



SINO-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN THE ARCTIC: A CAUSE FOR CONCERN FOR THE WEST?

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OUTLINE

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 - ▶ Changing Geo-Strategic Dynamics of the Arctic
 - ▶ Strategic and Regional Limitations to China-Russia Cooperation
 - ▶ Western Arctic States Vs. China & Russia inevitable?

AN EMERGING ENTENTE

- ▶ How to Define Sino-Russia Relations?
 - ▶ Axis of convenience/opportunism
 - ▶ Political-military alliance/pact
 - ▶ Entente
- ▶ Alignment and overlap of grand strategic interest
 - ▶ A less Western/US dominated world
 - ▶ Promotion of a multi-polar world
 - ▶ Minimizing historical tensions & power asymmetry
 - ▶ Not a complete divorce from international order but becoming more independent
- ▶ Acceleration 2014 onwards
 - ▶ Severe degradation of Russia-West relations
- ▶ Augmentation of relations across multiple domains



POLITICAL, MILITARY & ECONOMIC RELATIONS

- ▶ Political Relations
 - ▶ Not comprehensive coordination but alignment
 - ▶ UNSC Voting Record
 - ▶ Tacit support for each others' activities in home regions
- ▶ Military Relations
 - ▶ Arms sales
 - ▶ Joint exercises
 - ▶ Not integration but increased regularity of exercises/exchanges
- ▶ Economic Relations
 - ▶ Growing trade relationship
 - ▶ China as a key customer/financier and tech partner to Russia
 - ▶ Coordination between mega-economic projects: EAEU & BRI

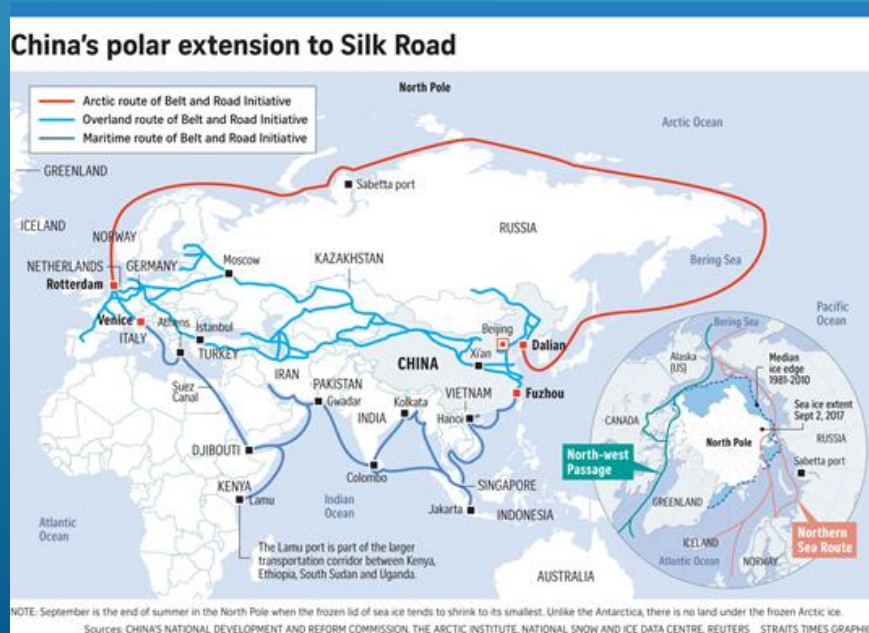
Russia China trade turnover & estimates \$bn





COOPERATION MOVING NORTH

- ▶ Russian Interests in the Arctic
 - ▶ Vital for economic and national security
 - ▶ Status as a great power
- ▶ China's Interest in the Arctic
 - ▶ 'Near Arctic' State/ Arctic Ocean as a 'global commons'
 - ▶ Economic investment; military interest?
- ▶ Russian reservations of greater Chinese involvement and presence in region marginalized post 2014
 - ▶ Predominately economic





ECONOMIC, MILITARY & POLITICAL ASPECTS IN THE ARCTIC

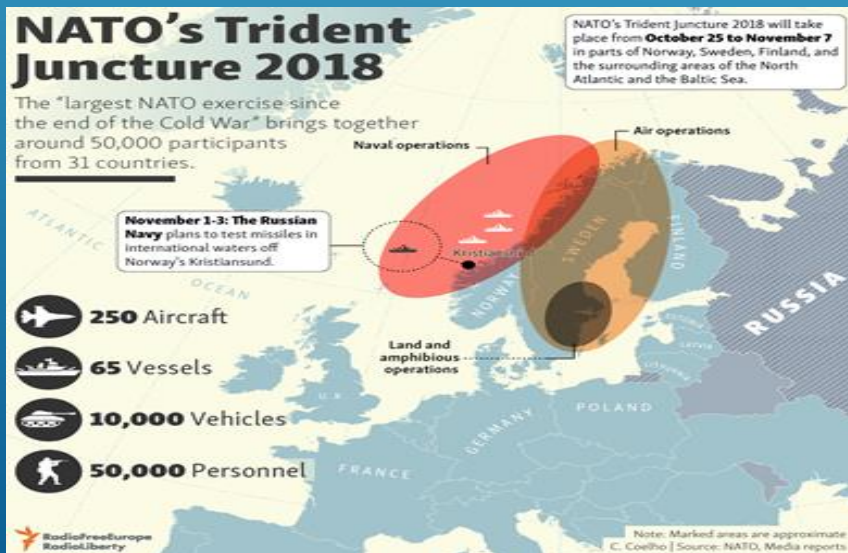


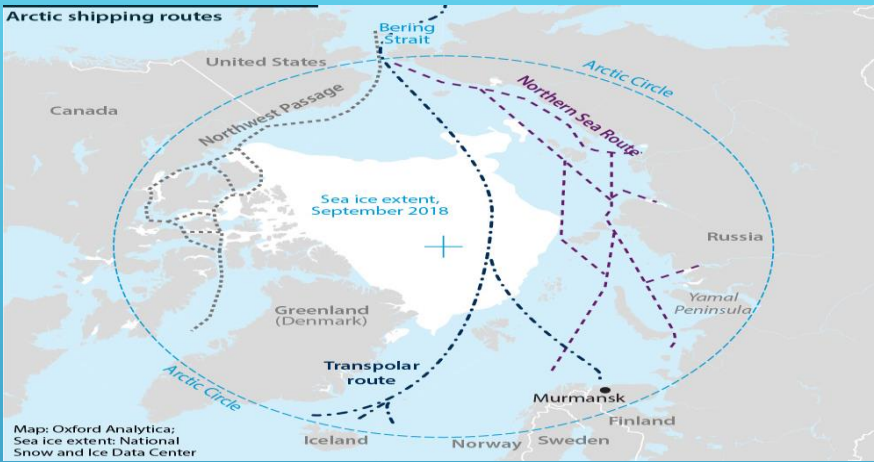
- ▶ Economic
 - ▶ Yamal LNG/Arctic LNG II development
 - ▶ Arkhangelsk port and rail development
 - ▶ Northern Sea Route ('Polar Silk Road')
- ▶ Military
 - ▶ Participation in VOSTOK 18; naval exercises in the Arctic?
 - ▶ Lots of speculation/hypotheticals but no stationing of Chinese forces in Russian Arctic or joint patrols
- ▶ Political
 - ▶ Both overtly supportive of the regional status-quo
 - ▶ Eventually work in tandem in a 'race to/for the North'?



CONSIDERATIONS FOR DETERMINING HOW TO RESPOND

- ▶ Changing Geo-Strategic Dynamics of the Arctic
 - ▶ Western Arctic States increasingly concerned about Russian military and Chinese economic developments in the region
 - ▶ A growing need/role for NATO in the Arctic?
 - ▶ The US: The Arctic as a Geopolitical Arena
 - ▶ Alignment pressures on regional allies?





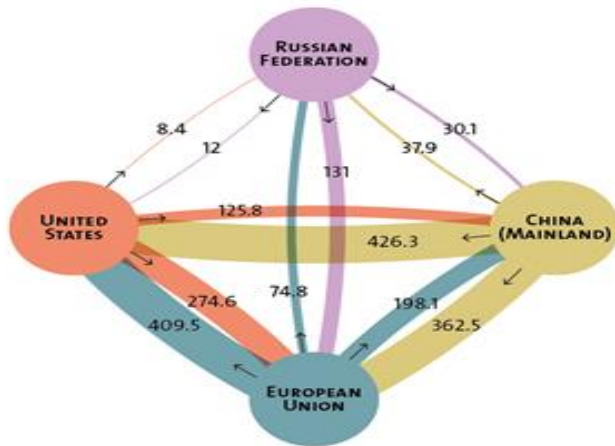
CONSIDERATIONS FOR DETERMINING HOW TO RESPOND

- ▶ Strategic and Regional Limitations to China-Russia Cooperation
- ▶ Strategic
 - ▶ United by what world they want to move away from ≠ world they want to move towards
 - ▶ Russia pursuing anti-hegemonic grand strategy vs. China pursuing counter-hegemonic grand strategy
 - ▶ Case study: Central Asia

- ▶ Regional
 - ▶ Chinese risk aversion offsets vs. Russian control in economic development
 - ▶ China investment interest beyond (and possibly to the detriment of) Russia
 - ▶ Russian position in the Arctic

Economic Ties between Russia, China, the US and the EU in 2016

Volume of trade (in billion USD)



Note: When a disparity existed between data reporting the same movement of trade in a different way – for example, US exports to China versus Chinese imports from the US – this graphic uses the average of the two figures.

Source: IMF Data, Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS)

Strategic Trends 2018 (Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich)



CONSIDERATIONS FOR DETERMINING HOW TO RESPOND

- ▶ Ensuring Russia commitment to regional status-quo
 - ▶ Must be balanced against but not excluded
- ▶ China economic investments a possible security concern
 - ▶ Beneficial if only place to invest is Russia?
- ▶ Western Arctic States' strategy
 - ▶ Monitor changes in relationship, especially signs of moving towards political-military pact
 - ▶ Wary of actions which facilitate greater alignment between them
 - ▶ Deal with both as distinct and separate relationships