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# Nuclear Deterrence Relations

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- ▶ Traditionally dyads
- ▶ Emphasis on US-Russian, US-Chinese nuclear balance
- ▶ Shifts in the Russian-Chinese nuclear deterrence relations
- ▶ Deterrence in the US-Russia-China triangle



# Typology of Nuclear Deterrence Relations

	<b>Adversarial (dyadic)</b>	<b>Cooperative (triadic)</b>
<b>Explicit</b>	US-China; US-Russia; India-Pakistan; DPRK-US; India-China	US-UK vs Russia
<b>Implicit</b>	Russia-Pakistan; US-France (under de Gaulle); DPRK-China	China-Pakistan vs India; India-Israel vs Pakistan; Russia-India vs China



# Dynamic Relations

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- ▶ Dyads are not static
- ▶ Shifts as a result of managing rivalry
- ▶ Tools: arms control, confidence-building and transparency measures
- ▶ Dyadic relations can have elements of cooperation when considered in a triangle (triads)



# Russian-Chinese Relations

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Dramatic changes over the last 70 years:

- ▶ 1950s – Partnership
- ▶ 1960-1985 – Confrontation
- ▶ 1985-1997 – Normalization
- ▶ 1997-2013 – Strategic partnership
- ▶ Post 2014 – Comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination



## Russian-Chinese Relations (2)

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- ▶ Have nuclear deterrence relations changed accordingly?
- ▶ How do Russia and China see utility of nuclear weapons vis-a-vis each other and how does it manifest itself?
- ▶ Explicitly adversarial → implicitly adversarial → implicitly cooperative vis-à-vis the United States
- ▶ Possibility for explicitly cooperative relations?



# Explicitly Adversarial (1964-1985)

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- ▶ Crucial role for nuclear weapons in deterring the opponent
- ▶ Potential for a conflict was extremely high:
  - ▶ 1969 border clashes
  - ▶ Soviet runs on mockup Chinese nuclear facilities
  - ▶ Soviet military planners took Chinese threat seriously
  - ▶ Exploring deployment of nuclear mines along the border in order to prevent a head-on Chinese invasion should deterrence fail



# Implicitly Adversarial: Transition (1986-1993)

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- ▶ **Perestroika and “new thinking”:**
  - ▶ Normalization of political relations
  - ▶ Soviet Union ceded military advantage:
    - (1) complete elimination of its medium-range nuclear forces, including 180 Asia-based SS-20s, and 256 other missiles in the context of the INF;
    - (2) significant force reduction in the Far East, including along the Soviet-Chinese border and in Mongolia;
    - (3) range of bilateral military confidence-building measures.
- ▶ **Transition of nuclear deterrence relations**
  - ▶ Nuclear weapons are not central but part of a bigger picture of strategic balance
  - ▶ Support strategic independence
  - ▶ No open targeting or nuclear threats





# Implicitly Adversarial: Consolidation (1994-2013)

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- ▶ Russia dropped Soviet NFU pledge in 1993 but in September 1994 signed Detargeting and NFU Agreement with China
  - ▶ NFU pledge included in the 2001 Friendship Treaty
  - ▶ 2009 - intergovernmental agreement on notifications about ballistic missiles and space launches (institutionalized bilateral military-to-military cooperation)
  - ▶ Joint military exercises and arms sales
  - ▶ Access to GLONASS
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# Implicitly Cooperative? (2014 – present)

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- ▶ Post-Crimea environment
- ▶ Comprehensive assessment of China
- ▶ Advanced arms sales to China: S-400 surface-to-air missile system and Su-35 fighter jets
- ▶ Discussion of a possible joint MD and MD exercises
- ▶ Expanded military games (Vostok-2018) and interoperability



# Implicitly Cooperative?

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- ▶ Nuclear deterrence relations between Russia, China and the United States are transforming from three individual dyads into a triad.
- ▶ Russia and China may cooperate implicitly *vis-à-vis* the United States:
  - ▶ January 2017 - deployment of DF-41 near Russian border:
    - ▶ Basing in Heilongjiang allows China to cover all of the continental US
    - ▶ Increases the system's vulnerability to a Russian strike
  - ▶ 2018 NPR – The Return of Great Power Competition
  - ▶ Missile Defense Review?



# Limits of Cooperation

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- ▶ Russian-Chinese rapprochement is natural:
  - ▶ Strategic rear
  - ▶ Shared support for multipolar world and opposition to the US policies
  - ▶ Coordinating diplomatic efforts at the global level
  - ▶ Arms sales and military-technical cooperation
  - ▶ Economic complementarity
  - ▶ Political affinity
- ▶ Nuclear deterrence is no longer central but NW as a hedge
- ▶ United States as threat vs. Monitoring each other



# Russia's Concerns

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- ▶ China's modernization: improving second strike capability given the US deployment of missile defenses
- ▶ Investments in SSBNs and MIRVing driven by the requirement to target the United States
- ▶ China's opacity on the size of nuclear forces (“sprint to parity”)
- ▶ Higher numbers than open-source US estimates
- ▶ Next round of reductions should include others
- ▶ China and INF Treaty: Russian deployments in Asia?



# China's Concerns

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- ▶ Credibility of the Russian NFU given its overall posture
- ▶ Reliance on tactical nuclear weapons (limited utility in the West)
- ▶ Installation of a Voronezh-type radar in Barnaul oriented towards China
- ▶ Deployment of nuclear-capable Su-35 and Su-27SM to the Far East
- ▶ Questions about the real purpose of some of the Russia's military games in the Far East and Siberia but Vostok-2018



# Implications for the United States

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- ▶ Coordination will increase but not to the US-UK level
- ▶ To what extent is the US policy pushing Russia and China closer?
- ▶ Is a conflict with both Russia and China at the same time possible?
- ▶ Conflict with China only: can ICBMs be used?
- ▶ Renewing strategic dialogue with Russia and exploring options for trilateral discussions



# Summary

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1. Russian-Chinese nuclear deterrence relations have moved from explicit adversarial to implicit adversarial after the end of the Cold War.
2. This shift enabled establishment of implicit cooperative nuclear deterrence relations vis-a-vis the United States.
3. At the same time, Russia remains wary in the long term and keeps nuclear weapons as a hedge against a more assertive China.
4. It places limits on cooperation and a further shift to explicit cooperative nuclear deterrence relations is unlikely.
5. Trilateral dialogue is necessary.





Thank you for your attention

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