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**China-Russia relations from the perspective of Russia's rational diplomatic decision-making: policy text analysis based on NVivo****Fan Wenjin**

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**Abstract**

The negative impact and consequences of the spillover effects of the Crimean crisis in 2014 on major countries, regions and even the world are far from being completely eliminated today, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict has intensified. In view of the special responsibilities that China and Russia shoulder for global strategic stability and international security, as well as the huge potential for trade, investment, science and technology and other cooperation between the two countries, it is important to rationally understand the essence of Russia's foreign policy decisions and China-Russia relations. On the one hand, in 2023, Russia will revise the new version of the "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation". China's position and weight in Russia's diplomatic strategic layout will continue to increase. The national interests of China and Russia will be more consistent, and the relationship between the two countries will face new opportunities and development. On the other hand, the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its spillover effects have brought subversive changes to Russia's internal and external environment and security situation. A rational understanding of Russia's foreign policy will help us gain insight into the direction of Russia's diplomatic strategy in a changing world, especially the China-Russia strategy. As the cooperative partnership develops to a new historical position and faces new promotion and restraint factors, whether it can turn pressure into motivation and challenges into opportunities will test the determination and wisdom of China's diplomacy. At the same time, under the century-old changes of global transformation and profound adjustment of the international system and international order, crisis spillover may accelerate the emerging China-Russia axis and influence the world.

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**Keywords**

Russia-Ukraine conflict, China-Russia relations, national interest, foreign policy decisions, scientific rationality.

## Decision theory and analysis path

As early as two thousand years ago, the famous work "Han Feizi·Guangng" during the Warring States Period in China mentioned that "a wise man makes decisions based on fools", which is the earliest origin of the word decision-making. Decision-making, simply speaking, is strategies and methods, which set guidelines for future actions [Zhang Lili, 2007]. Similarly, national actions need to formulate guidelines. In order to ensure the external environment for the country's long-term development and strive to be in a favorable competitive position in the international system, it is necessary to provide responses to various diplomatic problems encountered and decide on policies and solutions., this is foreign policy decision-making [Zhang Lili, 2007].

Research on foreign policy decision-making theory began in the 1950s, and in the 1960s and 1970s it gradually formed a foreign policy analysis discipline based on the theoretical framework of rational choice model, bureaucratic organizational model, and cognitive psychological model. Entering the 21st century, research on diplomatic decision-making has begun to shift its direction toward establishing a mid-range theory between general international relations theory and specialized theory (such as country and regional studies) research, emphasizing the role of diplomatic decision-making theory in connecting international relations theory and comparative studies. The linking role of political science and foreign policy-making groups [Song Haidilao, 2016]. Handover decision-making research will achieve further development. In fact, when most analysts explain (and predict) government behavior based on the conceptual model of diplomatic decision-making, they explain diplomatic behavior and international events by determining the purpose and interest calculation of the country or government. This is a hallmark of the rational actor model. Characteristics, that is, rational actor model. Indeed, the development and evolution of diplomatic decision-making have been deeply influenced by rationalism. Realist master Hans Morgenthau inherited the realist ideas of Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hegel, and Weber. He used the security rational model and believed that the state is a rational actor similar to human beings. The purpose is to maximize power and interests [Lu Xiaohong, 2012]. From classical realism, to realism, to neorealism, power is regarded as the core concept. It is believed that in an anarchic system, power is the core variable that shapes international behavior. Therefore, national policies and policies aimed at pursuing national interests with power are Behavior is considered rational [Dougherty, Pfalzgraf, 2002]. In the treatise on liberal international relations theory, neoliberal institutionalism represented by Robert Keohane draws on the rational choice theory in new institutional economics and identifies the principle of rationality as an important aspect of liberal state relations theory. assumed. Neoliberal institutionalism's assumptions about the state converge with structural realism. States are self-interested and rational actors acting on the basis of their own notions of self-interest [Keohane, 2001]. In short, the rationalist or rational diplomatic decision-making model here emphasizes the interests of actors, that is, the diplomatic decision-making of a nation-state is for the purpose of pursuing national interests. In the academic world of international relations, the basis of a national government is national interest backed by power, and national interest has increasingly become an explanation for a country's foreign behavior and decision-making that is acceptable to academic circles [Song Haidilao, 2016].

How to determine national interests? Especially in the diplomatic decision -making process, what factors affect a country's national interests? To answer this question, we need to understand the nature of foreign policy decision-making. If the theory of international relations focuses on the study of the external environment of a country and the phenomena, processes and mechanisms of international life, the theory of foreign policy analysis attempts to elucidate the interaction between a country and its

external environment that leads to a certain behavior by studying the internal factors of the country. Causes, dynamics and mechanisms. That is to say, international relations theory studies the interaction and mutual relations between the subjects of international relations, while foreign policy analysis theory studies the interconnection between a country's internal factors and its external behavior in international politics and international relations. Different from "international system-level analysis" which focuses on explaining and analyzing state behavior from the level of national political and economic structure or international environment, foreign policy research takes national characteristics as the main independent variables and examines the specific impact of these variables on foreign policy, which denies "International System Level Analysis" assumes that domestic political processes are regarded as "black box operations" [Feng Yujun, 2002]. The examination of independent variables profoundly reflects the national interests contained in a country's policy output in foreign policy decisions.

It can be seen that foreign policy decisions determined by national interests, which are affected by domestic and foreign political factors and processes, constitute a complete chain of analysis. The problem is how to build an analytical framework to understand a country's national interests and then study its diplomatic behavior and foreign relations. Diplomatic decision-making is a complex interaction and game process. In such a process, the interests and values of different actors will collide. Therefore, when analyzing a country's diplomatic decision-making process, it is important to recognize clearly what the actors do. The main thing is to formulate and implement foreign policy. The definition of foreign policy can be simply stated as the set of official foreign relations implemented by independent actors (often countries) in international relations. It is a country's goals, principles and action lines determined around the distribution of interests among countries. Therefore, when analyzing a country's foreign policy-making, a useful analytical path is to analyze the country's foreign policy and then reveal the national interests in its foreign behavior, and then explore the interactive relationship between national interests and foreign policy-making, so as to further predict the development trend of diplomacy. , at a deeper level, one can analyze the country's diplomatic behavior through its national interests, thereby exploring the essence of its international relations or inter-state relations. This is a classic research path of realist international relations theory. According to Western realism theory, national interests, political and economic strength and balance of power are the most important reference factors for decision-making. This concept based on the Hobbesian mindset is often used by the powerful to defend the law of the jungle in real international life. According to the Marxist view of history, national interests are the interests of the dominant class and have a class nature, but At the same time, national interests also realistically reflect the interests of the country as a specific community to a certain extent [Qi Jianhua, 2010].

In today's world, almost all major events related to the course of human history cannot ignore the existence of China and Russia. The movements and gatherings and separations between these two Eurasian giants are related to the development and changes of the entire international structure .Today, China-Russia relations have entered a new stage in an all-round way. The relationship between the two countries is a model of a new type of international relations and has global strategic significance. Fundamentally, China and Russia have found "the right way for countries to get along with each other." This is the fundamental issue in the diplomacy of major powers. Looking at the development of China-Russia relations, we can see that there is a strong interactive relationship between the overall foreign strategic setting and the specific cooperation space and dimensions. This interaction lies in the fact that the two countries continue to consolidate and deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for the new era based on their respective national conditions, which not only embodies the complexity and comprehensive characteristics of China-Russia relations, but also reveals the

essence of China-Russia relations - in line with the fundamental interests of the country. Therefore, according to the theoretical model of foreign policy decision-making analysis, we analyze the national interests in Russia's foreign policy-making through foreign policy, judge Russia's strategic interests and diplomatic demands towards China, and then reveal the nature and characteristics of China-Russia relations.

To this end, this article studies the nature of China-Russia relations from the perspective of Russian diplomatic decision-making. Its purpose is not to obtain a clear and unified answer, but to advance understanding of this issue with the help of more diversified research perspectives and methods. The research contributions of this article are twofold: first, the innovation of research perspective. According to the analysis path of this article, the most important point is how to interpret Russia's foreign policy. The West pays attention to Russia's foreign policy decision-making issues. However, there is a common shortcoming among Western researchers. The study of Russia's foreign policy-making and foreign relations ignores and There is a lack of in-depth discussion of the laws and regulations related to the foreign policy decision-making mechanism, which is the fundamental source for analyzing Russia's foreign policy decision-making mechanism [Feng Yujun, 2002]. Therefore, the most important source of information for this study is the legal document "Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation". Confirm the main contents of the "Concept" policy text, and reveal the realistic basis of the relationship between the two countries - national interests on the premise of a rational understanding of Russia's foreign policy. On this basis, the essential characteristics and fragility of China-Russia relations are analyzed. At the same time, in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, we will further understand the development prospects of China-Russia relations. Second, the innovation of research methods uses NVivo coding software and qualitative analysis. Domestic research on this issue generally uses literature analysis and descriptive research methods. <sup>1</sup>This article uses qualitative analysis to analyze text samples with the help of program software to generate specific data content and try to prevent the researcher's subjective interference. More scientific.

### **Policy output of foreign policy decision-making: national interests and scientific rationality**

From 1993 to 2023, Russia launched a total of six foreign policy guidance documents, the "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" (hereinafter referred to as the "Concept"). The "Concept" is a consensus reached within the Russian state and on foreign policy priorities, and a "programme" for advancing the diplomatic process in a coordinated manner. Internally, the "Concept" objectively reflects the characteristics of Russia's history, geopolitics, economic and cultural development, and clarifies its international interests, strategic goals and main tasks in the field of foreign policy to ensure

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<sup>1</sup> NVivo is a professional computer-aided qualitative analysis software developed by the Australian company QSR (Qualitative Solutions Research). It can conduct fast and in-depth qualitative analysis of information data in documents, PDFs, videos, photos, audio and other files, and present it as quantitatively as possible. It highlights key points by creating a project, gathering source materials, creating nodes, and simple coding. NVivo creates connections between the research topic and related concepts. The first round is open coding, the second round is axis coding, and the third round is selective coding. In this study, coding was carried out in three step-by-step steps: first, the first-level dimensions were determined based on the content of foreign policy texts at the three levels of security, development, and culture/spirituality; second, the secondary content of the above three dimensions was dismantle to form a second-level dimension framework; finally, the foreign policy is coded to form several sub-nodes, and the sub-nodes are placed into the corresponding second-level dimensions through integration to form a third-level dimension.

that diplomatic institutions can deal with diplomatic problems in complex international situations. , indicating the principles and direction of foreign policy. Externally, the "Concept" can clearly convey Russia's external stance and attitude. It is an important adjustment for Russia's diplomatic philosophy and policy direction in the context of changes in internal needs and external environment [Wang Yujing, Fang Lexian, 2023]. That is to emphasize the principles and pragmatism of Russia's diplomacy to the outside world, while creating a favorable external environment for development. This article will determine the main content of Russia's foreign policy through the six "Concept" texts promulgated by Russia in the past thirty years, thereby exploring the national interests of its foreign policy, and whether the content of its foreign policy is rational, and then analyzing Russia's fundamental principles of foreign policy.

### **Text analysis: Thematic clustering of "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation"**

This article selects the "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" (hereinafter referred to as "Concept") since 1991 (1993, 2000, 2008, 2013, 2016, 2023) as the object of analysis. The study used the qualitative analysis software NVivo to perform three-level coding on 10,922 reference nodes of policy documents. The results of the analysis of the foreign policy text itself are as follows (table 1, 2, 3).

**Table 1 - First-level coding results of "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation"**

Primary code number	Primary-level node
R1	Russia's Global Agenda and International Security
R2	Russian regional prosperity and development
R3	Russia's national sovereignty and cultural and spiritual interests

**Table 2 - Second-level coding results of "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation"**

Primary code number	Secondary code number	Secondary-level node
R1	R1-1	The global situation changes and Russia's status is challenged
	R1-2	International tensions have intensified and the international order is under threat
	R1-3	Diversification of international security risks and threats
	R1-4	Tensions in Russia's surrounding areas and borders
R2	R2-1	The risk of Russia's economic system becoming dependent on foreign countries has increased, and the international economy has been unstable.
	R2-2	Regional cooperation needs to be strengthened urgently to promote economic development
	R2-3	Russia needs to vigorously participate in international and regional organizations
R3	R3-1	Protect Russia's national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity
	R3-2	Traditional spiritual and moral values are under attack
	R3-3	The falsification of Russian historical issues
	R3-4	Facing challenges from unfriendly countries

**Table 3 -Three-level coding results of "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation"**

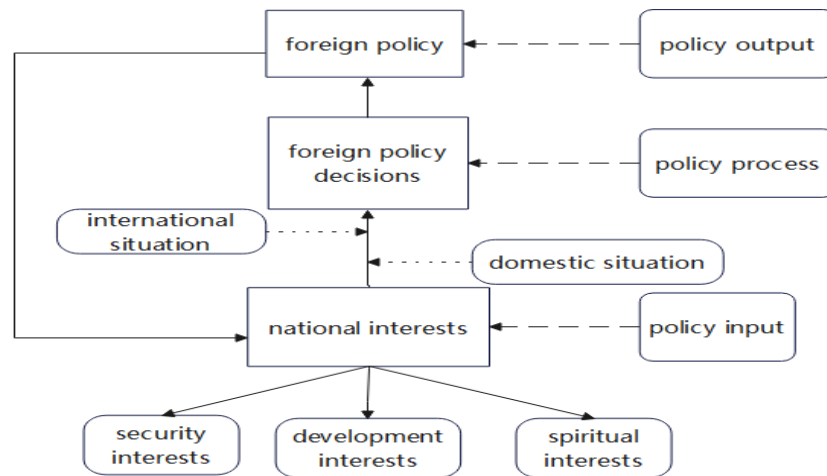
Primary code number	Secondary code number	Third level code number	Three-level node
R1	R1-1	R1-1-1	Securing Russian national interests and implementing national strategic priorities
		R1-1-2	Take steps to establish cooperation in the military field and formulate and conclude new agreements in line with their national interests
		R1-1-3	Providing political means for Russia's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and preventing the use of double standards towards Russia on its borders, in its periphery and throughout the world
	R1-2	R1-2-1	Ensure that all countries enjoy the dividends of the world economy and achieve fair and equitable development
		R1-2-2	Ensure and improve international mechanisms for global and regional security and development
		R1-2-3	Facilitate the development of effective integrated responses to common challenges and threats
		R1-2-4	Reduce the role of force in international relations and strengthen strategic and regional stability
	R1-3	R1-3-1	Comply with international obligations stipulated in international treaties in the fields of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms control and disarmament, and improve relevant international legal systems
		R1-3-2	Combating terrorism and other criminal activities
		R1-3-3	Develop bilateral nuclear and multilateral cooperation among nuclear-weapon states to ensure common security in the spirit of strategic openness
		R1-3-4	Support the establishment of effective interactive mechanisms with the support of the United Nations and other international organizations to respond to sudden emergencies and improve the establishment of early warning mechanisms
	R1-4	R1-4-1	Develop mutually beneficial and equal partnerships and establish good-neighborly relations with neighboring countries
		R1-4-2	Promote conflict resolution in the region through constructive partnerships with other countries, the United Nations, non-traditional organizations, and international and regional organizations
		R1-4-3	Military potential should be directed towards ensuring regional stability and creating a safe and reliable guarantee
R2	R2-1	R2-1-1	Expanding people-to-people exchanges based on the choice of Russia and China to establish good-neighborly, friendly, close and rich relations
		R2-1-2	High economic growth based on stabilizing exports and expanding domestic demand to ensure global economic and financial stability
		R2-1-3	Russia's full and effective participation in the establishment of a fair and democratic global trade, economic, monetary and financial institutions
		R2-1-4	Strengthen the transparency of global trade and economic space and form an inclusive, more open and balanced world trade and monetary and financial system

Primary code number	Secondary code number	Third level code number	Three-level node
	R2-2	R2-1-5	Properly develop marine life, minerals, energy and other resources to promote human interests and ensure Russia's security and development
		R2-2-1	Strengthen Russia's position in the world economy, achieve national development goals, ensure economic security and unleash the country's economic potential
		R2-2-2	Establish a common, open and non-discriminatory economic partnership to provide space for the common development of ASEAN, SCO and Eurasian Economic Union member states
		R2-2-3	Asia plays an increasingly important role in Russian diplomacy, which is needed for the economic recovery of Siberia and the Far East.
		R2-3-4	Leveraging Russia's unique geographical location and transit potential to develop the country's economy and strengthen Eurasian transport and infrastructure connectivity
	R2-3	R2-3-1	Strengthen the institutional role of international organizations and promote regional and sub-regional integration
		R2-3-2	Enhance the potential and international role of the BRICS, SCO, CIS, Eurasian Economic Union, and Collective Security Treaty Organization, and expand participation mechanisms
		R2-3-3	Support integration within friendly multilateral institutions, dialogue platforms and regional frameworks in Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East
		R2-3-4	Maintain peace and stability in the Arctic region, provide favorable international conditions for the socio-economic development of the Arctic region, and establish mutually beneficial cooperation with non-Arctic countries, including the construction of Northern Sea Route infrastructure
	R3-1	R3-1-1	In accordance with national interests and its special responsibility to maintain peace and security at global and regional levels
		R3-1-2	In response to the unfriendly behavior of the West, we will use all means to defend its rights to survival and free development.
		R3-1-3	Protection of the constitutional order, sovereignty, independence, state and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation from destructive foreign influence
		R3-1-4	Oppose the use of human rights issues to interfere in the internal affairs of the country
R3	R3-2	R3-2-1	Popularize the national culture, national historical heritage and cultural identity of the Russian people
		R3-2-2	Resolutely oppose neo-fascism and any form of racial discrimination, aggressive nationalism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia
		R3-2-3	Ensure respect and protection of universal and traditional spiritual and moral values
	R3-3	R3-3-1	Promote Russian cultural, scientific, educational and artistic achievements abroad and protect them against discrimination
		R3-3-2	Promote the depoliticization of historical discussions
		R3-3-3	Expansion and strengthening of Russian space language and culture
		R3-3-4	Resist Russophobic campaigns carried out by unfriendly countries and their organizations

Primary code number	Secondary code number	Third level code number	Three-level node
	R3-4	R3-4-1	Eliminate the dominant position of unfriendly countries such as the United States in international affairs and refuse to create conditions for hegemonic ambitions
		R3-4-2	Political and diplomatic means are used to combat the policies of unfriendly countries that militarize the global information space, use information and communication technology to interfere in national internal affairs, and use it for military purposes.
		R3-4-3	Crackdown on unfriendly countries imposing sanctions on Russia
		R3-4-4	Protection of organizations, investments, goods and services outside Russia from discrimination and unfair competition

According to the coding results, it can be seen that the policy trends contained in Russia's "Concept" and its basic understanding of the external world are continuity, forward-looking and pragmatic, and its fundamental content is aimed at ensuring Russia's stability, development and prosperity. Based on the content analysis of the policy text, the foreign policy text has basically reached consensus on several points: First, Russia's foreign policy attaches great importance to national security. National security is the criterion of Russia's foreign policy, and its national security includes politics, economy, society, culture, foreign policy, ecology and other aspects. Second, it pays attention to economic diplomacy. Russia has always emphasized that diplomacy creates a favorable external environment for the country's economic and social development, strives to maintain its status as a major country, safeguard its interests in the international market, promote economic modernization, and enhance the economic foundation of its status as a major country, especially maintaining energy. security and energy development. Third, Russia pays more and more attention to traditional values, prestige, status and soft power concepts. Its status and reputation form an important part of foreign policy. The memory of ancestors - who conveyed "trust in God" and the continuity of the country's development - was preserved in the policy. The pursuit of "great power" status reflects the Russian elite's reaffirmation of its identity and determines its foreign policy, even if it is not commensurate with the country's true strength. Therefore, it can be seen from the coding results that Russia's foreign policy implementation plays a key role in safeguarding national security and sovereignty, promoting economic and social development, and national cultural identity. The main content includes national security interests, development interests and spiritual interests. Based on this, an analysis path for diplomatic decision-making is proposed.

The foreign policy decision-making analysis model is the product of the political process of national foreign policy. Domestic factors and international factors must enter the decision-making process. Under the influence of domestic and foreign factors, the ultimate reflection of the pursuit of national interest goals by domestic political forces is. National interests are the most important factor for a country to safeguard and strive for, and are also the decisive factor in a country's relationship with the international system. Interests are the essential needs of actors. As a goal to be realized or achieved, they are often abstract and have a certain degree of fixity [Li Kaisheng, 2010]. As a collection of people, the country has exactly three types of interests: security interests, development interests and spiritual interests. The three types of national interests are also deeply reflected in the "Concept" of Russia's foreign policy. However, the development manifestations and means of realizing national interests are affected by political factors and national strategies. Whether the production of policy texts is recognized and truly reflects national interests fundamentally depends on whether the policies formulated by decision-makers are scientifically rational.



**Figure 1 – Theoretical model for foreign policy decision-making analysis**

### **Text content analysis: Russian foreign policy is scientific and rational**

By examining Russian foreign policy texts, the "Conception" text is coded, the important contents of its foreign policy are analyzed in detail, and the origin and development of Russian diplomacy are investigated. However, whether a foreign policy can be understood rationally depends on whether the theoretical basis for its foreign policy decisions is rational. Analyzed from a rational perspective, a scientific and rational understanding of diplomatic decision-making depends on the substantive rationality of diplomatic decision-making and the procedural rationality of decision-making. The substantive rationality of diplomatic decision-making mainly refers to purpose-value rationality, and procedural rationality are by no means created out of thin air. Purpose – Value rationality is included in a country's political philosophy, traditional cultural values, the country's current stage of development and its basic positioning in the international system, and the basic norms of international relations. Procedural rationality is reflected in a country's political system, decision-making mechanisms and rules, and the wisdom of the top decision-maker [Lu Xiaohong, 2012]. Specifically, from the perspective of the background, content and procedures of foreign policy formulation, the scientific rationality of foreign policy decision-making mainly includes four elements:

First, a comprehensive understanding and deep understanding of the current situation of the international system and international relations. Russia's foreign policy theory and strategy are official texts, and thirty years of practice are its response to global development trends, further deepening Russia's comprehensive and profound understanding of the international system and international relations. In the context of the end of the Cold War and liberal democratic reforms, the "Concept" was formulated in 1993. The new concept gave up the policy of confrontation with Western countries and established partnerships with the United States and major European powers to guide the direction of Russia's foreign policy. Due to changes in the international situation and the needs of national development, Putin took over Yeltsin in 2000. Taking into account the importance of "national interests", he sought a stable international environment for domestic development and re-revised the conceptual basis of foreign policy at the turn of the millennium. In 2008, the new President Medvedev released a new version of the "Concept", which reflected the strengthening of continuity in the process of cooperation with various power centers in the multipolar world and the formation of a flexible multilateral interaction mechanism. The logic of the document on the international process is that "the

West has lost control of The prospect of monopoly in the globalization process”, Russia is called “the largest country in Eurasia”. In 2013, Medvedev and Putin achieved a “change of position” and took into account the degradation of Russian-US relations under the pressure of sanctions. They formulated a new foreign policy. The new concept included the idea of “reducing the West's ability to dominate the world economy and politics.” This marks the end of the era of unilateral reconciliation between Russia and the West since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Since 2016, foreign policy has been different from the previous logic. The need for a new generation of ideas does not depend on the “transfer of power”, that is, the presidential election/new term, but on the international political situation. The 2013 Ukraine crisis led to anti-Russian sanctions imposed by the West, which exacerbated Russia's military and political instability, and Russia-US relations were in a “frozen” state. In this context, the new foreign policy concept sets tasks for breaking the deterioration of Russia's international environment, developing relations with other regional partners and the role of the United Nations in international affairs. In a situation where the internal and external environment and security situation have been subverted by the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the new foreign policy released in 2023 has re-evaluated the trends of the modern world. The necessity of restoring the coordinating role of the United Nations has become a challenge to the West in establishing a “rules-based” order” response. In fact, Russia's foreign policy is deeply influenced by domestic development strategy and the international environment, and it has a comprehensive understanding and deep understanding of the current situation of the international system and international relations. As Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said, “The logic of the document reflects the changing geopolitical reality and is essentially a revolutionary change in Russia's external environment” [России прописали самобытность и глобальную миссию..., www].

Second, an accurate grasp of the country's status and identity, as well as a scientific and rational understanding of national interests. Russia's development path determines what kind of foreign policy it implements, and its development path often depends on Russians' grasp of their own national status and identity. From a deeper level, this involves the issue of Russia's nation-state attributes and civilizational ownership. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, many Russians felt a historic sense of loss and believed that Russia had lost its own attributes. To this end, Russian civilization must form its own nation-state attributes in order to find a “strong ideological pillar” and realize national interests. During the Yeltsin period, Russia did not have mainstream values in society, and ideological nihilism appeared in the society. It sought economic assistance from the West to ensure political stability and promote economic development, allowing Russia to integrate into Russia, which has hundreds of years of history and a unique geopolitical status. international community. However, the condescending and even gloating attitude of Western countries towards Russia has greatly hurt the self-esteem of Russians. In the 1993 Russian State Duma election, the nationalist radical party received an unprecedentedly high support rate. This event caused panic in the Yeltsin government and prompted Yeltsin to make “restoring Russia's great power status” his foreign policy goal during this period [Yeltsin, 1994]. Until 2000, Putin's Russian-style governance philosophy, diplomatic thinking and “great power” style enabled Russia to maintain political, economic and security stability despite experiencing NATO's eastward expansion, color revolutions, financial crises and the Russo-Georgian war. During this period, Putin's ruling ideological foundation was “Russian New Thought”, “Sovereign Democracy” and “Russian Conservatism”. The core of his ideology was conservatism. The resulting “big country mentality” enhanced the patriotism and national awareness of Russians. Sense of identity. Therefore, the “big power consciousness” was expressed more clearly in the “Concept” released in 2000, pointing out that “improving Russia's status in the international community is the fundamental

purpose of Russia's diplomacy, and this status is more in line with Russia's role as a world power. Benefit". With the substantial recovery of the economy, this "big country mentality" is increasingly reflected in the country's foreign policy. Its main characteristics are the expectation for the country's comprehensive rejuvenation and its uncompromising foreign policy. In 2013, Putin further proposed that Russia is an irreplaceable political force in the world [meeting of the international discussion club "Valdai", [www](#)]. At the same time, conservatism gradually became the dominant ideology. Under the guidance of conservatism, Russia pursues stability internally and assumes an offensive posture externally, returning to its status as a world-class power. Such a goal will inevitably escalate tensions between Russia and the West, further consolidate conservatism's status as Russia's mainstream ideology, and have a comprehensive impact on foreign policy. Against the background of extreme sanctions and isolation from the United States and the West, Russia has turned its diplomatic attention to non-Western countries, hoping to build a new international order based on this [Han Lu, 2023]. In fact, Russia has neither integrated into the Atlantic system centered on the United States, nor has it truly built its own center of strength on the Eurasian continent [Pang Pangpeng, 2020]. In the new version of the "Conception" concept in 2023, Russia's self-perception has changed. The term "Russian World" was mentioned for the first time, indicating that Russia began to regard itself as an independent civilization rather than a "European civilization." organic part" [Tokarev, [www](#)]. In other words, Russia has officially completed its reflection on its role in world history. A country that stands on the solid soil of national interests is destined to play a full role in global affairs. In short, after the establishment of the Russian Federation, after several adjustments to its foreign policy, it finally clarified its national positioning and national interests, and regarded the realization and maintenance of Russia's status as a great power as the most important goal of its foreign policy. This is also the concept of a powerful country firmly adhered to by the business class, and implemented a series of tough policies to defend this national interest [Xing Yue, Wang Jin, 2017].

Third, abide by international laws and international treaties, actively participate in and maintain international mechanisms, and adhere to world pluralism and democratization of international relations. Russia's foreign policy adheres to national interests and pursues a leadership position in the international system. It can be seen from the coding of Russian foreign policy texts that it has always adhered to the following principles: First, in the context of world transformation and the West's attempt to maintain hegemony, Russia promotes "international relations based on international law and the principles of universal, equal and indivisible security" system, deepen multilateral collaboration in which the United Nations plays a central role, and safeguard the supremacy of international law". Secondly, Russia not only pursues a diversified diplomatic line, but also continues to expand its external strategic space, unite developing countries, and join forces with "most countries in the world" to build a global anti-hegemony united front. Thirdly, in order to promote world multipolarity, Russia is committed to tapping the potential of BRICS, SCO, CIS, Eurasian Economic Union and Collective Security Treaty Organization, enhancing their role and ensuring regional security, stability and sustainable development. . Finally, promote the development of international society, promote international economic and ecological cooperation, and develop international cultural cooperation and human rights. Particular attention is paid to measures to promote international development in the 2023 version of the Concept. As Lavrov pointed out, the "Concept" elaborates on Russia's views on the principles of a more balanced and just world order, including "polycentricity, sovereign equality of all countries, ensuring the right of all countries to choose their development model, and safeguarding the diversity of world cultures and civilizations" [России прописали самобытность и глобальную миссию..., [www](#)]. Therefore, in order to protect national interests, Russia is destined to play a leading

role in international affairs, uphold international law and international treaties, participate in influential global and regional dialogue and cooperation mechanisms, unite non-Western countries, and promote world economic and political integration. , strive for a greater say in the formation of a new architecture of international relations.

Fourth, the decision-making system/procedure is scientifically rational and consistent with procedural rationality. The structure of a country's official political process, including its external decision-making process, directly depends on the country's political system, constitution and other important legal rules. Under normal "non-crisis" conditions, it is the country's political system that determines the main "rules of the game" in the political process. Research on the external decision-making mechanism should include the basic direction of its interaction with the domestic social system and the international relations system [Feng Yujun, 2002]. Compared with the influence of the international environment, a country's internal factors play a more active role in the decision-making and implementation process of foreign policy. When studying the impact of domestic factors on the foreign policy process, it is important first to analyze "the highly structural internal organization of the overall social system—the political system and its subsystems—of the state as the direct subject of foreign policy". Directly linked to the foreign policy process is a social political system, whose main component is the state. It also includes political parties, social movements, interest groups and other political subjects, that is to say, state power relations, acquisition of state power, and organization. and application. Therefore, determining the structure and functions of foreign policy decision-making mechanisms at the government and state agency levels is the core of analyzing the foreign policy decision-making and implementation process [ГАНТМАН, 1981].

In fact, the Russian president has the right to determine the basic principles of foreign policy and has crucial strategic power to determine the country's destiny. In other words, Russia's foreign policy decision-making is centered on the president. But there are two reasons why it still believes that its foreign policy is procedurally rational. First, in terms of the subject of research, foreign policy refers to the guidelines for action formulated under certain strategies and lines. It is a public policy in political science. The so-called "public policy" refers to the study of the behavioral norms of governments and civil society, rather than the study of individual behavioral norms [Zhang Lili, 2007]. Although the Russian diplomatic decision-making process is not transparent, in the construction of diplomatic decision-making theory, in order to facilitate theoretical analysis, the "rational person" assumption is still adhered to, that is, the behavior of decision-makers in decision-making theory is always considered to have clear purposes and motives, rather than The purpose of random activities is to protect national interests. Second, in terms of research content, the thinking mode of procedural rationality is different from pure substantive rationality. It is not that Party B's interests or values dominate the other party, but that procedural rationality based on proceduralism is used to eliminate differences among multiple social groups and absorb, Bridging different interests and seeking the institutionalization of cooperation [Lu Xiaohong, 2012]. Therefore, based on the analysis of the background, content and procedures of foreign policy formulation, foreign policy-making is characterized by scientific rationality.

### **Rationally understand the essential characteristics of Sino-Russian relations**

To understand today's China-Russia relations, we must first recognize its historical roots. During the Cold War, the relationship between China and the Soviet Union was a whirlwind, going from curiosity and vigilance at the beginning, to tight ties in the early 1950s, to feuding and even division.

As the Cold War drew to a close, China-Soviet relations began to thaw in response to the changing political goals of major powers. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the two countries demilitarized and demarcated their borders, China-Russia bilateral relations began to warm up and develop a certain degree of strategic mutual trust. After Putin came to power, relations between the two countries were further promoted. After 2012, China-Russia relations have flourished. When the Crimean crisis broke out in 2014, the West imposed extensive sanctions on Russia. Against this background, China-Russia relations entered a state of accelerated development. Western scholars believe that the Russia-Ukraine conflict marks a turning point for Russia to embrace China, which is not only due to the need for financial and political restrictions, but also out of considerations of global norms [Stokes, Jacob, and Julianne Smith, 2020]. Although the relationship between the two sides is good, China and Russia have not officially declared themselves allies. The two sides have positioned their diplomatic relations as a "comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in the new era" and claimed that "strengthening China-Russia relations is the call of history and an unswerving strategic choice for both sides." [Stokes, Jacob, and Julianne Smith, 2020]. In order to rationally understand Sino-Russian relations, we must deeply analyze the nature of Sino-Russian relations and explore the national interests of the two countries in specific fields. The consistency and compatibility of national interests promote the development of China-Russia relations, but interest preferences and differences lead to constraints in China-Russia relations in specific areas of cooperation.

### **China-Russia relations are improving: national interests**

International relations academic circles believe that a country exists in an anarchic system, and the basis of national policies is national interests backed by power. National interests are increasingly becoming an explanation of countries' foreign behaviors and strategies that are acceptable to academic circles. In nation-states, national interests are repeatedly emphasized by each sovereign state on their uniqueness and irreplaceability. "National interest is the basic motivation that determines a country's foreign policy and external behavior, and is the core element that determines international relations." [Song Tsunxiao, 2016] "A country's definition of its own interests is based on the strength it possesses. The stronger a country's strength, the broader its definition of its own interests [Morgenthau, 1985]. At the same time, international relations scholars believe that the probability of international conflicts is closely related to national interests. (especially core national interests) are positively correlated with the extent to which they are harmed [George, Simons, 1994]. Thinking from this perspective, the degree of friendship between the two countries is also directly proportional to national interests. Combined with foreign policy text coding, security interests, development interests and spiritual interests are specifically analyzed.

### **Pillars: Potential threats and shared values are the source of China-Russia security cooperation**

At the level of the security community, the geopolitical and military security threats between the two countries have increased, and "security anxiety" has continued to rise. Rozman, a famous American expert on Asia-Pacific issues, calls it "parallel ideology" (параллельные идентичности) and believes that "mutual support between China and Russia is a characteristic of the new geopolitical order after the Cold War." [Kashin, A.V. Lukin, 2019]. According to structural realism, the world should check and balance American hegemony. Kenneth Waltz believes that a hegemonic country that occupies a

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dominant position in the distribution of global power will inevitably cause other countries to worry about the security of its position in an unbalanced international system. Therefore, such countries either strive to enhance their own capabilities (internal balance) or try to realign alliances with second-tier countries (external balance). The temporary lack of hard balance against the United States does not mean that a balancing alliance will never be formed. When the United States acts in a way that threatens the interests of other major powers, it will eventually lead to the establishment of balancing alliances. The current China-Russia-US relationship fits exactly this logic [Korolev, 2016]. After the end of the Cold War, NATO has continued to expand eastward, and Russia's geopolitical space has been severely squeezed. Currently, Ukraine is looking forward to "joining" NATO. From Russia's perspective, this is tantamount to tearing a "big gap" in the post-Soviet space, which will Loss of western barrier [Li Yan, 2021]. Now, in the context of escalating conflicts, Russia must ensure the security of its eastern flank. After entering the 21st century, the situation around China has become increasingly complex. In 2010, China surpassed Japan for the first time and became the world's second largest economy. China's construction achievements have attracted much attention, but it has also seen uneven and inadequate development, and the domestic stability and security situation is relatively complicated. Externally, risks such as surrounding maritime security, transnational crime, terrorism, environmental and ecological security, and investment security are rising [Li Yan, 2021]. In recent years, the international situation has been rising in the east and falling in the west, and the United States has penetrated Central Asia and the Asia-Pacific, intensifying competition between China and the United States. As General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized when he proposed the overall national security concept, the connotation and extension of my country's national security are richer than ever before in history, the time and space are broader than ever, and the internal and external factors are more complex than ever. China and Russia's views on US containment have prompted the two countries to strengthen strategic coordination and cooperation. Faced with NATO's continued encroachment in Europe, Russia has turned east and sought to strengthen military cooperation with China, while China has also emphasized that its partnership with Russia is to "challenge the hegemonic role of the United States in the international system." [Wenzhao, Shengwei, 2020]. Therefore, China and Russia have a high degree of strategic consensus in the field of national security, and their differences with the West, especially the United States, have contributed to the improvement of the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination. In the Adler-Barnet security community concept, the security mechanisms of China and Russia are tantamount to a strategic alliance established for common threats [Emanuel Alder and Michael Barnett, 1998]. However, the military and security cooperation between China and Russia reflects the common security interests of the two countries and aims to create not only a stable order against hegemony and threats, but a stable peace. However, China and Russia regard shared security values as the source of close security cooperation.

The so-called shared values mean that the two countries have strategic commonality in the values of security concept and security theory. It can be seen from Russia's national security strategy and China's overall national security concept that the ultimate goals of the security concepts and security strategies of China and Russia are basically the same, and the theoretical commonality is the basis for China-Russia security cooperation [Li Yan, 2022]. First, both countries advocate overall national security. National security interests should be considered at all levels and developed comprehensively. The common attitude towards global and regional security challenges is the rhetorical reaffirmation by both parties of their willingness to participate in building an international security architecture based on non-use of force, non-interference in internal affairs and political and diplomatic resolution of conflicts. Particularly emphasizing the need to combat terrorism, China and Russia usually link

terrorism with extremism and tend to condemn the politicization and double standards of Western counter-terrorism policies on this issue. In addition to traditional military security considerations, China and Russia are paying more and more attention to non-traditional security and non-military threats. Secondly, the two countries have the same motivation in maintaining regional security and stability. In 1999, the Shanghai Five-Nation Mechanism, the predecessor of the SCO, was established, with all countries undertaking political and military cooperation under the general trend of multipolarity. In addition, the two countries usually hold bilateral military consultations on the sidelines of multilateral forums (such as regular meetings of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization). Most of them end with a joint statement or declaration, reflecting the two countries' common views on the consultation issues. The breadth and depth of bilateral security consultations between China and Russia are constantly increasing to respond to emergencies in the regional international environment. Consultations between the two sides revealed that criticism of U.S. policies in Asia and other regions has become "increasingly threatening," descriptions of the international environment as "increasingly complex and unfriendly," and announcements that China and Russia intend to jointly resist the United States' growing aggression. Threat has become one of the inherent norms of China-Russia security dialogue [Mastanduno, 2019]. The "color revolution" and information warfare in the new century have stimulated the SCO to take a series of measures to protect information security. Different from the Western paradigm of free flow of information, when China and Russia talk about information security, they refer to the state's ability to prevent the spread of information that may pose a threat to the government and its values. The SCO is one of the main platforms for China and Russia to strengthen information security. It proposed a code of conduct on information security to the United Nations General Assembly that emphasizes information sovereignty, and democratic countries regard it as an effort to defend censorship. This is a sign of China and Russia's information security. One of the many areas of disagreement between the concept and the Euro-Atlantic consensus. China and Russia support "democratizing" the governance of cyberspace (meaning they oppose a leading role by the United States) and want multilateral governance by state actors rather than multi-stakeholders (which is the U.S. preference). The latter may also be non-state actors [Wishnick, 2016]. Finally, both sides share the same overall goal of promoting global stability. In the fields of global arms control, strategic stability and space security cooperation, the two countries have cooperated to provide guarantees for global nuclear security and space security. The overall goal of both parties to promote global peace and stability provides impetus for China and Russia to deepen security cooperation. Security cooperation has long-term vitality and driving force. The Sino-Russian military cooperation relationship is solid and comprehensive. The two major powers share a common hostility towards the United States' hegemony in world politics. Military cooperation tends to be highly institutionalized and is on the rise. Therefore, China-Russia military relations are not temporary but strategic.

Overall, the security interests of China and Russia include two parts. The first is the sovereignty factor. The West puts pressure on China and Russia, believing that they are undermining the Western-led world order. China and Russia seek political support from each other, and China and Russia share extensive common interests. At least as long as the United States maintains its strategic advantage and adopts a hostile strategy against China and Russia, the two countries will continue to maintain close relations [Lukin, 2021]. Secondly, geopolitically, Russia needs to maintain stable relations with its economically and politically powerful neighbors under any circumstances, which will help maintain its own political stability and economic development. For China, the complexity of the relationship between the two countries in the past led to an increase in military spending, incited unnecessary panic, and was not conducive to the political stability needed for China's development. Therefore, such

security needs and cooperation deepen security values and become the pillar for the stable development of China-Russia relations.

### **Intrinsic motivation: Development interests are the key to the stability and forward-looking nature of China-Russia relations**

Russian national security imperatives have always trumped economic priorities. This perspective is rooted in a realist assessment of national interests and does not appear to hold true in Russia's interactions with China. In 2019, U.S. Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats declared in the Senate's Global Threat Assessment Report that China and Russia are "more like-minded than at any time since the mid-1950s." [Monks, 2019]. This is intended to illustrate that the all-round and multi-level cooperation between China and Russia is getting closer and closer. When the Chinese President paid a state visit to Moscow in 2023, he published an article titled "Moving forward with determination to open a new chapter of China-Russia friendly cooperation and common development." Among them, "development and revitalization" is a frequently used word in the article signed by President Xi Jinping. It can be said that development interests are an important part of the relationship between the two countries.

At the bilateral level, the two sides focus on expanding common interests. Thanks to cooperation projects in the fields of energy, industry, agriculture and high technology, China-Russia trade in goods and services has achieved qualitative development in just a few years. The development of economic relations is increasingly important to China and Russia. First, for Russia, the immediate issue is dealing with economic sanctions imposed by the West over the conflict in Ukraine. Although Russia is wary of China's multilateral financing initiatives, it has been excluded from the G8, prompting President Putin to seek areas of cooperation in the Eurasian Economic Community and China's "One Belt, One Road" project, Russia's turn to the East has become an inevitable trend [Wishnick, 2016]. Second, the main content of Russia's shift to China is to strengthen economic relations, and cooperation in the energy field is regarded as the core direction. In this regard, the two countries have no shortage of political commitments. In May 2014, the two sides signed a natural gas agreement worth US\$400 billion. This move was regarded as a sign that cooperation between the two countries had reached a new level and a symbol of the upgrade of their partnership [Baev, 2016]. Since the Crimean crisis, China has become Russia's largest trading partner, and Russia replaced Saudi Arabia as China's largest crude oil supplier in 2015. Third, China is also an important export market for Russia's military weapons and technology, and revitalizing its military power projection capability is an important part of its "Advance East" strategy. The Ukraine crisis has seriously affected Russia's military construction in the Far East. This setback forced Russia to upgrade its partnership with China, expand China-Russia military cooperation, and sell its most technologically advanced weapons systems to China. Whether based on common goals or strategic needs, China and Russia have shown a willingness to strengthen political mutual trust [Monks, 2019]. In March 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Russia was a milestone event in promoting China-Russia relations. The two heads of state outlined a new direction for national cooperation and long-term strategic partnership. From the perspective of bilateral relations between China and Russia, the two countries have profound development interests, bilateral trade has risen to a new height, and economic complementarity and deepening cooperation in the economic field have become important driving forces for bilateral relations.

At the regional level, Russia has actively integrated into the construction of the Asia-Pacific regional order and actively interacted with major powers in the region. In fact, integrating into the

Eastern political and economic system has become one of Russia's foreign policy priorities. In today's geopolitical system, with the breakdown of relations between Russia and Europe, the importance of Asia has become increasingly prominent. Strengthening relations with major Asian countries has become an inevitable choice for Russia's foreign policy. With the rise of Asian countries, further developing relations with them has become an important strategy for Russia to break through Western containment and enhance its international status [Bordachev, www]. Efforts will be made to enhance the status of the Asia-Pacific region in its overall external strategic layout. This is not only to balance the growing pressure from the West, but also in line with Russia's concept of taking advantage of the rapid development of the Asia-Pacific economy to promote its own development and promote the development of the Far East, hoping to enhance Russia's global influence. Whether from the perspective of geopolitics, national security or economic development, the Asia-Pacific will have a great impact on Russia's national strategy [Xianliang, Teng Huiyi, 2018]. In recent years, Beijing has increased its enthusiasm in the direction of Moscow, hoping to retain a secure rear from the Pacific Ocean to the interior of the Pamirs for the long term, ensuring a short and reliable land outlet to the European part of the CIS and Eastern Europe for the future. To ensure its rapidly growing demand for raw materials, as well as to establish cooperation guarantees with Russia in exchanges in the fields of science and technology and military affairs. The Asia-Pacific region is an important driving force and engine for global economic growth. It must be said that Russia's active integration into the Asia-Pacific strategy is forward-looking. Only after its strategic investment in the Asia-Pacific achieves decisive benefits and security growth points in return can Russia no longer stick to its traditional focus on Europe, accelerate its transformation and development, closely integrate its Asia-Pacific strategy with accelerating the development of Siberia and the Far East, and fully Make good use of the overall development trend to achieve regional peace and development [Chen Xianliang, Teng Huiyi, 2018].

At the global level, the unique good-neighborly and friendly relations between China and Russia are a model for building a new type of major-country relations in today's world [Pang Pangpeng, 2022]. First, China and Russia have a solid strategic consensus: friendship will last forever, and they will never be enemies; the two countries will not align, confront, target third parties, or become ideological. Second, China and Russia share the same strategic stance on the basic principles of the world structure, and both China and Russia pursue a multipolar world structure in their foreign policies. Third, both countries face the same historical task: to achieve national rejuvenation, and there are no political issues between them that hinder mutually beneficial cooperation. Based on this, China-Russia relations have broad areas of mutual promotion and cooperation, and China will continue to work toward a community with a shared future for mankind on the basis of comprehensive strategic coordination. This means focusing on their respective peaceful development and jointly establishing and maintaining an international and regional environment conducive to the development of the two countries: it means that the two countries do not seek unilateral gains from each other in cooperation on regional affairs, but pursue benefits that are conducive to the common development of both countries. A win-win result means that both parties make their own contributions and assume greater responsibilities for the common stability and prosperity of the international community, which means further cooperation with the international community [Pang Peng, 2022]. This approach is conducive to guiding the regional and inter-regional economic integration process of the two countries under the framework of the SCO and BRICS, and also promotes the development of the Greater Eurasian Partnership. The multipolar world goal pursued by China and Russia needs to build a general consensus among non-Western countries and regional powers around the world.

It can be seen that the openness, mutual trust and effectiveness of China-Russia relations have

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reached unprecedented levels. It has always maintained its own logic and rhythm in moving forward, and its strong development interests serve as endogenous driving forces that determine the broad prospects for China-Russia relations.

### **Bond: spiritual interests promote the convergence of cognitive models between China and Russia in understanding and interpreting the world**

A country's cultural tradition, cohesion and influence are an important aspect of its comprehensive national strength, and the interests a country wants to safeguard also largely include its cultural and spiritual interests. Melvin Loeffler, a history professor at the University of Virginia, pointed out that national security policy "must protect the country's core values from external threats." Therefore, core values play a decisive role in the formulation and execution of a country's foreign policy. In the "Culture, Cognition, and Institutional Theory" proposed by Douglas North, on the interaction between culture and diplomacy, he came to the conclusion that in the highly purposeful action process of diplomatic decision-making, Culture/spirituality will play a very large role because shared cultural heritage affects decision-makers' cognitive models for understanding and interpreting the world, which in turn affects their perceptions of diplomatic issues and policy choices. A shared cultural/spiritual cognitive model will prevent decision-makers in the country's foreign affairs field from agreeing with foreign policies that are incompatible with the country's cultural traditions. Clearly, there is an alignment of cultural/spiritual interests between China and Russia.

First, both China and Russia regard building cultural identity as a key means to ensure regime stability and protect the country from external threats. This is the two countries' response to the cultural and political hegemony of values and norms established globally by Western countries, especially the United States. To be more precise, leaders of both countries believe that Western cultural hegemony in the form of Western neoliberal values and Western-style democracy that are widely promoted around the world poses an important threat to national security [Jeanne L. Wilson, 2016]. Since 2000, Russia has gradually become disillusioned with the West and believes that Western countries led by the United States rely on illegal means to incite "color revolutions" in the post-Soviet space. This is an important example of their attempts to participate in the subversion and infiltration of the Russian state power. Surkov, widely known as the "Kremlin ideological expert," identified color revolutions as one of the three main threats facing Russia, which are aimed at reducing the Russian state's immunity to foreign activities. The Russia-Georgia war, election protests and the Ukraine crisis have all made Russia increasingly vigilant against color revolutions. Information warfare and proxy wars in recent years have complicated the threats and challenges Russia faces. As Putin said, there are so-called soft power mechanisms and other well-known technologies used in the world to directly or indirectly weaken Russia's influence [Wilson, 2016]. China's assessment of the motivations of Western behavior is very similar to Russia's. China believes that the West is trying to imitate color revolutions and is a potential threat to subvert domestic regimes, and that cultural penetration threatens national ideological security. Both countries regard a range of Western methods as a threat to national sovereignty. These forms of soft power are considered equal to, or even more covert than, traditional hard power methods, with the ultimate aim of effecting regime change through internal infiltration and subversion of the state. In essence, China and Russia need to resist Western norms and values in order to survive. The developing national identities of both countries reflect not only the beliefs formed by the inter-state system, but also the overlapping domestic norms and values of both countries due to historical experience [Wilson, 2019]. It is worth noting that the two countries firmly believed in the historical narrative of jointly

fighting Japan in World War II. This is a positive historical legacy especially in the context of the West distorting history for political and ideological reasons and belittling the role of China and the Soviet Union in the anti-fascist alliance. It will reshape the strategic mutual trust between the two countries and help the two countries unanimously resist the "historical expansion" of Western hegemony [Korolev, Portyako, 2019]. It can be said that the Chinese and Russian cultural national policies share a common goal in resisting the potential invasion of Western culture and values.

Second, China and Russia define their identities in similar ways, looking forward to obtaining their respective roles and status in the global order, and reshaping the order through the values they advocate. First of all, in the context of deepening interdependence between countries and the urgent need to reform the global governance mechanism, China and Russia both realize that the world is irreversible towards multipolarity. At the same time, they also realize that global competition and confrontation have become more intense, and geopolitical contradictions and Protectionism is increasing, global economic growth is weakening and anti-globalization trends are evident. Both China and Russia interpret international security in a state-centric manner, which means that the two countries share a common position of condemning Western "external interference" in specific conflicts [Korolev, Portyako, 2019]. On this basis, China and Russia emphasized that their cooperation will help maintain peace and stability at the regional and global levels, firmly jointly respond to regional and global security challenges, and promote the "democratization" of international relations. Their common goal is to establish a more just and reasonable multi-center new international order, and the core of this order is the win-win cooperation and a community with a shared future that China vigorously advocates , [Kaczmarek, 2019]. It also echoes the idea of Eurasian integration proposed by Russian philosophers a century ago based on the common historical experience of the peoples of all Eurasian continents. Secondly, China and Russia seek to enhance their international status and reconstruct their foreign and security policy interests, with the ultimate goal of weakening the appeal of the West while enhancing their own influence. As international status seekers, both countries use expressions such as "multipolarity," "changing world order and power dimensions," and "new security alternatives" as ways to enhance their authority and status in the international system. , thereby strengthening economic interaction and modernization capabilities to promote domestic transformation. This can be evidenced by "cultural statecraft," which is the conscious use of soft power resources with "civilized" characteristics to improve foreign policy and enhance international reputation [Geir Flikke, 2016]. In the final analysis, the establishment of the same cultural identity and common political values between the two countries serves to maintain national cultural/spiritual security and is in line with national interests. From the analysis of spiritual interests, the uniqueness of China-Russia relations is even more meaningful.

### **Interest preferences: the "fragility" of China-Russia relations**

Common interests are the life source of international cooperation, and the power of international cooperation is mainly determined by its magnitude. The development of all-round and multi-level cooperative relations between countries has formed many convergence points of interests in the economic, security, and political fields, building an "interdependence" model, and then realizing the docking of development strategies. Generally speaking, countries are more inclined to enhance relations between countries that have more common interests with themselves [Men Honghua, Yang Ruoyun, 2023]. The existence of extensive common interests between China and Russia does not mean that there are no conflicts between the two countries. As the differences in national interest preferences

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and power status between the two countries highlight the sensitivity and fragility of the relationship between the two countries, especially in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russia's unpredictable behavior has made China more vigilant in the fields of politics, security, and economy., need to carefully consider the direction of foreign policy.

First of all, the spiritual interests of China and Russia are consistent, but the two sides have very different views on their respective roles and paths on the international stage. The fundamental reason is that the two countries' national interests in foreign relations are biased, which leads to the two countries' strategies for the evolution of the international order and specific cooperation. There are differences between. Russia considers itself first and foremost a military power and a barrier against U.S. dominance and unipolarity. At all times, security interests are the highest priority. China, on the other hand, portrays itself as a driver of economic globalization and views its economy as an opportunity for the world, developing and developed countries alike, winning international audiences through economic development rather than military means. Therefore, the different preferences of security interests and development interests lead to differences in the strategic choices of China and Russia in foreign policy. For Russia, the current international order is not conducive to its national interests, so it does not mind occasionally acting as a spoiler. role, challenging the West's dominant position in the global strategic field and trying to compensate for economic weakness by strengthening political and diplomatic activities [Kaczmarek, 2019]. China's economic growth relies on open trade and stable markets, and requires an open international system. Therefore, China needs an open international system and a peaceful and stable international environment more than Russia. For China, any changes in the international order should not undermine the overall global political stability, nor should it inhibit the opening of the global economy. In fact, there is no conflict between Russia's security and stability and China's development, but they have their own preferences in diplomatic tendencies, leading to different strategic choices between the two countries. Just as Russia's pursuit of security interests may challenge China's development interests.

Secondly, the differences between China and Russia are caused by their differences in status in the international system and economic disparity. Both China and Russia regard Western dominance as a threat to their foreign policy interests and domestic systems, and oppose the norms promoted by the West. However, due to the different status of the two countries in the international system, there are obvious differences in the mode of participation in global governance and the attitude towards globalization. Since 2000, Russia has still struggled to prevent a long-term economic recession, and its role in the global economy has been basically limited to the fields of energy resources, civilian nuclear energy, and military industry. In contrast, China is a potential superpower that maintains its economic growth rate and is deeply integrated into the global economy. The different development methods and the widening power gap between China and Russia have led to different expectations between the two countries in the evolution of the international order and "insecurity" in national and regional cooperation. Especially in the field of economic cooperation, China and Russia have reached a basic consensus on building a new international system and order in the "Belt and Alliance" docking. However, conflicts have arisen due to economic gaps and differences in national interests, as well as China's growing presence in Central Asia. Russia's economic influence worries Russia. Similarly, the energy field is a model for China-Russia economic cooperation, but compared with China's insecurity about adequate supply of resources, Russia's concerns about becoming China's resource appendage have been more widely discussed [Wishnick, 2016]. This is not only due to the impact of the economic gap between China and Russia, but also due to the unreasonable economic and trade structures and resource vulnerability between the two countries. Obviously, the gap in economic strength between

China and Russia has caused the two countries to face many challenges. The inhibitory factors of non-reciprocity in foreign economic exchanges, the differences in interests and strategic goals of the two countries are the root causes that hinder the two countries from establishing a more solid economic partnership.

Finally, in global competition, Russia's unpredictable behavior poses serious challenges to Sino-Russian relations. Today, the Russia-Ukraine crisis has triggered spillover effects, with traditional global security risks rising and world economic challenges intensifying. China has also been severely negatively affected, mainly in China-Russia bilateral relations [Trush, 2022]. First, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has attracted much attention on security issues. Power factors are playing an increasingly important role in international relations. An uncontrolled arms race is one of the most dangerous threats at present. Almost all armaments between Russia and the United States The control treaties have expired. Conventional weapons and militaries are being modernized in all regions of the world. NATO is directly involved in the conflict, global risks escalate, and the possibility of using nuclear weapons and triggering a world war increases. As an influential power in the world, China has stood by and watched as the era of nuclear weapons is no longer applicable, which has aggravated tensions around China. At the same time, China-Russia security cooperation and military exercises in the context of tense situations can easily be "stigmatized" by Western countries. Second, the economic sanctions imposed by Western countries on Russia have seriously damaged the global economy, affecting the logistics supply chain and production chain. The global economy has weakened, causing global prices, especially energy and food prices, to rise sharply. At present, China has reason to worry that its external economic advantages and interests will be affected by the spillover effects of the Russia-Ukraine crisis, especially its economic and trade exchanges with Europe. However, in order to ease the pressure of economic sanctions, Russia has every reason to elevate its strategic coordination with China to a new level. In this process, China must not only maintain economic development, but also be wary of preventing Western "conspiracy theories." Third, China is in a dilemma between expanding economic ties with Russia and facing the risk of Western secondary sanctions. In recent years, China's economy has been affected by the COVID-19 epidemic and US suppression. The domestic economy has been weak, and diplomatic and economic risks have intensified. China needs to carefully consider its economic priorities and overall diplomatic strategy.

### **Impact of the crisis: The emerging China-Russia axis?**

Overall, the foreign policy "Concept" reflects that Russia's external environment faces many challenges and threats, and its judgment on the development trend of the international situation has become increasingly pessimistic. Henry Kissinger noted in his book "World Order": "The principles of 'order' based on the current era do not reflect the new reality...Much of the world has never truly accepted the principles of order established by the West; They were just forced to agree to it...The order established by the West has reached a point of transformation." [Kissinger, 2014]. Under the influence of the Ukraine issue and its spillover effects, Kissinger's views on this issue deserve great attention. On the first anniversary of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022, China's release of the peace plan for Ukraine and the phone call between the heads of state of China and Ukraine were viewed by Western observers as "rationalizing" high-level contacts between China and Russia. At a time when Russia is in such a delicate situation, China-Russia bilateral relations have undergone historic changes. Alexander Gabuev believes that Russia may make the largest concessions in post-Soviet history to China, including market opening, energy import preferences, and sharing of high-end weapons designs. It is

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unlikely that China and Russia will establish a formal alliance in the short term, but the emerging China-Russia axis will have global influence in the next few years [Gabuev, www]. Regardless of whether China and Russia form a new axis, this will promote the accelerated evolution of the international political and economic landscape, mainly manifested in the intensification of military competition and the intensification of the trend of camp confrontation; the deepening of China-Russia regional cooperation, the acceleration of the globalization process, and the promotion of a fair and just country. The evolution of order; the "de-dollarization" process is accelerating, and the international financial field is accelerating changes, affecting the international strategic landscape.

First of all, the Ukrainian crisis has evolved into a military conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The strategic game and competition between Russia and the United States and the West has intensified. China's continuous improvement in strength has made Europe panic. The new geopolitical entanglements between Asia and Europe have led to a two-way security and defense participation, which may open the door to two-way security and defense participation. A new era in which great power military competition intensifies. Europe and Asia have very different geopolitical traditions and environments, but it is undeniable that their strategic interdependence is deepening. The reason is that the two major factors, the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the rise of China, are driving the geopolitical integration of Europe and Asia. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has not yet ended. Europe has lowered its fear of the escalation of the Russian war and is worried about security developments in Asia in advance. NATO has planned to open its first Indo-Pacific liaison office in Japan in 2024. Europe will use bilateral defense engagement with Indo-Pacific countries as a means to respond to the rise of China and persuade countries in the Indo-Pacific region to join the anti-Russian front, reaffirming its commitment to countries in the Asia-Pacific region to join the anti-Russian front and long-term strategic engagement in Asia, while , the Orcus partnership has strategically greatly shortened the distance between the UK and the Indo-Pacific region as a hedge against China and Russia [Nigel Gould-Davies, Ben Schreer, www]. From this perspective, Russia's launch of special military operations in Ukraine in 2022 is a milestone event. The war has affected the nuclear arms control negotiation process between the United States and Russia. Russia has temporarily withdrawn from the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, and the world may lose its means of deterrence. The United States, Europe and Russia already lack strategic mutual trust and are increasingly trapped in the anxiety of the "security dilemma". Both sides' perceptions of each other's aggressive intentions and nuclear fears are far greater than their awareness of the willingness to cooperate based on common interests. Under this threat narrative framework , the possibility of a security conflict between Russia and the West is increasing. In addition to Europe, Asia and even the world will intensify military tensions. On the other hand, war may catalyze deeper changes in the world. The West's response to special military operations shows that it is still willing to use existing institutional rights and international organizations to promote the protection of its own interests without regard to the interests of other countries. . It also reveals that the West, led by the United States, is unwilling to participate in the process of establishing an indivisible security space that considers all countries, and even exacerbates tensions in Asia [Skriba, 2023]. In response to this situation, China and Russia continue to deepen the strategic complementary advantages of the two countries, oppose the pursuit of regional and world hegemony by groups headed by a single country, and jointly promote a multilateral global order by promoting multilateral mechanisms including the SCO, BRICS, and the G20. Transform the direction of polarization to prevent the emergence of new camp confrontations.

Secondly, while advocating "zero-sum game" and "China threat theory", we need to note that the common interests and cooperation space of China-Russia regional cooperation far exceed narrow

geographical competition, and China-Russia regional cooperation has made breakthrough progress. First, the two countries have begun to relax their strategic cooperation in the Arctic. Russia's Arctic oil and gas development projects are highly dependent on foreign technology and funds. The West's anti-Russian sanctions have largely eliminated Russia's previous concerns about Arctic cooperation with African regional players and promoted interactions between China and Russia in the Arctic. China is deeply involved in natural gas projects in the Russian Arctic, providing funds and various production equipment, which is in sharp contrast to before. Russia believes that "cooperation with Chinese partners in developing the transit potential of Arctic waterways is promising" and is ready to establish relevant joint institutions. Against this background, cooperation between the two countries in the Arctic is growing day by day, and China now has a historic opportunity to become Russia's new priority partner in Arctic projects [Филиппова, www]. Considering the anti-Russian background in the West, the existing multilateral cooperation in the Arctic region - cooperation between Russia and NATO countries - is facing risks, and China's presence in the Arctic region will only strengthen in the future. Second, the crisis has prompted the interdependence between China and Russia to naturally extend to their relations in Central Asia. Faced with the structural imbalance between its sense of presence and deprivation in Central Asia, Russia has strengthened its practical connection with the region through traditional issues such as economic and trade relations, Central Asian labor, "revolutionary friendship of the older generation" and oil and gas pipelines. The China Central Asia Summit in 2023 will continue to deepen trade and investment cooperation with Central Asia, but the growth in trade volume between China and Central Asia has not been at the expense of Russian capital: China has neither established a supranational organization to compete with it nor it has not formally sought a free trade agreement with any Eurasian Economic Union member state other than Russia. Of course, since China can provide Central Asia with markets, technology and capital that Russia does not have, Russia has no intention and is unable to stop this trend. Under the influence of crises and sanctions, Russia no longer views China's growing economic and security influence in Central Asia as a competitive challenge to a large extent, but as a geopolitical opportunity to share responsibilities and risks [Gabuyev, www]. In general, the breakthrough progress in China-Russia regional cooperation, safeguarding multilateralism, strengthening communication and cooperation in international organizations, reforming and improving the existing international order, and realizing the expansion of BRICS countries have all promoted the development of pragmatic cooperation among developing countries. Cooperate to promote the process of a multi-polar world.

Finally, the impact of the crisis has spilled over to the financial sector, with the global "de-dollarization" process accelerating and changes in the international financial sector accelerating, affecting the international strategic landscape. Under the background of Western monetary sanctions, Russia hopes to use the RMB to break through the US and European sanctions, which has boosted the rapid growth of the RMB in Russia and also provided assistance for the international development of the RMB. In 2023, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the People's Bank of China jointly issued the "Notice on Further Supporting Foreign Economic and Trade Enterprises to Expand the Cross-Border Use of RMB and Promote Trade and Investment Facilitation", which will further accelerate the pace of RMB internationalization [Xu Wenhong, 2023]. Currently, Russia uses the RMB in its economic cooperation with China, Brazil, India, Bangladesh and other countries. Substantial progress has been made in the process of using RMB as a third-party trade settlement currency. According to relevant data, the transaction volume of RMB has increased from 0.63% in 2013 to 3.2% in 2022, and its ranking in global currency circulation has also increased from 13th. Improved to 4th place [Matveev, www]. The new progress in the internationalization of the RMB is a reflection of Russia's foreign

economic and trade relations in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It is also the process of geopolitical conflicts and great power competition that accelerate the disintegration of the old global trade, economic and monetary systems. With the weakening influence of Western countries such as Europe and the United States in international politics, Russia's strong counter-sanctions, the nationalization of the RMB, and the continuous rise of developing countries, the global "de-dollar" process will continue to accelerate and establish a more equitable international financial order. has become an unstoppable trend.

## Conclusion

The development of China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in the new era has its own historical logic. Subjectively, the politicians and people of the two countries have learned experiences and lessons from the past Sino-Soviet relations and have enough wisdom to shape a new type of Sino-Russian relations. The reasons for the closeness of China and Russia are complex and multidimensional. The most common theory is that the common dissatisfaction with the authoritarianism and ideology of the liberal international order headed by the United States has prompted China and Russia to converge. Specifically, both countries believe that this international order poses an "existential threat" to them. However, the reasons for China and Russia to move towards a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination include the geopolitics, culture and history of the two countries, and most importantly, the development of the two countries. The national interests pursued in mutual relations are highly consistent. In other words, national interest motives are the main driving force for bilateral relations. Whether China-Russia relations can achieve new and greater development ultimately depends on the compatibility of the two countries' national interests, which in turn depends on changes in the four major factors of strategic position, international environment, economic interests and political value. The factors are mainly contained in security interests, development interests and spiritual interests. Similarly, interest preferences and gaps in status and strength have become constraints on the development of bilateral relations, leading to differences between China and Russia on certain specific issues. This requires the two countries to continuously enhance political mutual trust in diplomacy, strengthen economic and trade relations, and maintain close coordination and cooperation.

Rational understanding emphasizes scientific or behavioral exploration of the laws of action, which does not mean that Russian foreign policy must be rational. Of course, the issue of whether Russia's foreign policy decisions are rational is easily controversial, and something needs to be said here. On the one hand, in an era of constant change and uncertainty, rational behaviorism is increasingly unconvincing. However, its research is still meaningful and can be discussed "according to the issue" or "according to the country". A detailed analysis of specific issues in Russia's foreign policy-making, and the gradual increase in the priority of China's development in Russia's foreign policy, from a strategic partnership to a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in the new era, has withstood the test of the times. In the face of crises and sanctions, Russia's "Turn East Strategy" and expanding cooperation with China in specific areas are its rational choices. Foreign policy, on the other hand, is determined by the tension between the self-perception of the powerful powers and that of the major Western powers. Russia's foreign policy is affected by relations with Western countries and the international situation. Russia is committed to an independent foreign policy, focusing on national economic development, and has achieved its goal of returning to the status of an influential major country in its confrontation with the United States and NATO. The core of its policy is still its status

as a major power and its national interests. Relevant studies believe that Russia's strategic understanding of the United States and the West has its relative independence. It is affected by conflicts of interests and social and cultural factors, and adopts overly tough foreign and security policies, which makes the country's foreign and security policies. It may not necessarily follow the rationalist path. The current military conflict between Russia and Ukraine reflects the strategic game and competition between Russia and the West. It has an extremely profound political logic foundation. It is a strategic choice made by Russia based on national security and cannot be attributed one-sidedly to Russia's foreign policy. of irrationality. Even American scholar Graham Allison's decision-making theory uses personal temperament theory and historical situation theory as perspectives to analyze this process when it is affected by social and cultural factors, and the result is to adhere to a decision-making model with rationality as the core.

In recent years, international relations have experienced unprecedented complexity and uncertainty, and the interdependence between traditional and non-traditional security in various countries has continued to increase. A rational understanding of the current situation and future trends of the international system will be crucial for examining the interactions between countries within the system and for countries to formulate foreign strategies and policies. Accurately analyzing and judging the international situation, especially the changes and development trends of major forces, is not only an academic theoretical issue, but also a practical issue of great significance. It is related to whether decision-makers can cope with the complex changes in the international structure, relations between major powers and international relations. Handle relations between countries well.

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**Отношения между Китаем и Россией с точки зрения  
рационального принятия дипломатических решений  
Россией: анализ политических текстов на основе NVivo**

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**Аннотация**

Негативные последствия Крымского кризиса 2014 года для основных стран, регионов и даже мира сегодня еще далеко не устранены, при этом российско-украинский конфликт усилился. Учитывая особую ответственность, которую Китай и Россия несут за глобальную стратегическую стабильность и международную безопасность, а также огромный потенциал для торговли, инвестиций, науки и технологий и другого сотрудничества между двумя странами, важно осознавать суть внешнеполитических решений России и китайско-российских отношений. С одной стороны, в 2023 году Россия пересмотрит новую версию «Концепции внешней политики Российской Федерации». Роль Китая во внешней политике России продолжит расти. Национальные интересы Китая и России будут все более совпадать, а отношения между ними получат новый виток развития. С другой стороны, российско-украинский конфликт и его последствия внесли кардинальные изменения во внутреннюю и внешнюю политику России и ситуацию в сфере безопасности. Понимание внешней политики России поможет получить представление о направлении дипломатической стратегии России в меняющемся мире, особенно в отношении Китая. Кооперативное партнерство развивается в новых исторических реалиях и сталкивается с новыми факторами продвижения и сдерживания. Сможет ли оно превратить давление в мотивацию, а проблемы – в возможности, покажет решимость и мудрость китайской дипломатии. В то же время в условиях глобальной трансформации и перестройки международной системы и международного порядка распространение кризиса может ускорить формирование осевой линии китайско-российского сотрудничества и повлиять на весь мир.

**Для цитирования в научных исследованиях**

Фань Вэньцин. China-Russia relations from the perspective of Russia's rational diplomatic decision-making: policy text analysis based on NVivo // Теории и проблемы политических исследований. 2024. Том 13. № 12А. С. 159-187.

**Ключевые слова**

Российско-украинский конфликт, китайско-российские отношения, национальные интересы, внешнеполитические решения, научная рациональность.

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