

“New Detente” Between Russia and The West?

Impacts on the Russia-China Strategic Partnership

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Region: [Asia](#), [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Macron's Mediation

The dynamics of the [New Cold War](#) might undergo a dramatic transformation if the geopolitical game-changer of a “New Detente” between Russia and the West succeeds, which is becoming increasingly possible as proven by recent events.

President Putin's meeting earlier this week with his French counterpart in Paris saw Macron repeatedly emphasizing Russia's [European identity](#) in a clear sign that this rapprochement is making visible progress. Macron is motivated to play the role of mediator between the US and Russia for two main reasons, namely that he wants to position France as a possible replacement to inevitably post-Merkel Germany as the EU's leading country and also to reach an accommodation with Moscow in Africa after the completion of the country's “[African Transversal](#)” earlier this summer [began](#) to [threaten](#) Paris' interests in the continent. Putin responded [extremely positively](#) and reminded Macron of their two Great Powers' decades-long shared desire to forge “a common Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok”, reaffirming that Russia regards itself more as a European country than a “Eurasian” or Asian one, which has important implications for International Relations.

The Neo-NAM

“[What The US Really Wants From Russia](#)” is for it to recalibrate its recent “Eurasian” turn towards China in exchange for much-needed sanctions relief that could help it survive its [two ongoing systemic transitions](#) in the [political](#) ([post-Putin 2024](#), or PP24) and economic (“[Great Society](#)”/“[National Development Projects](#)”) spheres, which was [likely discussed during Pompeo's trip to Sochi](#) in May and thus enabled the author to “[Predict The Possible Details Of A 'New Detente'](#)”. The US doesn't have any unrealistic expectations about the Russian-Chinese Strategic Partnership and is very well aware that Putin [announced](#) earlier this year that the Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union will work towards integrating with China's [Belt & Road Initiative](#) (BRI), so a repeat of the Old Cold War-era “Sino-Soviet Split” probably isn't in the cards, but what's much more feasible is for the US to encourage Russia to become the leader of a new Non-Aligned Movement ([Neo-NAM](#)) that could “[balance](#)” between China and the West exactly like Mr. Oleg Barabanov — a programme director at Russia's top think tank, the Valdai Club — suggested in his policy paper a few months ago titled “[China's Road to Global Leadership: Prospects and Challenges for Russia](#)”.

“Politically Inconvenient” Truths

Both the Mainstream and [Alternative Medias](#) had hitherto exaggerated the nature of the Russian-Chinese Strategic Partnership for their own reasons, with the former wanting to

portray it according to the paradigm of the so-called “Russian threat” in order to justify a more muscular American military buildup against them while the latter imagined that the two were “allies” jointly working together without any disagreements whatsoever in order to accelerate the emerging Multipolar World Order that would presumably be “anti-American”. The reality of their relations is a lot less sexy and it’s that Russia was pushed into reorientating its strategic focus as a result of the West’s anti-Russian sanctions following Crimea’s reunification, which served as the catalyst for Moscow’s decision to embrace Beijing. Russia probably wouldn’t have undertaken this move had it not been for American pressure, but it felt compelled to since it didn’t want to remain a “junior partner” in the US’ “New World Order”, instead endeavoring to return to its historical role as a Great Power among equals.

In pursuit of this, it’s much easier for Russia to simply reintegrate into a reformed “New World Order” than to build an entirely new one from scratch alongside China, which is why the possibility of a “New Detente” is so enticing to its leadership, though provided of course that the West is sincere in finally treating Russia as an equal Great Power. Trump already hinted as much when he said earlier this week following Putin’s successful summit with Macron that he’d [support Russia’s return](#) to the G8, which is hugely symbolic because of the effect that it would have on the country’s prestige and the international standing of its influential elites (including the “[big business representatives](#)” commonly referred to as “oligarchs”). In what certainly wasn’t a coincidence of timing, all of this is taking place just days before the upcoming G7 Summit in France, strongly suggesting that something serious is in the works behind the scenes. With this in mind, Macron’s repeated emphasis on Russia’s European identity and Putin’s reaffirmation of his country’s commitment to “a common Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok” takes on a new significance.

The Contemporary Russian-Chinese Context

It’s important to point out that all of this is happening right after the indisputable differences between Russia and China over Kashmir have become public, which debunked the Mainstream and Alternative Media assumptions about their strategic partnership by showing that it’s indeed possible for them to [disagree about a very significant international issue](#) contrary to what the global public was preconditioned to believe. That seemingly unimportant diplomatic development is actually a pivotal event in the larger context of what’s been discussed in this analysis since it proves that Russia’s “Eurasian pivot” isn’t as strong as it’s been portrayed as, thus throwing into question the working efficacy of related structures such as the SCO and BRICS. Speaking of which, those organizations’ next meetings will be held in [late October](#) and [mid-November](#) respectively, prior to which Putin plans to visit “[Israel](#)” in [September](#) and Saudi Arabia [the month after](#). It should be noted that both historically pro-American governments are Russia’s new [strategic partners](#) and possibly played a quiet role in helping to bring Moscow and Washington closer together, so even more progress might be made on reaching a “New Detente” during those trips.

Concluding Thoughts

What all of this means is that there’s a very high likelihood that Russia will continue recalibrating its approach to China before the SCO and BRICS summits later this year, which it’s presently in the process of doing as proven by its willingness to publicly contradict Beijing’s position towards Kashmir and the recent reaffirmation of its European identity as opposed to the “Eurasian” one that many observers had thought that it was finally embracing over the past half-decade since the West’s anti-Russian sanctions were first

imposed. The grand strategic consequences that this could have for China are profound because the People's Republic presumably never predicted that the scenario of Russia "balancing" it through its prospective leadership of a Neo-NAM was possible, though that might eventually come to pass and could even be inevitable. Russia independently has its own interests in fulfilling this role, whether it's enticed by the West through the perk of sanctions relief in exchange or provoked by China in the event that Beijing clinches its own "New Detente" with Washington through a forthcoming trade deal that could then make Moscow a "junior partner" to both of them. In other words, Russian-Chinese relations will almost certainly change and enter a new era in the near future.

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