes it a persistent source of income, despite many of the states' poor economic status. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Russia overtook Ukraine as the region's

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<sup>209</sup> Klomegah.

top arms exporter in the years spanning from 2014 to 2018 capturing 28% of the market.<sup>210</sup> Actual arms sales figures are difficult to come by due to many sales going unreported or conducted on shadow or black markets, but based on open-source data collected by SIPRI this translated to around \$US 6.048 billion in 2017 alone.<sup>211</sup> Since 2014, Russia has, also, reportedly made around 19 defense cooperation deals with states such as Ethiopia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and others.<sup>212</sup> In contrast to Soviet-era transfers based on shared ideology, current Russian arms sales in Africa are, according to Nalbandov, characterized by a “nothing – personal, pure business approach” and Russia’s primary objective is to make a profit off the sales.<sup>213</sup> Russia often attaches extensive maintenance and defense advisory contracts or requires access to natural resources as stipulations of its arms sales in Sub-Saharan Africa to make them even more lucrative. One recent example of this is Russia’s arms agreement with the Central African Republic. Russian arms transfers in the Central African Republic were reportedly accompanied by an influx of Russian civilian defense advisors from the Wagner Group, notorious for its alleged involvement in the murder of three Russian journalists, and provided opportunities for Russian companies to purchase mining rights for gold and diamonds at a reduced price.<sup>214</sup>

Russia’s economic ties in the Sub-Saharan Africa, however, pale in comparison to China’s and its current activities have little impact on China’s economic interest in the region. China has cultivated its relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa since the 1950s, which continued after the Cold War deescalated and other states lost interest. After Africa

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<sup>210</sup> “Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018,” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018, [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs\\_1903\\_at\\_2018.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs_1903_at_2018.pdf).

<sup>211</sup> Calculated by the author using Russia’s percentage of the Sub-Saharan African arms sales market share multiplied by the total value of arms transfers to Sub-Saharan Africa in 2017 (\$21.6b) as determined by SIPRI; “SIPRI Yearbook 2018: Armaments, Disarmament, and International Security (Summary),” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018, [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/yb\\_18\\_summary\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/yb_18_summary_en_0.pdf).

<sup>212</sup> Russia Expands its Military and Business Ties to Africa,” *Reuters*, October 17, 2018, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-10-17/russia-expands-its-military-and-business-ties-africa>.

<sup>213</sup> Robert Nalbandov, *Not by Bread Alone: Russian Foreign Policy under Putin* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Potomac Books, 2016), 446.

<sup>214</sup> Eric Schmitt, “Russia’s Military Mission Creep Advances to a New Front: Africa,” *The New York Times*, March 31, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/31/world/africa/russia-military-africa.html>.

underwent a series of economic reforms in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s that promised greater privatization of industries and increased trade opportunities, as Brautigam notes, China began to structure its aid and investments towards capitalizing on its markets and gaining access to natural resources.<sup>215</sup> China's investment in the continent started to pay-off in the early 2000s when trade between the two rapidly increased at a rate of over 40% annum from 2001 – 2006, a vast majority of which occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>216</sup> This growth continued, and according to Schoen and Kaylan, China passed the United States and EU as Africa's biggest trade partner by 2012.<sup>217</sup> The total value of China's trade with Sub-Saharan Africa vastly eclipses Russia's at \$US 165.4 billion in 2017.<sup>218</sup> China also actively seeks opportunities to expand its exports in Sub-Saharan Africa as a region that is not oversaturated with its products and, according to Taylor, whose customer base it perceives as being "more receptive to the type of inexpensive products that Chinese factories typically produce."<sup>219</sup> Russia does not have the manufacturing capacity to directly compete with China on this front and Russia's attempt to increase its economic ties are not likely to harm China in the near term.

Sub-Saharan Africa's immense natural resources also position it as an important source of fuel for China's economic growth and it has invested a significant amount of time, effort, and money to gain access to these resources that limit Russia's ability to impact its supply. According to data collected by the American Enterprise Institute, China's investments in Sub-Saharan Africa's energy and metal/mineral sectors totaled \$US 130.88 billion of the \$US 299.66 billion China invested in Sub-Saharan Africa from 2005 – 2018, with investments in the supporting transportation infrastructure adding another \$US 96.06

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<sup>215</sup> Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2009), 70.

<sup>216</sup> Jian-ye Wang, *What Drives China's Growing Role in Africa?* IMF Working Paper WP/07/211 (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2007), 5, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2007/wp07211.pdf>.

<sup>217</sup> Schoen and Kaylan, *The Russia-China Axis: The New Cold War and America's Crisis of Leadership*, 203.

<sup>218</sup> Devermont, *The World is Coming to Sub-Saharan Africa*, 3

<sup>219</sup> Ian Taylor, "China's Arms Sales to Africa," in *China in Africa*, ed. Arthur Waldron (Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 2008), 36.

billion.<sup>220</sup> These investments allowed China to amass an extensive portfolio of natural resource exploration and extractions rights within Sub-Saharan Africa that ensures Russia cannot directly counter or hinder China's access to the resources it needs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Overall, Russia's increased activities to establish deeper economic engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa coincided with both increased Western sanctions and Russia's growing reliance on China and both are likely important drivers of its actions in the region. Russia's increased efforts to capitalize on Sub-Saharan Africa's emerging economic markets, secure access to natural resources, and increase its comprehensive arms sales agreements are more suggestive of mitigatory balancing reactions than exacerbating ones because they support Russian economic diversification efforts without decreasing China's security. Although Russia's overreliance on China's oil and gas purchases are in the early stages, as it continues to grow and Russia's security decreases, it is likely that security dilemma dynamics between the two will become an increasingly important driver of its activities in the region.

## **2. What Chinese or Russian Activities in Sub-Saharan Africa Could Exacerbate the Identified Security Dilemma Dynamics between the States?**

The activities of China and Russia in Sub-Saharan Africa that could exacerbate security dilemma dynamics between the two centers around each state expanding its activities to those that the other typically has a strong presence. For China, this manifests in its expanding arms sales in the region to which Russia is the top player. For Russia, its desire to obtain a share of Sub-Saharan Africa's economic markets could eventually encroach on China's long-awaited chance to do the same and its efforts to access Sub-Saharan Africa's oil and gas could contribute to reversing the economic symmetry between the states. These activities are directly related to security dilemma dynamics between the two as China's expansion into the Sub-Saharan African arms market could decrease one of

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<sup>220</sup> "China Global Investment Tracker," The American Enterprise Institute and Heritage Foundation, accessed May 9, 2019, <http://www.aei.org/china-global-investment-tracker/>.

Russia's few sources of revenue outside of hydrocarbons and Russia's actions to gain a share of the economic markets and access to natural resources are, in part, driven by the dynamics.

China's expansion into Sub-Saharan Africa's arms market could exacerbate the security dilemma dynamics between the two by threatening one of Russia's few sources of revenue outside of hydrocarbon resources. By producing low-cost "good enough" products that are roughly equivalent to those of other major arms producers, such as the United States and Russia, China is quickly growing what Li and Matthews label the "Made in China" global arms brand.<sup>221</sup> According to SIPRI, China is now the fifth-largest arms supplier in the world, and as its technology continues to improve, China will more directly compete with Russia in Sub-Saharan Africa in the future.<sup>222</sup> Chinese arms are an increasingly attractive option for the often conflictual, but cash-strapped states within Sub-Saharan Africa for several reasons outside of their low prices and adequate function. China essentially allows states to swap resources for arms in the form of loans tied to access to natural resources, to which states in Sub-Saharan Africa have in abundance but lack the capital to develop the reserves themselves. China's financial position also makes it more willing to transfer arms under favorable sales terms in exchange for influence and support in international arenas, such as the UN. As a result, China has gained significant shares of the arms market in Sub-Saharan Africa and is closing in on Russia. SIPRI found that, between 2014 – 2018, China accounted for 24% of all arms sales in Sub-Saharan Africa, while Russia accounted for 28%.<sup>223</sup> These figures are also similar for Sub-Saharan Africa's largest and most lucrative arms market, Nigeria, in which China held 21% of the market to Russia's 35% during this same period.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Ling Li and Ron Matthews, "'Made in China': An Emerging Brand in the Global Arms Market," *Defense & Security Analysis* 33, no. 2 (2017): 180, doi:10.1080/14751798.2017.1310700.

<sup>222</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, "SIPRI Yearbook 2018 (Summary)," 8.

<sup>223</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018," 8.

<sup>224</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 8.

The competition between China and Russia in Sub-Saharan Africa's arms market may escalate as Russia feels pressure to increase its sales in the region due to its growing insecurity as a result of its asymmetric vulnerability to China. As previously discussed, Russia's arms sales are one of its few sources of diversification away from hydrocarbons, and it uses the revenue generated from arms to fill gaps in hydrocarbon sales. As Russia continues to feel the pressure of security dilemma dynamics with China, in the interim it will likely look to further increase its arms sales in Sub-Saharan Africa as it searches for a more long-term solution to its vulnerability. Russian arms sales in the region will increasingly meet competition from China which may generate a counter-reaction. The centrality of a strong economy to the survival of the Putin regime will put more significant pressure on Russia to react to protect its economic interests and the importance of Sub-Saharan Africa to China's overall expansionist economic interests, and the survival of the CCP increases the chances of a counter-reaction by China.

An increase in Russia's activities in Sub-Saharan Africa's emerging economic markets is also a potential flashpoint for escalated competition between China and Russia. Sub-Saharan Africa's economic markets are mostly underdeveloped, absent significant competition, and have enormous potential as a result of the region's economic growth and a booming population and as such represents one of Russia's best opportunities to diversify its economy away from hydrocarbons. According to the World Bank, many Sub-Saharan African states are projected to sustain annual real GDP growth rates equal to or better than China's projected 6% through 2021 to include: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda, and Ethiopia is projected to average one of the highest growth rates in the world during this period at nearly 9% annually.<sup>225</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa's population is around 1.02 billion people, and the UN projects that it will grow to over 1.4 billion by 2030 and over 2.1 billion by 2050.<sup>226</sup> This population is also becoming younger than most other markets and increasingly

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<sup>225</sup> World Bank Group, *Global Economic Prospects: Darkening Skies* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2019), 4, 112, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/global-economic-prospects#data>.

<sup>226</sup> "World Population Prospects," United Nations, 2017, [https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017\\_DataBooklet.pdf](https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_DataBooklet.pdf).

urbanized. The middle and upper class in Africa is expected to make up around 42.69% of the total population in 2030, with much of it concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>227</sup> Household consumption, which totaled over \$1 trillion in 2015, is projected to reach over \$1.4 trillion in 2025, with actual figures likely much higher as most purchases occur in untracked informal markets.<sup>228</sup> This economic growth coupled with its large population means that Sub-Saharan Africa is an increasingly attractive market to both China and Russia for retail and consumer goods, high-technology products, and construction and engineering industries.

Russia has several advantages that may threaten China's long-cultivated efforts to increase its share of Sub-Saharan Africa's economic markets in the future and could spark an action-reaction cycle between the states. Russia is experienced in manufacturing high-technology industrial products, such as machinery, and possesses significant intellectual capital in the construction and engineering industries to make an immediate impact on Sub-Saharan Africa's markets as its efforts to increase its economic ties in the region comes to fruition. Russia could also hinder China's forthcoming efforts to introduce more high-end consumer products in Sub-Saharan Africa as part of its transition to manufacturing and exporting more of these products in the future. Russia already produces many high-end consumer products such as computers, televisions, and household appliances and Russia's ongoing efforts to increase trade with Sub-Saharan Africa may allow it to gain much of the high-tech consumer goods market in Sub-Saharan Africa prior to China's entry. This could also provide Russia a foothold in Sub-Saharan Africa's consumer market that, as it continues to mature and demand for higher quality goods increases, enables it to compete with China's lower-end products. Increased competition with Russia could generate a counterreaction by China to protect its economic interests that are further intensified by the centrality of economic expansion and growth to the legitimacy of the CCP.

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<sup>227</sup> Landry Signe and Chelsea Johnson, *Africa's Consumer Market Potential: Trends, Drivers, Opportunities, and Strategies* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institutions, 2018), 11, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Africas-consumer-market-potential.pdf>.

<sup>228</sup> Dollar figures were calculated by the author using data compiled by Signe and Johnson, *Africa's Consumer Market Potential*, 4–5.

Russia's actions to gain access to Sub-Saharan Africa's oil and gas reserves may also encroach on China's ability to do the same and could exacerbate the security dilemma dynamics between the two in the future. Russia does not need to import hydrocarbons from Sub-Saharan Africa for domestic use but increasing its control of external reserves could enable it to gain a more significant share of the global supply and reduce the ability of its current export markets, such as China and Europe, to diversify away from Russian sources. Russian oil and gas companies have already gained several extraction agreements with Sub-Saharan African states and are increasing their efforts to capitalize on them. Lukoil, a Russian oil company, began explorations in Cameroon, Ghana, and Nigeria in 2014 and has on-going projects to extract the oil and gas from these sites and in 2018 Rosneft obtained rights to oil and gas blocks in Mozambique fields.<sup>229</sup> If Russia were able to gain a more significant share of the global supply through Sub-Saharan Africa and other regions it could reverse the symmetry of the interdependence between it and China to which China will likely react to prevent. Undoubtedly, China wants to ensure its energy security and does not want another state to gain an advantage over it in this area. This puts pressure on China to react to ensure its access to Sub-Saharan Africa's oil and gas and could exacerbate security dilemma dynamics between the states.

### **3. Discussion**

Russia's actions to increase its economic engagement and access to natural resources in Sub-Saharan Africa resemble balancing actions to mitigate security dilemma dynamics with China. Russia's growing overreliance on Chinese oil and gas purchases as a primary source of economic revenue is likely putting at least some pressure on it to diversify its economy and shore up its hydrocarbon revenue, but Russia's asymmetric vulnerability to China is in its infancy, however, and other factors are also at play. Western sanctions that limit Russian export potential and its ability to court Western investments for domestic natural resource exploration are also a probable reason for Russia's actions in

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<sup>229</sup> "International Projects," Lukoil, accessed May 9, 2019, <http://www.lukoil.com/Business/Upstream/Overseas>; Alexander Winning, "Mozambique Signs Oil Exploration agreements with Exxon, Rosneft," *Reuters*, October 8, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mozambique-oil/mozambique-signs-oil-exploration-agreements-with-exxon-rosneft-idUSKCN1MI1YJ>.

Sub-Saharan Africa. Russia's desire for recognition as a great power is another likely reason for Russia's return to Africa as activities, such as its defense advisor roles in Sub-Saharan Africa, are essential to this claim. Additionally, Africa's ability to sway decisions in the UN is attractive to Russia and solicits actions to gain favor in the region. However, as Russia's reliance on China continues to grow, the security dilemma dynamics could become an even more important driver of Russia's actions in Sub-Saharan Africa in the future.

China, on the other hand, has a long-standing relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa and its actions in the region are not motivated by security dilemma dynamics with Russia, but by the CCP's rule hinging on economic growth. This, however, does increase the potential of a Chinese counteraction to any reaction by Russia that threatens its potential for economic expansion. China's economic standing affords it greater patience in its reactions that ensure the dynamics between the two are not likely to spiral to the point of war, but China is likely to vigorously defend its interests in Sub-Saharan Africa's economic markets and natural resources against increasing Russian competition. Russia's attempt to gain a greater share of the global oil and gas supply in Sub-Saharan Africa may also generate a counterreaction from China as it looks to maintain its asymmetry over Russia.

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## IV. CONCLUSION

Like Kennan's assertion that the Soviet Union contained the "seeds of its own decay," so too does the Sino-Russian partnership—the oil and gas that brought them together also has the potential to break them apart.<sup>230</sup> The findings of this thesis indicate that the potential is high for security dilemma dynamics, centered around Russia's growing reliance on China's oil and gas market, to drive competition between the two. Although their interests are largely aligned and they avoid conflicts of interest, Russia's economic vulnerability vis-à-vis China puts pressure on it to react to limit China's ability to inflict costs on it. This is perpetuated by Russia's deep-seated sense of victimization emanating from its shared history with China that evokes fears of subjugation, retaliation, and encirclement which impedes its ability to gain certainty in the motives of China's actions. A competitive action-reaction cycle that tears the partnership apart could ensue as Russia takes actions to diversify its economy that hinders China's own economic expansion or as China conducts actions that, as a result of the vulnerability, increase Russia's insecurity. All of which is exacerbated by the necessity of expansion for both states' economic growth and their regimes' reliance on this growth as a source of legitimacy to maintain control.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, however, Russia's actions thus far serve to mitigate the security dilemma dynamics between the two and leaves open the possibility for the states to take the same pragmatic approach to competition in Sub-Saharan Africa that they do in other regions. This would likely take the form of China capitalizing on the Sub-Saharan Africa's economic growth potential while allowing Russia to handle security in the region—to the benefit of both. If this were to occur, the United States' influence in Sub-Saharan Africa could be significantly reduced, especially as it appears to be retrenching from the region. The security dilemma literature provides some insight into the steps the United States could take to increase competition between the two and possibly prevent this from happening.

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<sup>230</sup> X (George Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 4 (1947): 580, doi:10.2307/20030065.

First, the United States should make a concerted effort to create or perpetuate uncertainty in China's and Russia's perceptions of the other's motives. Doing so, could lead to the states misinterpreting actions by the other as malign and incite an action-reaction cycle that hinders their cooperation. Russia, as the weakest in the partnership, is most likely to escalate competition between the states and should be the target of U.S. efforts. Russia fears encirclement by the United States and NATO, and China's integration in the global economy and reluctance to challenge the United States to a greater extent causes Russia to fear that China will join this effort. The United States should avoid actions, such as trade wars and portraying China as a threat, that compromise this fear and are counterproductive to dividing the Sino-Russian partnership. Russia also fears that China will use its preponderance of power to take advantage of it or regain control over territory China conceded to Russia when the roles were reversed. The United States should develop a comprehensive information campaign targeting the Russian oligarchs and future political leaders that highlights the disproportionate way in which the states' business deals, especially in the energy sector, favor China, and China's failure to fulfill promises of significant development and investment in the infrastructure in the Russian Far East. This could create further doubt that China's interactions with Russia are benign and that cooperation with China is mutually beneficial which may cause the oligarchs and political leaders to put greater pressure on the state to react to its asymmetric vulnerability with China and compete more directly. The United States should also support Russian leaders in the Far East in their efforts to convince the government and Russian people of an imminent Chinese take over in that portion of the state. This plays into Russian fears of subjugation at the hands of China and could illicit a nationalistic call to counter its asymmetric vulnerability to China to prevent its perceived subjugation by China. Overall, the United States should leverage the role-reversal that made China the "big brother" in the relationship to highlight China's preponderance of power and ability to harm Russia that may generate a greater response to its asymmetric vulnerability with China.

Second, the United States should take actions to increase Russia's asymmetric vulnerability with China. The United States should enact policy that decreases Russia's share of the oil and gas market in Europe and prevents the diversification of its customer

base. This would include expanding current sanctions that target future oil and gas projects to those already underway to prevent the completion of projects, such as Nord Stream 2 and TurkStream, that threaten to increase Russia's throughput to Europe. This would also entail expanding current sanctions that target Russian external LNG projects to its domestic ones to limit its ability to expand its customer base in the Asia-Pacific. Additionally, the United States would need to ensure it provides viable alternatives to Russian oil and gas to Europe and the Asia-Pacific and support European energy diversification efforts. This would involve maintaining competitive prices on U.S. shale oil and gas and increasing its throughput to Europe and the Asia-Pacific. It would also involve providing incentives to U.S. companies for participation in projects such as those in the Eastern Mediterranean that look to provide Europe with alternatives to Russian oil and gas. The United States should also put greater pressure on European countries, and particularly Germany, to break their dependency on Russia to ensure they are more receptive to alternative sources. These efforts combined would limit Russia's production potential and ability to diversify its customer base, while decreasing its share of the global oil and gas market and further increase its reliance on China's oil and gas markets. This would put greater pressure on Russia to react to its vulnerability with China and increase the potential for direct competition that divides the partnership and prevents them from taking a pragmatic approach to cooperation in places like Sub-Saharan Africa.

Overall, the United States cannot afford to allow China and Russia to develop their partnership into a full-fledged alliance aimed at upending the international system. Although China claims to want a peaceful rise, this does not mean it wants to remain second to the United States forever. China has already started to take a more assertive role in the international system and at some point, will likely challenge the United States for its top spot. China will not be able to do so, however, without allies to which Russia is one of the first candidates. If the United States can prevent China from obtaining powerful allies, it could prolong its primacy. Understanding how the security dilemma causes two status quo states to vigorously compete for security despite neither side truly wanting to could enable the United States to develop strategies that prevent Chinese led alliances from forming.

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