

The loud dissenter and its cautious partner – Russia, China, and the thorny issue of global governance and humanitarian intervention

Aglaya Snetkov (ETH Zürich, Switzerland)

and

Marc Lanteigne (University of Wellington, New Zealand)

DO NOT CITE WITHOUT PERMISSION

Introduction

Discussions about changing global order, the rise of China, and the apparent shift in global power distribution from West to East,¹ with the so-called rising powers said to be gaining increasing momentum and a greater role in international affairs have become ubiquitous in recent years.² Concerns have also been expressed that as new actors entering the system, these rising powers will become challengers to existing Western-built global norms, whilst

¹ Charles Glaser, 'Will China's Rise Lead to War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism,' *Foreign Affairs* (90) (2011); Michael Beckley, 'China's Century? Why America's Edge Will Endure,' *International Security*, 36 (3) (Winter 2011/12): Pages 41-78; Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson and Michael Beckley. (2013) 'Debating China's Rise and U.S. Decline,' *International Security* 37(3) (2013): 172-181. David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Gill Bates, *Rising Star: China's New Security Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press 2007).

² For different interpretations of the current debates on this issue see: Tudora A. Onea, 'Between dominance and decline: status anxiety and great power rivalry,' *Review of International Studies* (Online publication date: 8-Feb-2013):1-28; Quddus Z. Snyder 'Integrating rising powers: liberal systemic theory and the mechanism of competition' *Review of International Studies* 39(01) (2013): 209-231; Andrew Hurrell, 'Hegemony, Liberalism and Global Order: What space for would-be great powers?' *International Affairs* 82 (2006): 545-566.

potentially also seeking to establish new norms and normative alliances more in line with their own domestic normative perspectives,³ particularly in order to usurp the current established international system. The emergence of a more multipolar world and these rising powers is therefore said to impact not only on the power distribution within the international system and the West in particular,⁴ but also on its prevailing norms, organizations, and the ‘rules of the game’.⁵

Within these discussions, the way in which the international community deals with major humanitarian and security crises has become a major focus, in particular regarding humanitarian interventions and the now-established global norm of ‘responsibility to protect’ (R2P), as inscribed in the Convention on the Responsibility to Protect signed in 2005.⁶ R2P was already a source of controversy prior to its institutionalization in 2005. Some have depicted it as a fruitful and much-welcome culmination of the processes of globalization, cosmopolitanism and human security all rolled into one. Its critics, however, have instead pointed to international crises, such as Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, to highlight the inherent failures and contradictions not only within the convention itself, but also in its use and operationalisation. Indeed, many have also suggested that rather than representing a new more humanitarian global approach towards major security crises, this new international instrument is in fact a ‘neo-colonialist’ norm utilized by Western powers to further their own agendas.⁷

³ For discussion regarding the impact of China on global norms see Xiaoming Zhang ‘A Rising China and the Normative Changes in International Society,’ *East Asia*(28) (2011): 235-246.

⁴ For example see: Rosemary Foot and Andrew Walter, *China, the United States, and global order* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Rosemary Foot ‘Chinese Strategies in a US-hegemonic Global Order: Accommodating and hedging’ *International Affairs*, 82 (2006):77-94; John Ikenberry ‘The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberalism Survive?’ *Foreign Affairs*, 87 (2008): 23-37.

⁵ For more on this debate see: Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, ‘Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy’, *International Security*, 34(4) (Spring 2010):63-95; Daniel C. Lynch (2006). *Rising China and Asian Democratization: Socialization to ‘Global Culture’ in the Political Transformations of Thailand, China, and Taiwan*. (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press 2007); Maximilian Terhalle ‘Reciprocal Socialization.’ *International Studies Perspectives* 12(4) (2011): 341–361; Gregory Chin and Ramesh Thakur, ‘Will China Change the Rules of Global Order?’ *The Washington Quarterly* 33(4) (2010): 119-138

⁶ 2005 World Summit Outcome, available at:

<http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/World%20Summit%20Outcome%20Document.pdf#page=30>.

⁷ For discussion on these different debates see: S Neil MacFarlane, Carolin J Thielking and Thomas G Weiss ‘The responsibility to protect: is anyone interested in humanitarian intervention?’ *Third World Quarterly*, 25(5) (2004):977-992; Nicholas J. Wheeler, N.J. and Morris, J.C. ‘Justifying Iraq as a Humanitarian War: The Cure is Worse than the Disease’, in W.P.S. Sidhu and R. Thakur (eds.) *The Iraq Crisis and World Order: Structural, Institutional, and Normative Challenges* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press 2006), 444—463; Alex J Bellamy, ‘Responsibility to Protect or Trojan Horse? The Crisis in Darfur and Humanitarian Intervention after Iraq’, *Ethics and International*

Despite these controversies, both the 2001 Report on the Responsibility to Protect, and especially the 2005 Convention have resulted in R2P becoming one of the primary established principle according to which the international community is to supposed deal with major humanitarian crises.⁸ References to R2P faded from the debate during the heights of the ‘Global War on Terror, in the first half of the 2000s. However, recent conflicts and crises in Africa and the Middle East have once again pushed R2P to the forefront of international discourse. This increased prominence in the debate, does not, however, imply that states have now come to agree on what conditions should be present in order to intervene in a civil conflict, in which humanitarian conditions have either deteriorated or have been directly attacked.⁹

Indeed, within the broader discussion, the rising powers have often been characterized as disrupters and opponents to R2P. As many have pointed out, Russia and China, together with the other members of the ‘BRICS’ (namely, Brazil, India, and South Africa), have voiced their active suspicion and disapproval of this particular initiative both prior to, and after the 2005 Convention. In this literature, China and Russia often been singled out as the most critical of the non-Western powers, primarily because of their privileged position within the global security architecture as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).¹⁰ They thus have a veto on any UN resolutions, including in terms of the R2P Convention which states all must be pre-approved by the UNSC. Furthermore, they are both depicted as actors that are primarily concerned with maintain the primacy of state sovereignty as the ultimate referent of the international system. Analysts have pointed to their actions in relation to the 2011 Libya and ongoing Syria crises as evidence of their disruptive agency

Affairs 12 (2) (2005):31-54; Mohammed Ayoob ‘Third World Perspectives on Humanitarian Intervention and International Administration’, *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 10(1) (Jan.–Mar. 2004): 99-118.

⁸ Alex J. Bellamy, ‘Libya and the Responsibility to Protect: The Exception and the Norm’ *Ethics & International Affairs* 25(03) (September 2011): 263-269.

⁹ Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, ‘The new politics of protection? Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to *protect*’ *International Affairs* 87(4) (July 2011):825–850.

¹⁰ Alex J. Bellamy, ‘Realizing the Responsibility to Protect’, *International Studies Perspectives* 10 (2009): 111–128.

with regard to R2P. Taking this a step further, they are often said to be acting as a normative alliance as they share misgivings about the R2P concept and its application.

While this perspective has to some degree become conventional wisdom, little research has been undertaken into the perspectives and positions of China and Russia with regard to R2P, either individually or as a comparison.¹¹ Indeed, the current literature on these actors' perspectives tends to underplay the complexity of the relationship between established global norms, non-Western powers, the West and the international system. Taking this as its starting point, this paper sets out to explore the extent to which China and Russia have been successfully socialized into accepting the R2P norm; whether or not they seek to subvert it; and if so, whether or not they are in the process of building an alternative normative alliance around the issue. It is suggested, that contrary to the picture painted by many, although there is common ground between Chinese and Russian position on R2P, there is also significant daylight between them in their approaches to humanitarian intervention. It is suggested that this is due to differing foreign policy concerns and perceptions.

In order to tease out the different facets of China and Russia's positions towards humanitarian intervention, this paper adopts a multi-dimensional perspective – taking into account both their security cultures in relation to state sovereignty, security and intervention, and the roles that they seek to play in international affairs, particularly at times of major security and humanitarian crises. In contrast to many other studies of the security cultures of non-Western powers, we focus not simply on historical determinants, but also their contemporary relevance and impact. This is a particularly moot point in relation to the study of both China and Russia,

¹¹ For some examples of literature on China and R2P see: Sarah Teitt 'Assessing Polemics, Principles and Practices: China and the Responsibility to Protect,' *Global Responsibility to Protect Journal* 1(2)(March 2009); Zhongying Pang 'China's Non-Intervention Question,' *Global Responsibility to Protect Journal*,1(2) (March 2009); Liu Tiewaa 'China and Responsibility to Protect: Maintenance and Change of Its Policy for Intervention' *The Pacific Review* 25(1) (2012):153-173. Michael Fullilove, 'China and the United Nations: The Stakeholder Spectrum,' *The Washington Quarterly*, 34(3) (2011): 63-85. For literature on Russia and R2P see Gareth Evans 'Russia, Georgia and the responsibility to protect', *Amsterdam Law Forum* e 1(2) (2009):25-28; Nicolai N. Petro 'The legal case for Russian intervention in Georgia,' *Fordham International Law Journal* 32(2008-2009): 1524 -154; Roy Allison 'The Russian case for military intervention in Georgia: international law, norms and political calculation', *European Security*, 18(2) (2009): 173-200.

since both have undergone a series of cataclysmic and radical political and economic changes in recent history. In line with constructivist perspectives, the security cultures of both Russia and China should not therefore be seen as static frames of reference, but as dynamic, fluid and very much evolving processes. Whilst the question of the role that rising powers seek to play in international affairs is central to the current debate on the changing global order, most of the current critique within the literature on humanitarian interventions stems from a normative perspective. And yet, many of the disagreements within the UNSC arise not only as a result of different normative perspectives, but because of the different roles that actors seek to play or see others as playing. This paper outlines that Russia is willing to adopt a much more public and declarative stances on issues such as Libya 2011 and the current civil war in Syria, whereas China seems to keep a low profile by comparison. Any analysis of their approach to R2P must therefore also take into account the different roles that China and Russia seek to play in relation to such crises.

This paper begins by examining China and Russia's contemporary security cultures and the different roles that they seek to play in questions of global security, before proceeding to analyze their different approaches towards R2P. In particular, it considers the way in which their approaches to humanitarian interventions have played out with regard to Libya and Syria.

The loud dissenter: Russia's security culture and its global role

Russia's security culture

Since the end of the Cold War, despite the signing up to R2P and its softer interpretation of the principle of sovereignty, Russia retains a state-centric approach to security. Drawing on Russia's historical experience of mass-citizen upheavals, revolutions, civil wars and invasions, a strong state and respect for sovereignty is seen as necessary to avoid chaos and violence. Concerns about the potential disintegration of the Russian state are not confined to the history books as demonstrated by the secessionist conflicts in Chechnya and the greater Caucasus region in the 1990s and early 2000s, as well as ongoing terrorism and extremism operating on Russian soil.¹² Tellingly, the key focus of President Vladimir Putin's policies upon coming to power in 2000 was the re-building of a strong state inside Russia, in order to deal with and alleviate the instability and chaos at the end of the 1990s (Snetkov, 2011). Hence, the formal institutions and trappings of statehood are prioritized at the expense of wider discussion about the functioning of state processes, collective versus individual rights, or questions of good versus bad governance. Whilst the importance of human rights is recognized – human security continues to be placed alongside state and societal stability. As noted in the 2009 National Security Concept, 'the main long-term directions of state policy in the sphere of state and public security must be the reinforcement of the role of the state as guarantor of the security of the individual'.¹³

The principles of state sovereignty, non-interference into domestic affairs and the fear of external actors becoming involved in internal dynamics continue to play a central role in

¹² 'Gala evening marking Security Agency Worker's Day', *President of Russia website*, 20 December 2012 see <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/4783>

¹³ 'Strategiia natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii do 200 goda', *Security Council of the Russian Federation*, 12 May 2009, available at: <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/1/99.html>

Russia's security culture.¹⁴ Any attempts to disrupt or challenge its domestic order are often presented as a major affront to Russia's sovereignty.¹⁵ Putin noted in his Federal Address in December 2012: 'any direct or indirect foreign interference in our internal political processes is unacceptable.'¹⁶ This fear of foreign interference into actor's domestic spaces and the potential loss of sovereignty stems not only from historical traditions.¹⁷ Since the end of the Cold War, the Russian authorities have increasingly complained that they have become the target of Western interventionist discourse of democracy promotion and the promotion of individual rights over state stability, most in relation to the Chechen conflicts (1994-96) and (1999-2009). As Lynch notes tensions between Russia and the EU often stem from their very different perspectives on whether or not international actors have the right to chastise others for their behavior in their domestic sphere (Lynch 2004, p.105).¹⁸ Kalland characterized these as tensions between 'norms of interference...against the norm of non-interference' (Kalland 2004, p.2), and frictions have continued over issues such as the Yukos Affair, the 'color revolutions', the high profile assassinations of journalist Anna Politkovskaya in Moscow and former intelligence officer Aleksandr Litvinenko in London,¹⁹ and more recently the Pussy Riot legal case. Moscow therefore has become increasingly wary of any perceived interference in its domestic affairs,²⁰ and as a result is very suspicious of any suggestion that

¹⁴ This line of argument was evident in President Putin's post-Beslan speech, in which he described this blurring of internal-external security threats and the concern about external actors interfering into Russia's domestic space. See Vladimir Putin, 'Annual Address at the Federal Assembly', *President of Russia website*, 26 May 2004, available at: http://archive.kremlin.ru/appears/2004/05/26/0003_type63372type63374type82634_71501.shtml, accessed 10 September 2010.

¹⁵ This principle has also been outlined in its Russia's Military Doctrine in 2001, http://news.kremlin.ru/ref_notes/461; and Russia's 2009 National Security Strategy, <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/1/99.html>; and most recently in its 2013 Foreign Policy Concept.

¹⁶ Vladimir Putin 'Address to the Federal Assembly', *President of Russia website*, 12 December 2012, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/4739>.

¹⁷ In Russia's security culture there are in fact no popular examples of foreign interference playing a positive role such as earlier invasions such as the Mongol invasion, the Napoleonic wars, the Western involvement on the side of the Whites at the time of the Civil War in the 20th century or the Second World War,

¹⁸ Russia's policy for example towards the EU continued to rest on foreign rather than domestic policy, in other words Russia did not want the EU to play a role in its internal policy. This however was at odds with the EU model, developed on its experience with other East European states, which granted the EU the right to interfere and restructure domestic affairs in order to ensure that these actors comply with the regulations and principles of the EU. This created a sharp division between the EU and Russia, see Dov Lynch, 'Russia's Strategic Partnership with Europe', *The Washington Quarterly* 27 (2) (2004):99-118.

¹⁹ For example Russia was criticised by the 34 parliamentarians of the PACE over its official investigation of Anna Politkovskaya's murder, 'PACE urges international probe into Politkovskaya murder', *RIA Novosti*, 05 October 2007, available at: <http://en.rian.ru/society/20071005/82677496.html>, accessed 14 July 2010.

²⁰ 'Response by MFA Spokesman Alexander Lukashovich to a Question from Russian Media about Recent Remarks of German Human Rights Commissioner', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 23 December 2011, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b4325699005bcb3/32ab6a168d87a37c44257970003732f8!OpenDocument

the principle of external interference into domestic spaces becoming the norm in international affairs.

In addition, the importance of cultural and national traditions plays a vital role in Russia's security culture, with the Russian authorities becoming increasingly alarmist regarding the preservation of cultural and historical plurality, both between states and within the international system. In some respects, this harks back to Russia's historical concerns about its civilizational and geo-cultural location, i.e. whether it is part of the East or the West (Neumann 1996). In practice, this means that whilst Russia is happy to embrace other, particularly Western civilizational models of development and behavior as it did in the early 1990s, this can quickly turn into a rejection of these same models, as is the case now. The current Russian authorities are very resistant to, and vocal against any imposition of what they perceive to be foreign models of behavior – and are instead keen to promote Russian forms of behavior in line with its national traditions.²¹ They also accuse the West of failing to acknowledge and make allowances for the different cultural and normative traditions of other states on the international stage.²² The key point of contestation is not, however, over the form, but rather, the content of these different norms. For example, whilst the Russian authorities have repeatedly declared their support for human rights, they also maintain that 'nobody has monopoly over what constitutes human rights'.²³ Similarly, it has been suggested that whilst Moscow stands in support of both the principle of market capitalism and

²¹Vladimir Putin 'Address to the Federal Assembly', *President of Russia website*, 12 December 2012, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/4739>.

²² Putin's spokesperson Dmitri Peskov noting that "We have heard numerous times the word in Washington that Russia's domestic affairs are not satisfactory," and "unfortunately these voices cannot be taken into account here, and we cannot agree with them. We are a genuine democratic country, and we are taking care of ourselves." David M. Herszenhorn and Andrew E. Kramer, 'Another Reset with Russia in Obama's Second Term', *The New York Times*, 1 February 2013, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/02/world/europe/another-reset-of-relations-with-russia-in-obamas-second-term.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

²³ 'Vladimir Putin on foreign policy: Russia and the changing world', *Valdai Club*, 27 February 2012, available at: <http://valdaiclub.com/politics/39300.html>

democracy, that these norms should be implemented in line with its national traditions and local norms, which includes a strong role for the state.²⁴

Indeed, the cumulative effect of the color revolutions, the ‘Arab Spring’ and the West’s perceived supporting role for these popular revolts have not only raised Russia’s own concerns with regime security, but have also made it much more suspicious of external actors working jointly with Russian domestic partners.²⁵ In a series of articles in February 2012, President Putin re-iterated his complaints about actors that disregard state sovereignty, stating that they adopt “missile-and-bomb democracy.”²⁶

With regard to its internal space Russia is thus very aggressive about its protection from outside interference. When it comes to events outside Russia, however, a clear distinction in Russia’s perspective is evident. The external sphere is divided between spaces seen as local and those as distant, whereby events in what Moscow considers its own neighborhood and those in other regions of the world are considered very differently. The historical experience of the USSR means that the Russian authorities continue to see the post-Soviet space as its area of ‘privileged interests,’ as noted by the then President Medvedev in 2008.²⁷ Whilst the Russian authorities are not intent on reconstituting a Soviet Union 2.0, over the last decade, former Soviet states have become increasingly important in its foreign policy. Russia’s view of ‘its’ region is closely linked to its internal security thinking. As noted by Averre, Russia’s regional approach favors ‘sovereignty, regime stability and noninterference in the internal

²⁴ ‘Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.Lavrov for the documentary film on Syria by Hubert Seipel for the German channel ARD, on the air on February 13’, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/87653ACE6A5BEE9144257B13004058C4?OpenDocument.

²⁵ Andrey S. Makarychev, ‘Rebranding Russia: Norms, Politics and Power,’ *Centre for European Policy Studies working document no. 283* (Brussels, CEPS February 2008), available at: <http://aeci.pitt.edu/7583/>. The Putin regime also has become ever more focused on severing any links between Western actors and domestic groups inside Russia. Russia has recently passed series of legislation to curtail the Western influence into its domestic space, such as the expulsion of USAID and its programs and the widening of the principle of treason and espionage to include even groups seeking to promote advocacy into human rights or torture in October 2012.

²⁶ ‘Vladimir Putin on foreign policy: Russia and the changing world’, *Vaidai Club*, 27 February 2012, available at: <http://valdaiclub.com/politics/39300.html>.

²⁷ ‘Interview given by Dmitry Medvedev to Television Channels Channel One, Rossia, NTV,’ *President of Russia website*, 31 August 2008, available at: http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2008/08/31/1850_type82912type82916_206003.shtml

affairs of these states',²⁸ and it thus follows a much less principled position to events and circumstances within this space.

By contrast, Russia's view on the wider world is much more principled. In 2008, the then-President Dmitry Medvedev outlined five principles that guided Russian foreign policy, namely, international law, multipolar world, non-isolation, protection of citizens and privileged regional interests.²⁹ Moscow argues that the international system is increasingly becoming more multipolar, with different powers and regions gaining increasing power.³⁰ It is also suggested that no single power or bloc will be able to exert complete control.³¹ Critically, within Russia's reading of the changing global order, it is the West that is seen as a disruptive actor seeking to prevent the loss of its earlier dominance in economic and political spheres,³² a perception not helped by the US-led military operations in Iraq after 2003. This, in turn, is said to be resulting in increased instability and competition in international affairs.³³ The latest Foreign Policy Concept emphasizes that these confrontations have a civilisational dimension, in part referring to the rise in radical Islam, but also to broader cultural frictions in the international system.³⁴ Russia asserts the importance of cultural plurality in international affairs, which the West is frequently depicted as disregarding.

²⁸ Derek Averre, 'Competing Rationalities: Russia, the EU and the 'Shared Neighbourhood'', *Europe-Asia Studies* 61(10) (2009):1696.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Vladimir Putin 'Address to the Federal Assembly', *President of Russia website*, 12 December 2012, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/4739>.

³¹ 'Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the International Affairs journal Russian diplomacy and challenges of the 21st century', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 13 September 2012, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/0BA48B6D0169152644257A830046F855?OpenDocument.

³² Russia in many respects argues that it is the West that is acting as a revisionist power, trying to change the rules of the game rather than Russia that is in fact being presented as trying to uphold them, i.e. it is the West that it the difficult partner not the other way around. See Vladimir Putin, 'Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy', *President of Russia website*, 10 February 2007, available at:

http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/02/10/0138_type82912type82914type82917type84779_118123.shtml, accessed 3 June 2010.

³³ 'Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the International Affairs journal Russian diplomacy and challenges of the 21st century', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 13 September 2012, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/0BA48B6D0169152644257A830046F855?OpenDocument.

³⁴ Kira Latukhina, 'Vladimir Putin predstavil obnovlennuyu Kontseptsiyu vneschneii politiki RF', *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 18 February 2013, available at: <http://www.rg.ru/2013/02/15/politika-site.html>.

As part of its advocacy of a multipolar world, it is the UN that is presented as the lynchpin of international order. Despite increasingly acknowledging the need to democratize the international system, Russia is a conservative actor that is very keen on preserving the status quo, particularly with regards to the UN's position and role on the international stage.³⁵ It is also against what it sees as 'attempts to divide States into "bad" and "good" or "pupils" and "tutors" and to dilute the interstate character of the Council'.³⁶ Instead, its stated goal is the strengthening of the legal basis of international relations, and it advocates the preeminence of international law.³⁷ In this respect, it is against any powers seeking to revise international law and commonly accepted legal norms within the UN Charter, and to weaken the power of the UN and most importantly the UN Security Council.³⁸

Russia's role and behavior in international affairs

The importance of playing the role of a great power remains central in Russia's contemporary security culture, and repeated Russian leaders have set it as their goal to increase its role internationally.³⁹ Russia is therefore very sensitive to any events or circumstances where its position as a great power is either challenged or is seen to be undermined by other international actors. Gaining the respect it feels it deserves is also central to its view of itself and others.⁴⁰ As part of its position as a permanent member on the UNSC, Russia see itself as a central player in any major international security crisis, and it tends to embrace its role and position itself as a mediator in international disputes. Both as a result of historical

³⁵ 'Talking points for the statement by Sergey Lavrov at the high-level segment of the sixteenth session of the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva, 28 February', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 01 March 2011, available at:

http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/d38367d967d504c4c325784600356b0b!OpenDocument

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ 'Executive Order on measures to implement foreign policy,' *President of Russia website*, 7 May 2012, available at:

<http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/acts/3764>.

³⁸ 'Remarks and Replies by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov to Media Questions at Joint Press Conference Following Talks with Gabon's Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophony, Paul Toungui, Moscow, April 5, 2011', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 5 April 2011, available at:

http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/d22631ca576734f0c325786a004f0d37!OpenDocument

³⁹ 'Meeting with Security Council members', *President of Russia website*, 15 February 2013, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/5006>.

⁴⁰ Sergei Lavrov, 'Russia's policy attracts respect', *The Voice of Russia*, 10 February 2013, available at:

http://english.ruvr.ru/2013_02_10/Russia-s-policy-attracts-respect-Lavrov/.

circumstances and due to its ongoing interest in preserving its international role, Russia is currently involved in many of international mediation forums, such as the Six Nations talks on Iran, the flagging Six-Party Talks (SPT) on North Korea, and the Middle East Quartet. Indeed, Russia sought to extend its mediation role further in the Arab-Israeli issue by developing greater links with Hamas, and was the first big player to open negotiations with this group following their electoral victory in 2006, even if as suggested by Malashenko this often comes at the expense of its relations with Israel and the West.⁴¹

Pursing an independent, unique and self-assured role in international affairs is therefore central to Russia's foreign policy.⁴² As part of its suggestion that the world is increasingly becoming multipolar and in line with its concerns about the imposition of foreign models of behaving onto other international actors, Russia presents itself as a defender of normative plurality within the international system. This was a major aspect of its discourse on the War on Terror (Snetkov 2012), and this theme has continued to play a part in its position towards changing global order. By contrast, the West is presented as a revisionist and irresponsible power seeking to impose its own normative perspective on to other actors, often in order to retain its global hegemonic position.⁴³ By contrast, Russia considers itself as a disciplined follower of the established rules of the game, alongside reiterating the importance of abiding by international law when resolving international disputes and crises.⁴⁴ In other words, as a responsible great power,⁴⁵ a position which is often at odds with the way in which its international role is currently portrayed in the literature on intervention.

⁴¹ Jonathan Earle, 'Russia Side-lined in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', *The Moscow Times*, 26 November 2012, available at:

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-sidelined-in-israeli-palestinian-conflict/471927.html#ixzz2M5XOx500>.

⁴² 'Meeting with Russian ambassadors and permanent representatives in international organisations,' *President of Russia website*, 9 July 2012, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/4145>.

⁴³ Vladimir Putin, 'Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy', 10 February 2007, available at: http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/02/10/0138_type82912type82914type82917type84779_118123.shtml, accessed 3 June 2010.

⁴⁴ 'Talking points for the statement by Sergey Lavrov at the high-level segment of the sixteenth session of the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva, 28 February', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 01 March 2011, available at:

http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/d38367d967d504c4c325784600356b0b!OpenDocument

⁴⁵ ⁴⁵ 'Meeting with Security Council members', *President of Russia website*, 15 February 2013, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/5006>.

Despite seeking to retain its status as a great power, Russia no longer sees itself as having the equivalent role that the USSR within international affairs. In most international security crises, it thus seeks to play a role more akin to that of an overseeing authority. Despite seeking to develop its relations with other regions, as demonstrated by its policy towards the SCO and the BRICS, the G7 and the G20,⁴⁶ Russia recognizes that it has neither the capacity nor interest in becoming actively engaged in all international crises. However, as a permanent member of the UNSC, and thus one of the guardians of international security, it continues to demand that its opinion must be sought and its position respected at times of international crises. Indeed, as noted by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, the UN veto is important in order to avoid the mistakes of the League of Nations, the precursor to the UN which he suggests 'collapsed because of ignoring of interests of the largest states'.⁴⁷ In this respect, Russia sees its UN veto as a special privilege that grants it a significant role internationally.⁴⁸ Sensitive to any international security crises where its voice on the UNSC was disregarded, Russia tends to revert back to a much more vocal, obstinate and obdurate position, as seen during the Kosovo crisis in 1998-9,⁴⁹ the Iraq crisis in 2003,⁵⁰ and most recently in the events in Libya in 2011, and over Syria today.

⁴⁶ Kira Latukhina, 'Vladimir Putin predstavil obnoblennuyu Kontseptsiyu vneschneii politiki RF', *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 18 February 2013, available at: <http://www.rg.ru/2013/02/15/politika-site.html>.

⁴⁷ 'Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the International Affairs journal Russian diplomacy and challenges of the 21st century', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 13 September 2012, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/0BA48B6D0169152644257A830046F855?OpenDocument

⁴⁸ 'Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.Lavrov for the documentary film on Syria by Hubert Seipel for the German channel ARD, on the air on February 13,' *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/87653ACE6A5BEE9144257B13004058C4?OpenDocument.

⁴⁹ P.J. Dobriansky, 'Russian foreign policy: promise or peril?' *The Washington Quarterly* 23(1) (2000):135.

⁵⁰ A. Bessmertnykh, 'The Iraq War and Its Implications', *International Affairs* 4 (49) (23):28-29; 'Interview with the Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Safonov on the issue of the fight against international terrorism, Press Service, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 21 January 2004, available at: <http://www.mid.ru/nsrkonfl.nsf/ac72b85191b0db0643256adc002905c1/30e74d191e2478f9c3256e76004781a7?OpenDocument>, accessed 26 January 2008.

Russia's position towards the norm of the responsibility to protect and the principle of humanitarian interventions

Russia is of course a signatory to the Convention on the Responsibility to Protect. However, as noted earlier, even at its signing in 2005, it had already expressed its reservations about the weakening of the principle of the state sovereignty in international affairs. As a result, it often comes out in favor of the UNSC Charter, which enshrines the principle of sovereignty, international law and non-interference in the internal affairs of states, as a reassurance that the status quo and the power of the UNSC remain.⁵¹ For Russia, humanitarian intervention should therefore only ever be sanctioned through the UNSC.⁵² Nonetheless, as frequently stated in Russia's foreign policy discourse, as a law-abiding power, it is interested in the maintenance of international law. Its current role in most major humanitarian crises is therefore not so much as a disruptive force and more that of a disinterested partner.

Indeed, the significance of R2P for Russia is not so much as a 'common' norm, but as an institutionalized legal principle. Whilst Russia does not usually initiate such proposals, nor does it usually veto them as it sees itself as a responsible international power that uses its veto wisely.⁵³ In line with its security culture and role in international affairs, it does not seek to get directly involved in every humanitarian crisis, and does not tend to deploy its troops on the ground as demonstrated in the case of Darfur, Ivory Coast or the recent events in the Middle East.⁵⁴

⁵¹ 'Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the International Affairs journal Russian diplomacy and challenges of the 21st century', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 13 September 2012, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/0BA48B6D0169152644257A830046F855?OpenDocument.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ 'Statement by Dmitry Medvedev on the situation in Libya,' *President of Russia website*, 21 March 2011, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/1933>.

From the Russian perspective, most of frictions arising over R2P at times of humanitarian crises, stem not so much as a result of the form of this norm, as much as because of the way in which this norm is operationalized in practice, particularly by the West. Events such as Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria have come to be seen in Russia as a series of precedents, by which Western powers have instrumentalized the principle of humanitarian intervention to further their own agenda internationally.⁵⁵ Therefore, in Russian foreign policy discourse, it is the West that plays the role of a revisionist and irresponsible power that disregards the due international process, i.e. by by-passing the authority of the UN. This was particular the case during the Libya crisis when the Russian authorities regarded the West's actions in Libya as going beyond the narrow mandate set out in the UNSC Resolution 1973. Indeed, whilst Russia supported UNSC Resolution 1970 in February 2011,⁵⁶ it decided to abstain on Resolution 1973 over the establishment of the no-fly zone over Libya. In the words of the Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov in April 2011, this was because the sponsors of the resolution were unwilling to 'write down the rules determining the limits of the use of force'.⁵⁷ Following the events in Spring 2011, the Russian authorities also refused to accept NATO's version of events in Libya and the suggestion that the operation was 'clean and bloodless', and demanded that NATO must be held to account for its actions in Libya, its violation of international law, and widespread civilian deaths resulting from its airstrikes.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ 'The Interview of Special Representative of the Russian President for the Middle East, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia M. L. Bogdanov to "VIP-Premier" Journal, 23 May 2012', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 23 May 2012, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/0C014C5FE5DD2BB344257A150038991B?OpenDocument

⁵⁶ The UNSC Resolution 1970 condemned violence of the Gaddafi regime against its own population and imposed sanctions

⁵⁷ 'Remarks and Replies by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov to Media Questions at Joint Press Conference Following Talks with Gabon's Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophony, Paul Toungui, Moscow, April 5, 2011', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 5 April 2011, available at:

http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcb3/d22631ca576734f0c325786a004f0d37!OpenDocument

⁵⁸ 'Russian MFA Press and Information Department Comments Regarding Russia's Proposal for Investigation of Civilian Deaths during NATO Operation in Libya', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 23 December 2012, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcb3/e0d1533ee561dc694425797200493ee8!OpenDocument.

Another lesson from the Libya crisis for Russia was that in the future it must use its power of the veto,⁵⁹ in order to prevent Western powers from disregarding international laws and norms, including in the case of Syria.⁶⁰ In both cases its use of the veto was therefore presented as Russia acting responsibly to uphold international law, and to prevent the ‘irresponsible’ West from misusing this norm to further their own ends.⁶¹ A concern shared by China as will be explained below.

In line with its security culture, Russia remains deeply suspicious of any calls for direct interference into the affairs of sovereign states, and is against any proposal that appears to encourage regime change.⁶² This was at the heart of its criticism of the events surrounding the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999, American actions in Iraq after 2003, and more recently in relation to Libya and Syria.⁶³ However, its critique of forced regime changes in the international sphere stems not simply from its attempts to preserve state sovereignty as the guiding principle of international affairs, or the notion that local rather than foreign actors should decide on the fate and future of sovereign states,⁶⁴ but also from its fear of statelessness. As noted by Foreign Minister Lavrov with regard to the situation in Syria:

Russia probably knows the true cost of revolutions better than most other countries. We are fully aware that revolutionary changes are always accompanied by social and economic setbacks as well as by loss of human life and suffering. This is exactly why

⁵⁹ Andrei Baklanov, ‘Syrian opposition leaders in Moscow: growing role of Russian diplomacy.’ Valdai Club, 27 June 2011, available at: http://en.rian.ru/valdai_op/20110627/164862755.html.

⁶⁰ ⁶⁰ ‘Meeting with Russian ambassadors and permanent representatives in international organisations,’ *President of Russia website*, 9 July 2012, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/4145>.

⁶¹ Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the International Affairs journal Russian diplomacy and challenges of the 21st century’, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 13 September 2012, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/0BA48B6D0169152644257A830046F855?OpenDocument.

⁶² Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.Lavrov for the documentary film on Syria by Hubert Seipel for the German channel ARD, on the air on February 13’, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/87653ACE6A5BEE9144257B13004058C4?OpenDocument.

⁶³ Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the International Affairs journal Russian diplomacy and challenges of the 21st century’, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 13 September 2012, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/0BA48B6D0169152644257A830046F855?OpenDocument.

⁶⁴ Interview of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs S. V. Lavrov to Rossiyskaya Gazeta published on 2 March 2012,’ *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 3 March 2012, available at: http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/7226E10571F90534442579C000439989?OpenDocument.

we support an evolutionary and peaceful way of enacting long-awaited changes in the Middle East and North Africa.⁶⁵

Therefore, Russia advocates a diplomatic route, rather than the use of force as the best way for resolving such crises.⁶⁶ This was its position in the case of Darfur (Sudan),⁶⁷ Myanmar,⁶⁸ Côte d'Ivoire,⁶⁹ and most recently in Libya and Syria. In the latter two cases, Russia maintained its position that both the Libyans and the Syrians should be able to decide on their own future themselves, at the negotiation table with all the parties to this conflict involved and included. It therefore refused to sever its relations either with the Muammar Gaddafi or the Bashar Al-Assad regimes, and stood against any proposal that set regime change as a pre-condition to negotiations. Indeed, in the case of Syria, Russia publically stated that they did not care about the survival or future of the Assad regime, acknowledging that change was needed, but continued to refuse to support any proposal that advocated regime change from outside forces.⁷⁰ By contrast, the Russian side was supportive of the Geneva Communiqué in July 2012 on Syria that set out the principle of a transitional authority in Syria, but did not outright call for a regime change. In turn, Russia has criticized the West for being too hasty in advocating policies which would amount to regime change,⁷¹ because it both undermines

⁶⁵ Article of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov "On the Right Side of History" published in the internet edition "The Huffington Post," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 15 June, 2012, available at:

http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/D54B1EB2726D75F544257A1E003935A8?OpenDocument

⁶⁶ 'Russia will never involve itself in 'another Afghanistan,' *Russia Today*, 11 February 2013, available at: <http://rt.com/politics/russia-afghanistan-us-lavrov-898/>.

⁶⁷ Transcript of Address by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at 36th Session of OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers, Damascus, May 23, 2009', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 23 May 2009, available at:

http://www.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/991F509BB79994F7C32575C1002B9F45?OpenDocument

⁶⁸ 'Russian MFA Information and Press Department Commentary Regarding Discussion in UN Security Council of American Draft Resolution on Myanmar,' *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 13 January 2007, available at:

http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/C26F65BC9595E48AC325726D002BE5C2?OpenDocument

⁶⁹ Alexei Anishchuk, 'Russia criticizes U.N. force role in Ivory Coast,' *Reuter*, 14 April 2011, available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/14/us-russia-ivorycoast-idUSTRE73D20920110414>

⁷⁰ 'News conference of Vladimir Putin', *President of Russia website*, 20 December 2012, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/4779>

⁷¹ 'Sergey Lavrov speech at the 20th Jubilee Meeting of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, December 1, 2012,' *Russia in Global Affairs*, available at: <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Russia-in-the-21st-Century-World-of-Power-15809>

international law, and the 2005 Convention on the Responsibility to Protect, and therefore vetoed the proposed resolution on Syria in July 2012.⁷²

Indeed, in line with its stated goal of raising its international role, in some high-profile crises, Russia is even willing to act as a mediator for the warring parties. This was particularly so regarding the crises in Syria and Libya, and in both cases it engaged in shuttle diplomacy between the regime and its opponents. Indeed, Russia's role as a mediator was publically acknowledged by the Russian President's special envoy to Africa Mikhail Margelov in June 2011.

Some are looking to Benghazi, some are looking to Tripoli. Russia sees its task as building a bridge between these two banks on which Libyan society now stands... "We are ready, if it's possible, to act as middlemen in establishing an internal Libyan political dialogue."⁷³

As argued by Katz, Russia's current policy in Syria might in fact undermine its previous efforts to boost its role in the Middle East (Katz 2012), yet the Russian side continued to argue that it was acting responsibly by engaging in this mediator role.

Despite adopting this very public role as a mediator for the side of the regime, the Russians were also very keen to emphasize that most of the mediation efforts should be done either by the UN or regional actors. Indeed, in the Libya crisis Russia argued that it was the African Union, rather than Russia that should be carrying out most of the mediation efforts.⁷⁴ In this

⁷² 'Briefing of the Official Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia A.K. Lukashevich, July, 20th, 2012,' *Ministry of Foreign Affairs website*, 20 July 2012, available at:

http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/Brp_4.nsf/arh/690423448566620444257A44002AEA68?OpenDocument

⁷³ 'Russian envoy visits Benghazi for Libya mediation', Reuters, 7 June 2011, available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/07/us-libya-russia-idUSTRE7564E620110607>.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

respect, Russia appears to have come to accept the importance of the role that regional actors can and should play in such crises as enshrined within the 2005 Convention of the Responsibility to Protect. However, a major source of friction within the UNSC is over who decides which regional actors have the legitimacy to speak for the region. Thus, in the Libya crisis Russia backed the African Union proposals, against those of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League that were in turn supported by the Western powers. However, in Syria, Russia backed the Arab League initiative that was more in line with its version of how such humanitarian crises should be resolved. Once again, frictions within the international community were as much about the roles that actors play in such security crises, as about the principle of R2P itself.

Thus, not only does Russia not reject outright the norm of R2P at times of major international humanitarian crises, it has in fact began to utilize it in its own foreign policy discourse in relation to events closer to home. This was most telling during the 2008 Russia-Georgia war. Russia suggested that it intervened into Georgia in order to prevent mass killing in South Ossetia.⁷⁵ As noted by Petro, this demonstrates that Russia wanted to remain within the international legal framework,⁷⁶ and has to some extent also embraced this norm as one of the mechanisms for regulating events in the international system. Since one of the main concerns within the existent literature on R2P is over whether or not rising powers will choose to support the current established normative order, Russia's recourse to this norm within its own foreign policy answers this dilemma in the affirmative. The Russia-Georgia war in 2008 does however also demonstrate that the West is no longer the sole norm entrepreneur with regard to

⁷⁵ Bruno Coppieters, 'Conflict resolution after the 2008 Georgia-Russia War: the Taiwan and Kosovo models as tools for mobilization and comparison', *Nationalities Papers* 40(5) (2012):691.

⁷⁶ Nicolai N. Petro, 'The legal case for Russian intervention in Georgia,' *Fordham International Law Journal* 32 *Fordham Int'l L.J.*, (2008-2009):1524-25.

R2P, nor does it retain the sole prerogative to use it, or in the case of Russia's justifications for its actions in Georgia perhaps even to abuse this global norm.⁷⁷

Aside from the events in Georgia in 2008, judging by its recent proposals, Russia is potentially moving towards a greater acknowledgement of R2P to protect even within its own region. Russia is currently seeking to build up within its own regional sphere, regional mechanisms and instruments that will give it the capacity for future intervention in regional security crises, as demonstrated by the recent developments both in the SCO and the CSTO. Critically, whilst both of these regional instruments are built around the principle of maintaining sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs,⁷⁸ the rapid reaction force established as part of the CSTO framework will enable Russia together with its allies to have some instruments for responding to such security crises in the future. At this stage, and despite the 2008 Georgia war, Russia remains reluctant to operationalize this norm within its own region, as demonstrated by its reluctance to become engaged on the ground in the case of the Osh riots in Kyrgyzstan in 2010.⁷⁹ This may change in the future. Furthermore, the Russian authorities are increasingly arguing that it needs to bolster its peacekeeping capacities, and to become more engaged in the UN peacekeeping system in the future. To some degree Russia is therefore not only acknowledging R2P, even if it remains a reluctant to actively become engaged in such crises, it is in fact moving towards building up its capacities for engaging in such issues in the future.

⁷⁷ For more detailed discussion of the way in which Russia's used the principle of the responsibility to protect to cover up its actions in Georgia in 2008 see Roy Allison, 'Russia resurgent? Moscow's campaign to 'coerce Georgia to peace,' *International Affairs* 84(6) (2008): 1145-1171, and Gareth Evans, 'Russia, Georgia and the responsibility to protect,' *Amsterdam Law Forum*, 1(2) (2009): 25-28.

⁷⁸ As noted by Putin during the December 2012 CSTO meeting in Moscow 'The CSTO demonstrates a genuinely collective approach to resolving objectives in countering current threats and challenges. It understands the close interdependence of the global processes, the inviolability of the regulations of international law and the inadmissibility of interference into the domestic affairs of sovereign states. Ignoring these principles, attempting to impose one's own approaches on other nations, can lead to very serious consequences. The dramatic developments in the Middle East and North Africa are the most evident proofs to that.' <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/4775>

⁷⁹ In the case of the Osh riots in Kyrgyzstan in 2011, the Kyrgyz authorities made a public plea to Russia to send in troops to end the crisis, but the Russian authorities refused. For more details on this crisis and Russia's response see Anna Matveeva, 'Violence in Kyrgyzstan, Vacuum in the Region The case for Russia-EU joint crisis management,' *LSE Civil Society & Human Security Research Unit Working Paper*, December 2011, available at: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/CSHS/pdfs/workingPapers/violenceInKyrgystan.pdf>

The cautious partner: China's Security Culture, global role and the principle of humanitarian intervention

China's security culture

One of the most important components of the current reform era in China can be found in the area of strategic doctrine and policy. Although China's grand strategy has been the subject of doctrinal reform in the past, most notably after the death of Mao Zedong, the current period of policy restructuring, as a result of the change in government in Beijing from Hu Jintao to Xi Jinping, has presented new challenges to a state and government, which has been struggling to bring its strategic ideas into a new era. Much of this evolving policy thinking on the part of China stems from the fact that conflict in the international system is being defined less and less by state-to-state conflict and more by civil war, non-traditional security issues, and especially since the late 1990s, the threat of international terrorism

It was during this time that the Chinese government sought to counter this strategic trend by reinforcing its traditional ideas of state sovereignty, which had been crafted during the Maoist era. Shortly after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, Beijing sought to put forward a strategic doctrine, which stood against great power imperialism and stressed the need for developing states, especially those in Asia, to respect each other's territorial integrity, avoid interference in other states' sovereign affairs, and solve disputes through dialogue rather than force.⁸⁰ These ideas were given new life in the 1990s out of concerns about US-led strategic activism, starting with the first Gulf War in 1991 and subsequently in interventions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Haiti and Somalia.

⁸⁰ Liselotte Odgaard, *China and Co-existence: Beijing's National Security Strategy for the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, 2012), 51-2.

The most concrete evidence of these new policy shifts had been Beijing's evolving post-Cold War policy of a 'new security concept' (NSC) (*xin anquan guandian*, 新安全观点), an idea which, while still in its infancy, had nevertheless taken on increasing levels of importance in Chinese foreign and strategic policies first developed under Chinese President Jiang Zemin in the 1990s. The NSC, which had its origins in previous initiatives by the Jiang government to modernize both its military and its strategic policies, reflected a far more multifaceted approach to security and cooperation, as evidenced by Beijing's attempts to develop bilateral strategic partnerships, as well as interacting in a more positive fashion with multilateral institutions, especially on the regional, Asia-Pacific level. As well, the NSC had been designed as a primary tool for Beijing to downplay the coercive nature of its rising power in Asia and beyond while emphasizing the country's increasing importance as a strategic partner.⁸¹

The NSC had been heavily influenced by the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and stresses equality and non-discrimination, mutual trust and benefits and the non-interference in states' sovereign affairs.⁸² The Five Principles had their origins in regional talks between China, Myanmar (Burma) and India in the 1950s as means were sought to promote peaceful interaction between states with different social systems in ways which discouraged alliance or bloc mind-sets, which the states agreed often led to mistrust and conflict. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai was credited with their development into Chinese foreign policy doctrine in 1954. The Five Principles, mutual respect for sovereignty and territory, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence, were also praised by China for their flexibility and resiliency, since they were adaptable to both

⁸¹ David Lampton, 'China's Rise in Asia Need Not Be at America's Expense,' *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics*, ed. David Shambaugh (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005), 314.

⁸² 'Some Thoughts on Establishing a New Regional Security Order,' Statement by Ambassador Sha Zukang at the East-West Center's Senior Policy Seminar, 7 August 2000, Honolulu. Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the People's Republic of China, 2000, <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/5180.html>>, (Accessed November 12th, 2001).

cold war and post-cold war strategic interactions.⁸³ On the international level, parts of the NSC were derived from more recent policies, including then-Foreign Minister Qian Qichen's overview of China's 'New International Political Order' in the early 1990s, as well as Beijing's policies of developing 'strategic partnerships' with select states, including Russia, the United States, the EU and Pakistan during that decade.⁸⁴

However, what distinguished this new doctrine was that unlike previous strategic ideologies, which aligned China against perceived enemy forces, especially imperialism and later hegemonism, the NSC does not identify a third party as an adversary, but rather nods to the Deng Xiaoping-era idea of 'do not seek an enemy' (*bu xunzhao di* 不寻找敌),⁸⁵ and to avoid becoming entangled in great power security concerns. Indeed, during the first Gulf War, which ended with the restoration of the sovereignty of Kuwait after its attempted annexation by Iraq, China reacted to American views of a new world order (*shijie zhixu* 世界秩序) with some alarm, and interpreted this idea as an attempt by Washington to consolidate a hegemonic position on the international level. Beijing policymakers instead referred to the more statist idea of an 'international order' (*guoji zhixu* 国际秩序), which implied respect of sovereignty.

China has also advocated increasing political, economic and technological cooperation as a further means of strengthening ties between states, rather than using only military power as a basis for linkages.⁸⁶ Beijing also began to argue that the alliance-based forms of cooperation, which were favored by Western powers during the cold war, were being inappropriately

⁸³ Joseph W.S. Cheng and Zhang Wankun, 'Patterns and Dynamics of China's International Strategic Behavior,' *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behavior*, ed. Suisheng Zhao (Armonk, NY and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 185; Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 29.

⁸⁴ David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems and Prospects* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002), 292; Joseph Y.S. Cheng and Zhang Wankun, 'Patterns and Dynamics of China's International Strategic Behaviour,' *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behavior*, ed. Suisheng Zhao (Armonk, NY and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 179-206.

⁸⁵ Guoli Liu, 'Introduction,' *Chinese Foreign Policy in Transition* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Guyter, 2004), 17.

⁸⁶ H. Lyman Miller and Liu Xiaohong, 'The Foreign Policy Outlook of China's 'Third Generation' Elite,' *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, ed. David M. Lampton (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 144.

carried over into the post-cold war international system, as for example in the case of the NATO alliance. For example, the 1999 NATO operations in Kosovo did much to fan both nationalism and anti-Americanism in China due to perceived disdain in Washington towards international norms and the accidental destruction of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade by NATO airstrikes in May of that year.⁸⁷ The development of the R2P ideas in the late 1990s was also not well-received by policymakers in Beijing, who feared that such ideas amounted to a codification of great power rights to intervene under the guise of humanitarian intervention.

The idea of alternatives to the formalized alliance system was elaborated upon further within China's 2000 and 2002 National Defense White Papers, which stressed that 'multilateral security dialogue and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region should be oriented towards and characterized by mutual respect instead of the strong bullying the weak, cooperation instead of confrontation, and seeking consensus instead of imposing one's will on others.'⁸⁸ When Beijing released its revised 2008 Defense White Paper, the focus was on both the fact that China's overall security institution was improving and that various forms of strategic cooperation were bearing fruit, the primary concerns of separatist forces both in Taiwan and Tibet, as well as the fact that terrorism and economic security were still prevalent. These concerns were echoed in the 2010 White Paper on Defense, which was only released in March 2011. The unrest which took place in Tibet in 2008 and Xinjiang a year later augmented Chinese concerns about separatism and potential intervention by foreign actors.⁸⁹ This form of security thinking was judged by the Chinese government under Hu Jintao to be more compatible with the country's strategic interests during the transitional period away from cold war bipolarity.

⁸⁷ Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics and Diplomacy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2004), 13-29.

⁸⁸ *China's National Defence in 2000*, (Beijing: Information Office of the People's Republic of China, October 2000), 48.

⁸⁹ *China's National Defence in 2008*, <http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2009-01/20/content_1210227_3.htm>; 'China's National Defence in 2010', *Xinhua*, 31 March, 2011 <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-03/31/c_13806851_4.htm>.

In this way, the NSC could therefore be considered as a means of creating greater linkages between maintaining a stable periphery and ensuring greater security on the international level. While the Concept does not stand against R2P *per se*, it does seek to create a firewall against abuses of that idea. In other words, the NSC approached international security as very much similar to that of an onion, with many layers making up the whole. This idea was very much in keeping with cooperative security theory and as a result of China's growing confidence in its diplomatic skills, as evidenced by what was initially termed China's 'new flexibility and sophistication' in its approaches to bilateralism, multilateralism and security relations.⁹⁰

The Chinese policies of the NSC and the broader and more nebulous 'peaceful rise' (*heping jueqi* 和平崛起) concept, or the less politically-sensitive 'peaceful development' (*heping fazhan* 和平发展) doctrine under President Hu Jintao,⁹¹ are increasingly giving way to a heightened pragmatism. In turn, this has also led to the question of whether China's security thinking is moving towards greater unilateralism and willingness to challenge the status quo. Indeed, Beijing now has the confidence to link disparate forms of security together as it formulates its policies in Asia and beyond.

China's role and behavior in international affairs

Despite its remarkable rise on several fronts, including political, diplomatic, economic and strategic,⁹² it is unlikely that China's strategic behavior will be changing towards overt empire-building or attempts to challenge Western-dominated organizations and norms,

⁹⁰ Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, 'China's New Diplomacy,' *Foreign Affairs* 82(6) (November/December 2003): 24.

⁹¹ See Bonnie S Glaser and Evan S Medeiros, 'The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of "Peaceful Rise",' *China Quarterly* 190 (June 2007): 291-310.

⁹² Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall, 'Power in International Politics,' *International Organisation* 59(1) (January 2005): 52-5.

primarily because much of the international system has served Beijing well as it emerged from the isolation of the late-Maoist period and began to engage the international system on several fronts in the 1980s. Nonetheless, despite China's rise to great power status by the turn of the century, there remains a lingering sensitivity in Chinese policy circles towards 'peaceful evolution' (*heping jinhua* 和平演化), namely the erosion of the communist government in China not through direct force, but rather through tacit political, economic and cultural means.⁹³ These concerns were heightened after the fall of the USSR, with China becoming the largest 'communist' state still standing. Perceptions that with the Soviet Union gone, China would be the next target of Western interference dominated much thinking in 1990s.

However, Beijing also remains very anxious to avoid any recurrence of diplomatic seclusion, which it experienced during the height of the Cold War, a situation which gave the country a mind-set of being 'isolated and surrounded',⁹⁴ and with which it was threatened again after the Tiananmen Incident in June 1989. Institutional engagement and a more comprehensive approach to security have addressed these concerns and have created much stronger ties between Chinese policy and international security issues. Interestingly enough, although there was much talk in the 1990s about embedding China within various international networks, in order to prevent the country from developing into a giant revisionist power, the current embedding process is having an opposite effect. As China develops a more distinct strategic policy through institutional engagement, whatever sovereign China is losing through institutional cooperation is being offset by the fact that international security is slowly but surely being increasingly tied to Chinese interests.

⁹³ Russell Ong, *China's Security Interests in the 21st Century* (London and New York: Routledge 2007), 22.

⁹⁴ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London, Sydney and Wellington: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 447.

Beijing's primary strategic concern on the regional level has been that of containment (*ezhi shengce* 遏制政策), or to use the newer diplomatic term 'strategic encirclement' (*zhanlue baowei* 战略包围), by the United States and its allies.⁹⁵ Beijing had noted, using the USSR as an example, that bellicose or aggressive foreign policies can often trigger a counter-balancing coalition, a situation Beijing could ill-afford during a time of delicate domestic reforms. Under Hu Jintao, with China's strategic and economic interests spread out over a much wider area, including other parts of Asia as well as increasingly in many other parts of the world, concerns about 'containment' are not limited to the standard definition of having one's own territory ringed by adversarial elements, but rather Beijing is also increasingly wary of having its overseas commitments challenged by the West under the guise of human rights promotion and interference in civil conflicts. Thus, compared with Russia, economic containment concerns factor much more in China's thinking about humanitarian intervention.

There is also the realization within the Chinese government that many security issues which it is currently facing have become increasingly intertwined, and thus far too complex to address in a unilateral fashion. The most visible of these new security challenges is terrorism. Equally various aspects of economic security, energy, and trade have also become too complicated for Beijing to handle alone. As China continues to expand its security interests beyond its periphery, there are more opportunities but also a larger number of risks. Community-building and the growing number of bilateral and multilateral ties in the region have become increasingly important for Beijing to ensure the safety of its interests both within and outside of Chinese borders. However, these initiatives will need to be supplemented with a more robust policy towards humanitarian intervention, which better reflects China as a great power with interests which are rapidly spreading far beyond the Pacific Rim.

⁹⁵ See John W. Garver and Fei-ling Wang, 'China's Anti-Encirclement Struggle,' *Asian Security* 6(3) (2010): 238-61.

China's position towards the norm of the responsibility to protect and the principle of humanitarian interventions

As a result of its increasing global role the prospect of a more independent Chinese stance on humanitarian intervention has slowly begun to gain currency. In this case, Beijing is being increasingly viewed as stepping onto center stage and obtaining enough power to not only be the dominant actor in the international system, but also to set the rules of the creation and maintenance of international norms. Nonetheless, Chinese views on intervention in the name of human rights are still very much subject to internal debates, especially as the new government of Xi Jinping begins to construct its foreign policy platforms in 2013. Humanitarian intervention, especially that which results in forced regime change, continues to be seen by some policymakers in China, as in Russia, as a Trojan Horse (*mumaji* 木马计) policy conducted by great powers (i.e. the West) to improve their own power at the expense of adversaries and not for altruistic purposes.

Although Beijing's stance on intervention has softened considerably since the end of the 1990s,⁹⁶ as evidenced by China's positive response to the United Nations' operations in East Timor (now Timor-Leste) in 1999,⁹⁷ and greater enthusiasm for other UN peacekeeping initiatives in other parts of the world, the country still takes a very cautious approach to interference in domestic affairs of other states. Beijing has repeatedly indicated that certain conditions are required, such as specific UN approval, for 'proper' intervention to take place. Thus, at the beginning of the Iraq conflict, Beijing did not openly oppose US actions, but was

⁹⁶ Indeed during the Gulf War, although Beijing agreed to abstain rather than issue a veto during the UNSC vote which ultimately authorised Operation Desert Storm and military intervention against Iraq, its abstention was out of concern that the UN should not be used as a blunt instrument to interfere in states' sovereignty affairs via the threat of force. China's response to this international trend, as illustrated in a 1990 Beijing Review article was that humanitarian intervention had the worrisome potential of eroding international law and giving tacit support to expansionist great power policies involving the imposition of their views on weaker states. The Five Principles could therefore be seen as an attempted legal norm striving to create a de facto firewall against such perceived abuses. For more detail see ⁹⁶ Yi Ding, 'Upholding the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,' *Beijing Review*, (February 26th-March 4th, 1990): 13-6.

⁹⁷ Bates Gill and James Reilly, 'Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping: The View from Beijing,' *Survival* 42(3) (Autumn 2000): 41-59; Marc Lanteigne, 'A Change in Perspective: China's Engagement in the East Timor UN Peacekeeping Operations,' *China's Evolving Approach to Peacekeeping*, ed. Marc Lanteigne and Miwa Hirono (New York and London: Routledge 2012), 71-85.

dismayed at both the lack of participation of the UN and the nature of the American-led ‘coalition of the willing’, which served to further bypass, in China’s view, the primacy of international law when addressing global threats.⁹⁸

One major question yet to be answered is whether the current war on terrorism will continue to erode Beijing’s previously-rigid stance towards the observance of state sovereignty. As a result of China’s own terrorism challenges, the differentiation between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ intervention began to grow more distinct, with the former defined by multilateral operations within the UN Security Council’s purview, the latter being unilateral, great power-led initiatives.

Furthermore, since 2008, as China has made further adjustments in its policies as it has been more widely accepted as a great power both on a regional level and increasingly on a global level, more recent examples of intervention of humanitarian grounds has prompted further reconsideration of whether the country should or should not support such operations, starting with the Russian military operations against Georgia that year. Unlike for Russia, which followed the principle that it was a ‘local’ issue, for China, Russia’s actions in August 2008 took it by surprise. In response, the Chinese government chose not to formally endorse Russian actions despite a request from Moscow to sign a communiqué supportive of the operations. China’s unhappiness at the conflict erupting during the long-planned Beijing Olympics produced a restrained rebuke from the Chinese government stating that the spirit of the ‘Olympic truce’ had been broken, and that the incident had reminded the world about the delicate balance between international politics and national interests.

⁹⁸ Michael J. Green, ‘The Iraq War and Asia: Assessing the Legacy,’ *Washington Quarterly* 31(2) (Spring 2008): 188-91.

In this particular case, China refused to set a precedent which would negatively affect their own national interests. It was felt that Beijing could not on the one hand decry ‘splittist’ (分裂主义 *fenlie zhuyi*) or secessionist forces seeking to promote illegal secessionist movements, (such as in the case of Taiwan or Tibet), while at the same time condoning Russia’s actions.⁹⁹

However, the incident also demonstrated the asymmetrical nature of the Sino-Russian relationship, as well as their sometimes differing views on how intervention and R2P should be interpreted. As one author noted, China can ill-afford to allow its relations with Moscow to adversely affect its Western partnerships, and at the same time, ‘China as a partner confers a degree of respectability on Russian foreign policy, whereas the reverse is not the case’.¹⁰⁰ The question of what China’s direct strategic interests were in the Russia-Georgia conflict is also a relevant question, since as an editorial in the *Hong Kong Economic Journal* noted shortly after the conflict, Beijing did not have a very strong stake in the war given that the nature of the conflict was a geopolitical dispute between Russia and the West, rather than a larger ideological struggle despite Chinese misgiving about Western strategic advances as a result of the color revolutions.¹⁰¹

The 2011 ‘Arab Spring’ protests across the Middle East and North Africa also created a distinct challenge for the Chinese government. As with the color revolutions in the former Soviet Union, the Hu government was anxious to avoid a demonstration effect of sympathetic protests in China.¹⁰² However, after having seen the United States attempt to consolidate its position in Iraq during the conflict years there, Beijing was sensitive to any other Western-led

⁹⁹ Niklas Swanström, ‘Georgia: The Split that Split the SCO,’ *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 3 September 2008 <<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4930>> ; Susan Turner, ‘Russia, China and a Multipolar World Order: The Danger in the Undefined,’ *Asian Perspective* 33(1) (2009): 181-2.

¹⁰⁰ Bobo Lo, *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing and the New Geopolitics* (Washington DC: Brookings, 2008), 46.

¹⁰¹ ‘The West Launches All-Out Counteroffensive To Retrieve Lost Ground; Not Easy for China To Clearly State Its Stand,’ *Hong Kong Economic Journal (Hsin Pao)*, 31 August 2008.

¹⁰² John James Kennedy, ‘What is the Colour of a Non-Revolution? Why the Jasmine Revolution and Arab Spring Did Not Spread to China,’ *Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 13(1) (Winter 2012): 63-74.

initiatives to instigate regime change in the Middle East under the guise of humanitarian intervention.

While the changes in government in Tunisia and Egypt took place without external military pressure, the situation was far different for Libya when the Gaddafi regime sought to forcibly push back against people's protests, which by 2011 had turned into a full-scale rebellion. Similarly to Russia, China warily abstained rather than veto the UNSC Resolution 1973 in March 2011, allowing it to pass even though a Chinese spokesperson afterward noted that his government 'had serious difficulty with parts of the resolution' largely due to concerns of precedent.¹⁰³ Beijing however was supportive of the international sanctions placed on the Gaddafi regime during the previous month, which underscored Chinese opposition to the escalating violence in Libya.

During early 2011, Beijing also took the extraordinary step of diverting one of its naval vessels, the frigate *Xuzhou* (徐州), which had been serving with the multinational counter-piracy coalition off the coast of Somalia, to provide cover for the evacuation of over 35,000 Chinese nationals living and working in Libya.¹⁰⁴ This was a clear break from previous resistance from China within the UNSC to interference in what Beijing viewed as strictly internal affairs, as evidenced by China's controversial January 2007 use of the veto against a Security Council resolution, which would have punished the military junta in Myanmar for systematic human rights abuses. Russia had vetoed that resolution as well, marking the first use of the Sino-Russian 'double veto' (*shuangchong foujue* 双重否决) since 1972, Moscow

¹⁰³ Alex J. Bellamy, 'Libya and the Responsibility to Protect: The Exception and the Norm,' *Ethics & International Affairs*, 25(3) (2011): 267.

¹⁰⁴ Marc Lanteigne, 'Fire over Water: China's Strategic Engagement of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden Crisis,' *Pacific Review* 26(2) (2013): 12-3; Yan Xuetong, 'How Assertive Should a Great Power Be?' *The New York Times*, 31 March 2011.

siding with China in the view that the Security Council was not the best forum for addressing internal human rights issues.¹⁰⁵

However, shortly after the Gaddafi regime was toppled, Beijing found itself at odds with the successor National Transition Council in Libya over Beijing's longstanding support for the previous regime, and China was also sensitive to attempts by the West to limit new Chinese financial initiatives in post-war Libya.¹⁰⁶ As well, China remained unhappy with what it perceived was the use of UNSC to essentially force a regime change in Libya by proxy, and these misgivings would surface when the United Nations sought to address the worsening security situation in Syria, when protests against the regime of Bashar Al-Assad descended into civil war between Assad loyalists and the Free Syrian Army (FSA). In turn, China alongside Russia used their veto three times to quash resolutions calling for punitive measures against the Assad government for violence against the Syrian people. The insistence by both governments that diplomacy was the best solution to the crisis at the same time as the Assad regime was openly suppressing dissent through violence rankled Western policymakers who were under increasing pressure to intervene.

The third such veto, in July 2012, brought condemnation from the UK and United States and halted the possibility of the UN imposing direct sanctions on the Assad regime.¹⁰⁷ Similarly to Moscow, Beijing viewed the resolution as 'problematic' and one-sided in favor of the rebel forces. In explaining its decision, there was the stressing that China's objections were procedural and not political, that the resolution opened the door to too much outside interference in the conflict, and were not based on any direct interests Beijing had in the

¹⁰⁵ 'China, Russia Veto Myanmar Resolution,' *China Daily*, 13 January 2007.

¹⁰⁶ 'China Defends Handling of Libya's Civil War,' *Dow Jones Newswires*, 21 October 2011; 'Xinhua Commentary Slams Attempts to Exclude China from Libya's Reconstruction,' *Xinhua / BBC Monitoring*, 9 September 2011.

¹⁰⁷ Rick Goldstone, 'Friction at the U.N. as Russia and China Veto Another Resolution on Syria Sanctions,' *New York Times*, 19 July 2012.

outcome of the dispute.¹⁰⁸ As the violence wore on, however, China attempted to walk more of a middle diplomatic road maintaining that any solution to the Syrian conflict had to come from within the country, but also advocating a ceasefire and calling upon the Syrian government to accept peace talks and a possible negotiated leadership transition.¹⁰⁹

The fighting in Syria, which entered its second year at the start of 2013, has placed strains both on China's international image, as well as within the Middle East itself. Akin to Russia, Beijing has also sought to turn this situation to its benefit, however, by painting its policies as conservative and constructive in contrast to the activist stances taken by the West. A December 2012 article in the *China Daily* suggested that China's shuttle diplomacy between the Syrian government and opposition actors as well as neighboring states was bearing fruit, and that Beijing was successfully maneuvering between its traditional non-interference stance and acting as a power for peace.¹¹⁰ However, unless diplomacy in any form contributes to an end to the violence in Syria, it became more difficult for Beijing to shake off the impression that it is a spoiler, not a helper, in that conflict.

China's attempts to juggle both its suspicions of R2P policies and its expanding economic diplomacy in the developing world were also challenged by events in West Africa in early 2013. The decision by France to commit its military forces to *Opération Serval* in Mali in January of that year as a response to attempts by Islamic extremists to annex northern Malian territory proved to be another test of Beijing's evolving views on intervention. What makes the Mali case a watershed is that the country is very close to China's extensive African economic interests, and has itself been a source of Chinese trade. China's trade with Africa surpassed American and European levels in 2009 and as of 2011 stood at US\$160 billion,

¹⁰⁸ 'Russia, China Veto Western-Proposed Draft Resolution on Syria,' *Xinhua*, 19 July 2012.

¹⁰⁹ 'China "Deeply Concerned" about Violence in Syria- Spokesman,' *Xinhua / BBC Monitoring*, 14 December 2012; 'China Calls for "Patience" over Syria Crisis,' *Xinhua / BBC Monitoring*, 15 January 2013.

¹¹⁰ Cheng Guangjin, 'China Cements Role as Global Mediator,' *China Daily*, 28 December 2012.

while Chinese trade with Mali stood at US\$575 million in November 2012, compared with US\$280 million at the end of 2010.¹¹¹ The Chinese government's initial response to France's decision to send forces in order to protect the Malian government and to roll back territorial gains from the extremists was reserved, and that led to international concerns China was seeking to 'free-ride' on France's actions, similar to China's benefits from the war in Afghanistan which allowed for deeper Chinese investment there. Beijing rejected such ideas, noting that its tacit support for the Libya intervention cost China a considerable amount in lost contracts from the Gaddafi years. Moreover, as some Chinese Africa analysts have noted, France's intervention places it in a much stronger diplomatic position vis-à-vis both China and the United States. It was also argued that the decision by the government of François Hollande to intervene not only risked the same quagmire that the US encountered in Afghanistan, but also created the possibility for a 'legalization of a new interventionism in Africa.'¹¹²

Most recently, China has also used the Mali intervention to return to its earlier diplomatic stances which equate state instability with economic underdevelopment. As one editorial in the *China Daily* noted, while France's actions have worked to prevent the brand of radical extremism from spreading across the Sahel region in Africa, the real problem was that the widespread poverty in Mali and the surrounding region needed to be better addressed in order to prevent such extremist groups from returning to the region.¹¹³ However, China's own economic interests in Mali were adversely affected by the fighting, since before the conflict it was estimated that about a third of Mali's total exports, including cotton and gold, totaling

¹¹¹ 'China's Trade with Mali in November 2012,' *Xinhua's China Economic Information Service*, 5 January 2013; Qin Zhongwei, 'Africa Seeks to Learn a Lesson from China,' *China Daily*, 16 February 2013.

¹¹² He Weiping, 'Hollande Has Set Alarming Precedent for Intervention,' *Global Times*, 22 January 2013; Yun Sun, 'How China Views France's Intervention in Mali: An Analysis,' *Brookings*, 23 January 2013, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/01/23-china-france-intervention-mali-sun>>, (Accessed 10 March 2013).

¹¹³ David Gosset, 'Time to Defeat Poverty in Mali,' *China Daily*, 25 January 2013.

about €100 million (US\$130 million) annually, were going to Beijing.¹¹⁴ In short, as China continues to rethink its traditional policies towards humanitarian intervention, Mali has demonstrated that a new variable has been added, namely that several trouble spots in the world are either part of or close to Beijing's expanding network of trade and aid partners. Therefore, Beijing cannot act the bystander in new cases of civil conflict and intervention debates to the degree with which it had previously been comfortable.

Concluding remarks

As set out above, whilst both China and Russia remain powers committed to the principle of sovereignty and a state-centric view on security, they have to a certain degree accepted the notion of R2P in international affairs. As demonstrated, within Russia's policy towards what it considers its region, as well as during its 2008 conflict with Georgia, it seems to have adopted the language of R2P. Yet, both Russia and China are more conservative than the West when it comes to the operationalisation of the principle of R2P in international affairs. Most of the current frictions on this issue within the UNSC are based on the content, rather than the form of R2P, and the different roles that international actors play in such crises. In particular tensions persist over who plays the role of the 'adjudicator' in such crises, i.e. who, how, when, which strand, and with whose consent is the R2P norm operationalized. In this respect, both China and Russia are very keen to preserve their role as 'permission givers'. Indeed, they both see the West as a disruptive force that breaks the rules and norms of the current international system. Rather than intending to play the role of spoilers, both China and Russia in fact see themselves as acting as responsible powers to ensure that the current international rules are upheld. A key difference remains that neither Russia nor China see it as their role to directly intervene in such crises, and their current involvement in such crises

¹¹⁴ Anne Jolis, 'China's Limits in Africa,' *Wall Street Journal*, 4 March 2013.

remains on the diplomatic and mediation level. Despite their disagreements with the West when it comes to the use of force, both of these powers leave it up to the Western powers together with regional actors, to impact on events on the ground. This points to a subtle division of labor between these two groups of states. It remains unknown what happens once, and if, the Western powers no longer have the financial capability or political will to act militarily in such crises - who would pick up the baton then, if anyone. It seems unlikely that Russia and China would step into their shoes at least at this stage.

In spite of certain similarities between their perspectives on R2P, the notion that China and Russia form a common bloc often obscures as much as it reveals. Despite their similar positions at times of international crises, key differences within their policy towards intervention are evident. Whilst Russia is keen to play the role of a loud dissenter and principle negotiator with the opposing side, China prefers to follow a course of quiet diplomacy and is more sensitive to being labeled as a spoiler. In the case of Syria, both have demonstrated their willingness to use each other as diplomatic cover to demonstrate a united front, while stressing the need for diplomatic solutions to that crisis despite the worsening security situation.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, China's reasons for vetoing the UN resolution on Syria were quite distinct from Russia's views, and the synergy between the two states can better be described as a marriage of convenience, which does not necessarily set a precedent. Russia seeks to boost its international role from a position of weakness, while China's international role is growing exponentially, with its interests increasingly intertwined with regions further afield. Hence, since the end of the Cold War, their roles in international affairs have reversed, with China set to play a much more involved role in future crises, because it now has much greater ties with developing regions. Thus, China's involvement in interventions and R2P

¹¹⁵ Yun Sun, 'Syria: What China Has Learned From its Libya Experience,' *Asia-Pacific Bulletin* 152, 27 February 2012.

may in fact increase in the future as its global interests, particularly in the economic sphere, increase, and it becomes more entangled in regions further afield.

This assessment of Russia and China suggests that when analyzing the question of whether or not rising powers are seeking to challenge or reinforce existing norms of international society, it is therefore critical to consider not only these actors' position towards specific norms, but also their national security cultures and, crucially, the roles they intend to play in questions of global security, which are often rather distinct and worthy of further examination.