



May 2024

## A New Era of Arctic Geopolitics:

Russia-PRC Strategic Alignment Is Driving Unprecedented Regional Collaboration

*By Heather A. Conley, Sophie Arts, Bonnie S. Glaser,  
Kristine Berzina, and Jaine Archambeau*



This publication was funded by the Russia Strategic Initiative, U.S. European Command.  
The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of the  
Department of Defense or the United States government.

May 2024

## Introduction

Within the last decade, economic and strategic alignment between Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) has steadily evolved and reached unprecedented levels. Western sanctions targeting Russia following its invasion of Crimea in 2014 and its full-scale war against Ukraine in 2022 have accelerated their geopolitical alignment and elevated the PRC as Russia's most important trade partner and critical supplier of technology and dual-use components that support Russia's defense industry.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, have also found common ground in weakening the United States and its leadership of the international system. Putin's visit, with a large government delegation, to the PRC on May 16-17, 2024, the first after his most recent inauguration, suggests that he is positioning his country for an even deeper, long-term partnership with Beijing. The Arctic plays an important role in this evolving partnership. Moscow has looked to Beijing to develop the Northern Sea Route (NSR), invest in its Arctic energy projects and related support infrastructure (e.g., space and science), and enhance military cooperation. In return, Moscow has become Beijing's conduit for greater activity in the Arctic, as the other seven Arctic Council and NATO members have become wary of the PRC's strategic ambitions, coercive economic tactics, and focus on dual-use infrastructure investments.

As the analysis in this paper will show, Russia-PRC cooperation in the region supports commercial and military ends. This is the last and concluding brief in a series of four papers assessing Moscow's and Beijing's growing alignment in the Arctic. Previous briefs assessed their [cooperation in space](#), especially in the realm of satellite navigation supporting Arctic operations, their [scientific collaboration and exploration](#), including research supporting undersea technologies, and their [deepening civil-military collaboration](#), including efforts to pursue joint maritime law enforcement on the NSR. This paper summarizes their evolving Arctic collaboration in the context of a deepening strategic partnership and relies on open-source government documents, policy analysis, and anonymized interviews with leading experts and officials from North America and Northern Europe.

## Prospects for Deeper Strategic Alignment

In the context of growing geopolitical competition in the Arctic and in other theaters, many analysts have questioned the depth and durability of relations between Moscow and Beijing and weighed the various factors that shape their alignment. Moscow's previous reluctance to collaborate with Beijing in the Arctic, which experts assessed was especially strong given the Kremlin's focus on sovereign control over its Arctic territories, appears to have dissipated, as Russia has grown more economically and politically dependent on the PRC. That development has been underscored by recent joint statements, policies, and trade volumes.

### *Senior Russian Personnel*

The Arctic, a Putin prestige project and one critical to Russia's future energy and critical mineral production, is a growing arena for Russia-PRC collaboration, nurtured under the leadership of Deputy Prime Minister Yuri

May 2024

Trutnev, the official in charge of development of the Far East and the Arctic since 2013. A strong proponent of reducing barriers to year-round NSR operations<sup>1</sup> and to Russian rights in Svalbard,<sup>2</sup> Trutnev as natural resources minister (2004-2012) oversaw significant changes to bolster oil and coal extraction in the Arctic.<sup>3</sup>

Recent Russian policy and personnel shifts following Putin's pro forma election in March and his most recent visit to Beijing indicate that the Kremlin is positioning itself for ever-deeper relations with the PRC, including in the Arctic. The appointment of loyal technocrat and economist Andrey Belousov as defense minister and the promotion of Denis Manturov to first deputy prime minister from deputy of industry and trade, demonstrates Putin's focus on Russia's war economy, needed technological prowess, and requirement to ramp up defense industrial development with the help of Beijing. Manturov and his deputy, Alexey Gruzdev, joined Putin on his May visit to the PRC. Manturov has deep and long-standing connections to Beijing and a track record of engaging with Chinese Communist Party (CCP) counterparts. The 8th Russian-Chinese Expo in Harbin (May 17-21), which Putin attended, highlighted the strong socioeconomic development ties between the two countries. At the expo, Manturov described the PRC as the alternative to Western markets that Russia needs.<sup>4</sup>

### *Putin-Xi Meetings*

The May 2024 meeting represented the 43rd time that Putin and Xi have met and Putin's 19th visit to the PRC since he ascended to power in 2000.<sup>5</sup> The timing of the latest visit and the delegation's large size and composition underscore the growing centrality of Russia-PRC relations for Moscow. Russian official statements and state-controlled media coverage highlight this centrality by emphasizing the "momentous" nature of the visit and how decisive it was for regional and global long-term development.<sup>6</sup>

The inclusion of key defense and defense-industry officials reaffirms the importance of Russia-PRC cooperation in this area, although no new major defense or military-to-military initiatives were publicly announced (Russia and the PRC have not disclosed their defense contracts since the United States introduced the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act in 2017).<sup>7</sup>

Putin and Xi's joint statement released during the visit pledges "closer collaboration in critical sectors, including energy, space, and the military."<sup>8</sup> The Arctic plays an important role in all three areas. The Kremlin's press releases about the visit reference the development of "international transport and logistics corridors" (Trans-Siberian and Baikal-Amur railways, and the NSR), in addition to projects in other high-tech sectors.<sup>9</sup> It also asserts that both countries are "enhancing the capacity of border crossings and expanding border infrastructure."<sup>10</sup> The rail agreement is significant because it helps support Chinese imports that benefit Russia's war economy.

### *Cooperation in the Energy Sector*

Russia-PRC cooperation in the energy sector—including extraction and exports of crude oil, and natural gas, primarily localized in the Russian Far East and Arctic—has been a key driver for bilateral economic relations.<sup>11</sup> Russia holds the world's largest gas reserves (mostly concentrated on the Yamal peninsula)<sup>12</sup> and is among the top three global crude oil producers<sup>13</sup>. Russia and the PRC have "complementary economies", with the former largely exporting raw materials and energy needed to supply the latter's population and industry.<sup>14</sup> Russia also imports

May 2024

finished high-tech products and electronic components from the PRC.<sup>15</sup> The PRC is Russia's top trade partner,<sup>16</sup> while Moscow ranked seventh among Beijing's trade partners for exports and imports in 2023.<sup>17</sup>

The NSR is growing in importance for liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments as piped natural gas exports through the Yamal pipeline to Europe have been stopped following Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine. Fossil fuel exports to the Indo-Pacific, most importantly Beijing, have helped Moscow offset some of the losses resulting from lower European energy imports.<sup>18</sup> This cooperation also has facilitated infrastructure projects and civil-military and law enforcement cooperation on the NSR. In addition, Russia is eager to operationalize the Power of Siberia 2 pipeline, which connects Russia to the PRC through Mongolia, although no announcements have been forthcoming (it took over a decade to negotiate the first Power of Siberia pipeline).<sup>19</sup> According to Kremlin statements, Russia and the PRC remain interested in the pipeline's construction, but lack of progress and Beijing's reported reluctance have led some analysts to question its commitment to the partnership with Russia. More likely, PRC reluctance is based on economic considerations and efforts to diversify energy imports.

### *Industrial Cooperation and Trade in the Arctic*

Moscow is also looking to Beijing (and other BRICS+ partners) to finance and jointly develop infrastructure projects to connect mineral-rich regions and create more integrated logistics networks to increase cargo along the NSR. As part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Beijing is looking to further develop its Polar Silk Road and its Digital Silk Road. Although PRC investments in the Russian Arctic have reportedly fallen short of Kremlin expectations, the number of PRC-owned companies in the Arctic has increased from 48 in 2020 to 123 in June 2023.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, PRC participation in Russian development projects has increased since 2013 "especially in the areas of [liquefied] natural gas, mineral extraction, and infrastructure".<sup>21</sup>

GMF's [prior paper in this series on civil-military collaboration](#) explores current and planned infrastructure projects in the Arctic in more detail. The paper addresses PRC interest in several projects with dual-use potential, such as the deep-water ports at Indiga and near Archangelsk. These could be used to accommodate a future PRC civilian and military presence, including surface and subsea assets. On May 15, the day before Putin's PRC visit, the governor of Arkhangelsk met with PRC authorities to discuss additional NSR infrastructure development and cooperation.<sup>22</sup>

### *Space Cooperation and Satellite Navigation*

The PRC's reliance on dual-use technologies to support situational awareness and intelligence collection, including in space through remote sensing, have caused alarm among other Arctic Council states and have prompted decisions to suspend planned PRC science stations and space centers in Canada, Greenland, Finland, and Sweden. Russia's development of anti-satellite space-based weapons and aggressive deployment of electronic warfare (e.g., GPS jamming and spoofing) is helping it and the PRC make substantial strides to deny Western intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), command and control (C2), and societal communication advantage.<sup>23</sup>

As GMF's [brief on space collaboration in the Arctic](#) shows, Russia and the PRC have cooperated on space diplomacy and technology for well over a decade. In the Arctic, their space cooperation is primarily focused on satellite

May 2024

technology, including global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) to support positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT). Although Russia is continuing to invest in its own GNSS, GLONASS, and has a robust satellite network with remote sensing capabilities that supports situational awareness in the Arctic, it increasingly looks to the PRC's BeiDou network as a resilient navigation system that can supplement coverage. Production delays have hampered the Kremlin's efforts to update its own systems. In 2023, Rosatom announced that it would use Chinese satellite data to facilitate navigation and ice forecasts along the NSR, indicating that Russia has turned to Chinese providers as it seeks to replace dataflows blocked by Western sanctions (as it does to bolster its operations in Ukraine).<sup>24</sup>

The PRC remains focused on expanding and optimizing its BeiDou network as part of its effort to build its Digital Silk Road, which creates technological dependencies for other countries and surveillance risks. The large number of BeiDou satellites and ground stations in the Southern Hemisphere provide for greater regional accuracy than GPS.<sup>25</sup> More ground stations in Northern latitudes would further improve its accuracy in that region. Since 2015, Moscow and Beijing have worked on enhancing BeiDou and GLONASS compatibility, interoperability, and augmentation and installed ground stations in each other's territories.<sup>26</sup> The PRC announced in 2023 that it would open a ground station in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky on Avacha Bay, home to a large Russian submarine base and an access point to the NSR.<sup>27</sup> This would extend Beijing's independent tracking and monitoring capabilities into the Arctic.

### *Russia-PRC Scientific Collaboration and Defense Industrial Development*

Russia is not merely looking for Beijing to supply components that are critical to its war effort in Ukraine. Defense industrial development and modernization is a key priority for Russia. It and the PRC rely on cooperative projects between prestigious universities to foster joint research and development (R&D) that supports both powers' civil-military sectors. Both sides stand to benefit from this approach. For Beijing, collaboration with Russia may provide a pathway to select technologies in areas in which Moscow maintains an edge, including missile defense, rocket engines, deep-space exploration, and nuclear surface and subsurface vessels. Projects focused on the Arctic also provide the PRC opportunities to gain operational experience and to drive R&D that supports Arctic capabilities. Russian analysts view scientific collaboration with the PRC as an opportunity to carve "out a place in the Chinese military's supply chain", modernize, and keep pace with the PRC's R&D, which would otherwise "soon render Russian technology obsolete".<sup>28</sup>

The CCP has a military-civil fusion (MCF) development strategy that helps leverage scientific innovation and civilian technologies for the PRC's defense-industrial base.<sup>29</sup> As part of this effort, the CCP "is building links between China's civilian universities, military and security agencies".<sup>30</sup> The Australian Strategic Policy Institute lists 92 PRC institutions as "very high risk" entities due to their direct ties to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and defense industry, spearheaded by a grouping of seven leading universities, or the "Seven Sons of National Defense".<sup>31</sup>

Two of these institutes, Harbin Engineering University (HEU) and Harbin Institute of Technology (HIT), have joint centers or projects with Russia that focus on scientific research in the Arctic. Since 2016, Russia and the PRC publicly launched at least four Arctic research centers and projects as part of a series of bilateral university agreements. GMF's [prior policy brief explores the research of these institutions](#), their connection to the Arctic

May 2024

missions of the PRC's Xuelong 2 icebreaker, efforts to support navigation on the NSR, and potential benefits for submarine and anti-submarine operations.

During Putin's visit to HIT in May 2024, the Kremlin announced that the institute and St. Petersburg State University (SPBU) would soon open a joint Russian-Chinese training center in natural sciences at Harbin. HIT "is best known for its research of rockets, missiles and space technology." This research supports Russian operations in Ukraine, as coverage by *The Economist* highlights, and, as GMF research shows, both countries' long-term defense developments, including capabilities supporting Arctic operations.

Prior to Putin's May trip, Lomonosov Moscow State University (MGU) and Peking University (PKU) signed a memorandum to establish the Sino-Russian Academy of Fundamental Sciences (SRAFS).<sup>35</sup> MGU and PKU are highly prestigious universities. PKU's Advanced Technology Institute "covers semiconductors, nuclear technology, quantum physics, advanced materials, underwater acoustics, satellite navigation and communications, flight propulsion, aerospace engineering and microprocessors." Although MGU and SPBU are not located in the Arctic, their research is relevant for the region and overlaps with projects pursued by Arctic science centers.

### *Civil-Military Collaboration*

In addition to scientific research collaborations, whose details are usually not widely disclosed, Russia is also increasingly highlighting its Arctic civil-military cooperation with the PRC (and other BRICS+ countries) through high-visibility patrols and announcements of joint exercises. In April 2023, the Russian Federal Security Services (FSB) and the China Coast Guard (CCG) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to facilitate cooperation on maritime law enforcement along the NSR. The CCG, which since 2018 has been under the command of the Central Military Commission (CMC), has a reputation for aggressive and illegal actions toward other countries' vessels. The MoU signaled a new phase in their civil-military collaboration in the Arctic and could portend a reinterpretation of international maritime law in the region akin to the stances taken by the PRC and Russia in, respectively, the South China Sea and the Baltic Sea.<sup>37</sup>

Russia invited the CCG delegation to observe its "Arctic Patrol 2023" maritime security drill following the MoU signing. Russian statements framed the cooperation as an alternative to the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, with the head of the FSB Border Guard Service arguing that "Russia had to find new partners as the coast guard cooperation with the seven other Arctic nations is halted."<sup>38</sup> To date, no joint coast guard patrol has taken place on the NSR, but NATO allies should closely watch for a CCG presence in the Arctic.

In April 2024, the Russian and PLA navies signed an additional MoU on naval search and rescue cooperation "on the high seas."<sup>39</sup> Earlier that month, Russia invited the other BRICS countries to "test their equipment" during Arctic exercises in 2025. These announcements suggest that Moscow is eager to build and display a growing anti-West coalition that can operate in the Arctic.

May 2024

### *Posturing Vis-à-Vis the West*

Russia and the PRC view the US-led international order as a primary challenge to their economic, political, and military interests and power. At the same time, both countries advocate for alternative models and approaches, such as addressing the wars in Gaza and Ukraine to promote “political settlement for hotspots in the interest of truth and justice”.

Their joint statement issued during Putin’s most recent visit to the PRC further underscored both countries’ ideological and political alignment by highlighting five “basic principles” of their partnership.<sup>41</sup> In addition to referencing cultural ties, mutual respect, and support, the statement emphasized the importance of strategic cooperation in multilateral organizations such as the UN, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the G20, as well as Russia’s BRICS chairmanship and the PRC’s Shanghai Cooperation Organization presidency. These efforts align with Moscow’s and Beijing’s ambitions to strengthen a multipolar world and weaken US power and the existing international system.

Both countries publicize their partnership to domestic and international audiences to demonstrate the growth of an alternative, anti-West system with its own formats. This system, which includes the Eurasian Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, BRICS+, and the BRI Forum, ironically mirrors the US alliance system. In recent statements, Putin has repeatedly emphasized that Russia and the PRC have “profound mutual trust” and are strengthening their “foreign policy coordination in the interests of building a just, multipolar world order”.<sup>42</sup>

### *Converging Views on Arctic Governance*

Russia and the PRC also increasingly find value in displaying their alignment on Arctic governance questions as an opposing force to the Arctic Council. This is a shift, especially for Russia. The PRC, which has portrayed the region as a “global commons” and the polar regions, space, and seabed as “new frontiers” whose governance status is “unresolved”,<sup>43</sup> has long been focused on enhancing structures that provide Beijing greater regional access and that bestow legitimacy to non-Arctic states. Beijing participates in all accessible forums on Arctic governance and uses soft-power tools to frame narratives, and strengthen selective rules and principles, in line with its interests.<sup>44</sup> It has sought to use its influence via the International Maritime Organization’s International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code) and the International Seabed Authority (ISA) within the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) for these purposes.<sup>45</sup>

Russia used to be hesitant to empower non-Arctic states in the region. Its resistance to granting the PRC permanent observer status in the Arctic Council (which it achieved in 2013) is a case in point. Russia also long focused on maximizing its military and economic control over its vast Arctic territory stretching from the North Atlantic to the North Pacific, with its bastion defense protecting the Northern Fleet and ensuring freedom of navigation for Russian naval forces to the North Atlantic and beyond. This is still a priority even as Russia seeks to economically develop the region.<sup>46</sup> The Kremlin also remains focused on significantly extending its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), in line with its interpretation of UNCLOS and its Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) claims, while maintaining exclusive rights to resource extraction.



May 2024

It is important to closely monitor how Russia resolves its long-standing extended OCS claims in the Arctic Ocean now that the UN Commission on the Limitations of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) has confirmed a good portion of Russia's Arctic OCS claims.<sup>47</sup> Russia and the PRC have opposed and labeled recent US extended OCS claims unacceptable given that the United States has not ratified UNCLOS.<sup>48</sup> Some analysts believe that Russia could reference US claims as a pretext to unilaterally declaring its unapproved OCS claims as legitimate, thereby forgoing bilateral negotiations with other Arctic states that have overlapping claims. In December 2023, the former chief of the Russian navy emphasized the key national focus on “a full-scale expansion into the continental shelf beyond the borders of the 200-mile exclusive economic zone”.<sup>49</sup> Recent reporting about Russia's alleged (and then retracted) plans to change its maritime borders around Kaliningrad suggest that the country is increasingly considering unilateral actions on border delineations.<sup>50</sup>

Like Beijing, Moscow tends to take a selective approach to international law and regional governance mechanisms, buttressing rules and norms that work in its favor. The Arctic Council long served Russian interests to retain open channels to the West and strengthen its Arctic national identity and sovereignty. Moving away from this position, Moscow is prioritizing bilateral cooperation with the PRC and other BRICS+ partners. Growing alignment between Russia and the PRC in the Arctic may lead both countries to strengthen alternative institutions and enhance the economic viability of its separate alliance system.

## Conclusion

Since 2014, Putin and Xi have strengthened their partnership while bolstering their authoritarian control at home and developing alternative structures and systems to oppose the United States and its allies. While their alignment is neither consistent nor linear, Russia's growing economic dependency on the PRC, particularly in defense-industrial and infrastructure (e.g., rail and digital) development, and their civil-military cooperation demonstrate a deeper and more durable relationship, which has been strengthened recently.

Two years on from its announced “no limits” partnership with the PRC, Russia has preserved and elevated its position but at a sovereign price. Although the PRC remains Russia's most important economic and strategic partner, Moscow is not Beijing's top trade partner. But the Kremlin is the primary partner in the Arctic, which the PRC views as strategically and economically important for resource extraction, shipping, and military power projection. Putin is also Xi's critical ally in their joint effort to erode US influence in the world and revise the international order in ways that are favorable to their authoritarian systems.

Moscow's and Beijing's national interests in the Arctic are not perfectly aligned. Russia remains focused on sovereign control over its Arctic territories, while the PRC wants to develop its polar and digital silk roads and increase its access to resources and strategic sea lines of communication. Even if the sentiments of the Russian leadership and its people toward the PRC eventually sour, a scenario in which Russia severs ties with an economically and politically stronger PRC, especially in the Arctic and Far East, is hard to envision, given the growing economic dependence. Short of a dramatic change in leadership and vision in either capital, their Arctic collaboration will likely expand, in line with their overall strategic partnership.

---

May 2024

It may be tempting to conclude that any policy by the West, whether easing sanctions or reengaging with Russia, could slow or reverse Russia-PRC alignment in the Arctic. Given Putin and Xi's ideological alignment and growing economic partnership, both leaders would simply pocket the gain and continue their interest-based course of action. The United States and its allies must focus instead on outpacing Russia-PRC defense industrial and economic development and strengthening the international system. To do so, they must buttress domestic and alliance cohesion and enforce international law. Like the Cold War, today's geopolitical competition is a race to see which system is durable and resilient, and which system exhausts itself or is dominated or subordinated by the other. The Arctic represents a part of this critical race.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Interfax, “Deputy PM Yury Trutnev: Year-round Northern Sea Route navigation possible in 2024, then then momentum needs to be kept up”, June 20, 2022. <https://interfax.com/newsroom/exclusive-interviews/80421/>
- <sup>2</sup> Atle Staalesen, “Deputy Prime Minister sends warning to Oslo: Russian rights at Svalbard must not be challenged”, The Barents Observer, January 13, 2024. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/2024/02/deputy-prime-minister-sends-warning-oslo-russian-rights-svalbard-must-not-be-challenged>
- <sup>3</sup> Interfax, “Deputy PM Yury Trutnev”.
- <sup>4</sup> TASS, “The Ministry of Industry and Trade said that Russia has found an Alternative to the Markets of Unfriendly Countries in China”, May 19, 2024. <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/20842931>
- <sup>5</sup> The Economist, “The Xi-Putin partnership is not a marriage of convenience”, May 14, 2024. <https://www.economist.com/china/2024/05/14/the-xi-putin-partnership-is-not-a-marriage-of-convenience>
- <sup>6</sup> Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said “the trip laid the groundwork for many years to come” and that “these are momentous steps that will determine the future not only of our region, but also of the entire planet”. TASS, “Russian MFA describes Putin’s China trip as defining for world’s future”, May 18, 2024. <https://tass.com/politics/1790193>
- <sup>7</sup> Alexander Gabuev, “What’s Really Going on Between Russia and China: Behind the Scenes, They Are Deepening Their Defense Partnership”, Foreign Affairs, April 12, 2023. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/whats-really-going-between-russia-and-china>
- <sup>8</sup> David Pierson, “Putin’s China Visit Highlights Military Ties That Worry the West”, The New York Times, May 17, 2024. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/17/world/asia/putin-xi-china-russia.html>
- <sup>9</sup> The Kremlin, President of Russia, “Media statement following Russia-China talks”, May 16, 2024. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/74049>
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Oscar Almén and Christopher Weidacher Hsiung, China’s economic influence in the Arctic region: The Nordic and Russian cases, FOI (Swedish Defence Research Agency), June 2022, p.117. [https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--5326--SEFIO find reference](https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--5326--SEFIO%20find%20reference)
- <sup>12</sup> Luke Harding, “Yamal peninsula: The world’s biggest gas reserves”, The Guardian, October 2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/oct/20/yamal-gas-reserves>; Statista, Proved natural gas reserves in Russia from 2000 to 2020, July 26, 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/265325/natural-gas-reserves-in-russia/>
- <sup>13</sup> US Energy Information Administration, “What countries are the top producers and consumers of oil?” <https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.php?id=709&t=6>
- <sup>14</sup> OEC World, China/Russia. <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/chn/partner/rus>
- <sup>15</sup> Associated Press, “US intelligence finding shows China surging equipment sales to Russia to help war effort in Ukraine”, April 19, 2024. <https://apnews.com/article/united-states-china-russia-ukraine-war-265df843be030b7183c95b6f3afca8ec>
- <sup>16</sup> TradeImEX, RUSSIA EXPORT AND IMPORT STATISTICS 2023, September 6, 2023. <https://www.tradeimex.in/blogs/russia-export-and-import-statistics>
- <sup>17</sup> Statista, Distribution of Chinese imports in 2023, by trade partner, 2024. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1199613/main-import-partners-for-china/#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20exports%20from%20the,of%20total%20imports%20that%20year.>
- <sup>18</sup> For a detailed breakdown of Russian fossil fuel exports see, for example: Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air, Monthly analysis of Russian fossil fuel exports and sanctions, February 2024. [https://energyandcleanair.org/february-2024-monthly-analysis-of-russian-fossil-fuel-exports-and-sanctions/#:~:text=Pipeline%20gas%3A%20The%20EU%20was,%25\)%20and%20China%20\(26%25\).](https://energyandcleanair.org/february-2024-monthly-analysis-of-russian-fossil-fuel-exports-and-sanctions/#:~:text=Pipeline%20gas%3A%20The%20EU%20was,%25)%20and%20China%20(26%25).)
- <sup>19</sup> TASS, “Russia and China interested in energy projects, including Power of Siberia 2 — Putin”, May 17, 2024. <https://tass.com/economy/1789735>
- <sup>20</sup> Strider Technologies, Shifting Ice, 2024, p.6. [https://content.striderintel.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Strider\\_Shifting\\_Ice\\_Report.pdf](https://content.striderintel.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Strider_Shifting_Ice_Report.pdf)
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> The Arkhangelsk port is a hub for China-Russia NSR trade and is under development, with significant investment from the Patrushev family. Andrei, the youngest son of Nikolai Patrushev (The former head of the FSB and secretary of the Russian Security Council was recently appointed as an aide to Putin.), has a 10% stake in the port, and his father will reportedly be in charge of shipbuilding. Atle Staalesen and Olesia Krivtsova, “Ahead of Putin’s meetings with Xi, North Russian Governor Aleksandr Tsybulsky talked Arctic shipping in Chinese port”, The Barents Observer, May 16, 2024. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/industry-and-energy/2024/05/ahead-putins-talks-xi-north-russian-governor-promoted-arctic-shipping>
- <sup>23</sup> Simone McCarthy, “America’s military has the edge in space. China and Russia are in a counterspace race to disrupt it”, CNN, May 27, 2024. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/27/china/counterspace-us-china-russia-intl-hnk-scn/index.html>
- <sup>24</sup> Malte Humpert, “Lacking Own Satellite Coverage Russia Is Looking to China For Northern Sea Route Data”, High North News, March 30, 2023. <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/lacking-own-satellite-coverage-russia-looking-china-northern-sea-route-data>
- <sup>25</sup> Jemima Baar, “BeiDou And Strategic Advancements in PRC Space Navigation”, China Brief Vol. 24, Issue 5, The Jamestown Foundation, March 1, 2024. <https://jamestown.org/program/beidou-and-strategic-advancements-in-prc-space-navigation/>
- <sup>26</sup> Kevin Pollpeter, Elizabeth Barrett, and Jeffrey Edmonds, et al., China-Russia Space Cooperation: The Strategic, Military, Diplomatic, and Economic Implications of a Growing Relationship, China Aerospace Studies Institute, May 2023, p. 27. <https://www.cna.org/reports/2023/06/china-russia-space-cooperation-may-2023>
- <sup>27</sup> TASS, “Russia, China ink space cooperation deal to 2027”, December 29, 2022. <https://tass.com/science/1557333>
- <sup>28</sup> Alexander Gabuev, “What’s Really Going on Between Russia and China”, Foreign Affairs, April 12, 2023. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/whats-really-going-between-russia-and-china>

May 2024

<sup>29</sup> US Department of Defense, Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2023: Annual Report to Congress, October 19, 2023, p. 28. <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3561549/dod-releases-2023-report-on-military-and-security-developments-involving-the-pe/>

<sup>30</sup> Alex Joske, The China Defence Universities Tracker, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, November 25, 2019. <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/china-defence-universities-tracker>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> The Kremlin, President of Russia, Media statement following Russia-China talks, May 16, 2024. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/74049>

<sup>33</sup> The Economist, "The Xi-Putin partnership is not a marriage of convenience".

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> TASS, "Russia, China set up joint academy of fundamental sciences", May 17, 2024. <https://tass.com/society/1789429>

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Nilsen, "FSB signs maritime security cooperation with China in Murmansk", The Barents Observer, April 25, 2023. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2023/04/fsb-signs-maritime-security-cooperation-china-murmanskMoU>

<sup>37</sup> Financial Times, "Missing Baltic buoys mark out maritime border faultlines", May 26, 2024. <https://www.ft.com/content/cf2c092d-66b2-4406-9670-48d9448182cc>

<sup>38</sup> The Arctic, "China and Russia sign memorandum of understanding and cooperation in maritime law enforcement", April 26, 2023. <https://arctic.ru/international/20230426/1021665.html>

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Nilsen, "Admiral Moiseev signs MoU with Chinese navy", The Barents Observer, April 22, 2024. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2024/04/admiral->

<sup>40</sup> The Kremlin, President of Russia, Media statement following Russia-China talks, May 16, 2024. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/74049>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Anne-Marie Brady, China as a Polar Great Power, Cambridge University Press, 2017, p. 76.

<sup>44</sup> Matti Puranen and Sanna Kopra, "China's Arctic Strategy – a Comprehensive Approach in Times of Great Power Rivalry", Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies, 6(1), p. 244. <https://sjms.nu/articles/10.31374/sjms.196>

<sup>45</sup> For more on the PRC's views on the Polar Code see: Trym Eiterjord, Arctic Technopolitics and China's Reception of the Polar Code, The Arctic Institute, May 26, 2020. <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/arctic-technopoliticschina-reception-polar-code>

<sup>46</sup> For more on this see, for example: Mathieu Boulègue, Russia's Military Posture in the Arctic Managing Hard Power in a "Low Tension" Environment, Chatham House, June 2019, p.6. [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2019-06-28-Russia-Military-Arctic\\_0.pdf#find](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2019-06-28-Russia-Military-Arctic_0.pdf#find)

<sup>47</sup> Andrey Todorov, Russia's Arctic Shelf Bid and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, Explained, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, March 2, 2023. <https://sites.tufts.edu/fletcherussia/russias-arctic-shelf-bid-and-the-commission-on-the-limits-of-the-continental-shelf-explained/>

<sup>48</sup> Kenza Bryan, Josh Gabert-Doyon, and Demetri Sevastopulo, "China and Russia challenge US claim to mineral-rich stretches of seabed", Financial Times, March 25, 2024. <https://www.ft.com/content/0e550c72-c6b1-42ac-876b-22aa49c2057b>

<sup>49</sup> Atle Staalesen, "Moscow aims for another grab: Navy Chief says Russia will expand into Arctic Ocean", The Barents Observer, December 7, 2023. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2023/12/moscow-aims-another-grab-navy-chief-says-russia-will-expand-arctic-ocean>

<sup>50</sup> Paul Kirby, "Baltic concerns over Russian plan to move sea borders", BBC, May 22, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c6pp15v1lwzo>; For the Russian response, see: TASS, "Source: Russia did not have and has no intentions to revise the border in the Baltic", May 22, 2024. <https://tass.ru/politika/20870585>; and TASS, "Peskov said that there is nothing political in the project about the coordinates of the borders in the Baltic", May 22, 2024. <https://tass.ru/politika/20871853>