

## THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF PUBLICIZING MYTHS ABOUT THE CHINESE THREAT

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### *Introduction*

The Russian and other national media have recently begun publishing stories on the rising so-called Chinese threat with increasing frequency. They focus on speculations about the further domination of the developed countries in the world economy and politics in the wake of China's growing might, which is arousing worries about the emergence of a direct military threat to more than just its neighboring countries.

Of course, pluralism of opinions is a good thing, but any conclusions should be based on an analysis of the circumstances and different factors, as well as on a correct assessment of the new phenomena and processes.

Unfortunately, some media are only bent on drawing attention to themselves by publishing sensational material. Moreover, spreading these myths is often deliberate and is made even worse by the fact that they are entirely unsubstantiated.

Serious experts who write for a thinking and educated auditorium are inclined to turn a blind eye to such publications and refrain from publicly criticizing them, since they do not want to arouse undeserved interest in them. But this response is not entirely justified, particularly when it affects the complicated problems of interstate cooperation. We must take into account the negative effect of false information on the formation of public opinion about particular states, which could have an impact on their interrelations.

More often than not, the authors of dubious publications use various nongovernment organizations (institutions, centers, foundations, and so on), both Russian and international, as smoke screens. Whereby, if we are to believe the reference guide *Nauchnye instituty, issledovatel'skie tsentry i organizatsii Rossii i stran SNG* (Scientific Institutes, Research Centers, and Organizations of Russia and the CIS Countries), there are certainly plenty to choose from.<sup>1</sup> They usually abound in topics that focus on the problems of interstate relations, global and regional security issues, and assessments of the military policy of various countries.

Of course, extremely serious organizations that enjoy the well-earned trust of authoritative specialists can also be found. But there are others, which, instead of presenting the substantiated results of in-depth studies, churn out a different product full of controversial, sensational, and even scandalous arguments. This is their way of proving that they are important to certain Russian and, particularly, foreign circles (for financial reasons).

<sup>1</sup> See: *Reference Guide, Nauchnye instituty i organizatsii Rossii i stran SNG, vedushchie izuchenie mezhdunarodnykh problem i problem mezhdunarodnoi bezopasnosti*, Center of Political and International Studies, Moscow, 1996, 95 pages.

Quite a number of these quasi organizations appeared in the 1990s, and their representatives have even been invited to prestigious international forums. The speeches made by such public figures often aroused bewilderment, to put it mildly, among Russian scientists, who are accustomed to research being carried out using a scientific approach. The foreign participants in these forums perceived them as a new generation of the Rus-

sian scientific community free of the former ideologization, particularly if these speeches played into the hands of Western interests.

So these speakers were often quoted, given the corresponding royalties, and even offered grants for continuing “such important efforts aimed at strengthening mutual understanding.” Over time, interest in them waned and only the most ingenious managed to keep their heads above water.

## Analysis of the Myths about the Chinese Threat and the Reality of Politics and Military Strategy

Today, the Institute of Political and Military Analysis (IPMA), headed by A. Sharavin, can be called a research center that is not loath to publicize topics of dubious content.

This institute took its first steps when it participated in Boris Yeltsin’s election campaign in 1996. Later, as website [www.kommersant.ru] informs us, the organization carried out commissions from the State Duma, Russian Ministry of Science, Foundation for State Support of Progressive Technology and Space Research, and several other organizations and commercial structures.

According to the IPMA’s official website, the spheres of its research interests extend far beyond the framework indicated by the institute’s name. They cover history, political science, sociology, and psychology, study problems of ethnic relations, carry out information monitoring, analyze the domestic and foreign political situation and draw up corresponding forecasts, and engage in research of military conflicts and national security. Moreover, it offers consultation on how to organize elections to the power structures and use PR technology for this.<sup>2</sup>

It is obvious that this kind of all encompassing control is not conducive to engaging in diversified research at the corresponding professional level. Even academic institutes with large staffs and high scientific potential do not attempt to perform such diverse tasks at the same time.

The activity of the IPMA can be illustrated by taking a look at the main theses of the latest publications on an important topic, the Chinese threat, the author of which just happens to be Deputy Director of the IPMA Alexander Khramchikhin.

Here are the titles of just a few of them: “Quiet Expansion” (2006), “How China Will Squash Russia” (2007), “Why China Will Pull Down the Whole World” (2008), “China is Willing to Defend its Firth Column Using Constitutional Means” (2009), “Carving Up Russia. Will Beijing and Washington Share the World?” (2009), “The Chinese Are Masters of Russian Slaves,” (2009), “China against Russia: the Victory Will Not Be Ours” (2010), and “China’s War against Russia” (2010).

The above-mentioned author, who positions himself as a political scientist and military analyst, posts his articles on Internet sites and also appears on television and radio with expert opinions.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ipma.ru].

<sup>3</sup> Newspapers—*Novaia gazeta*, *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, *Vremya MN*, *Znamia*, *Otechestvennye zapiski*; Internet sites—russ. ru, globalrus.ru, ima-press.ru, rbc.ru; television channels—All-Russia National Television and Radio Broadcasting Company, REN-TV; radio—Radio Russia, Mayak-24.

When examining the main ideas of this author's statements, we are very conscientious about providing detailed citations in order not to be accused, if possible, of taking certain phrases out of context.

### *The Growth of Chinese Expansion*

According to Alexander Khranchikhin, "perhaps the greatest problem facing mankind is that it does not understand what present-day China is and what its development trends are... This is too difficult to understand, and most important, nothing can be done about it. We can only wait and hazard a guess at how this country is going to pull down the rest of the world... The Western approach to China is absolutely inadequate... The Russian view of China is generally a strange mixture of irrational horror and hopes of 'strategic partnership.' ...It is utterly impossible to understand how China can manage without external expansion in all its forms (economic, political, demographic, and military). It is simply unviable in its current borders. Either it will become much larger, or it will have to become much smaller."<sup>4</sup> External expansion will become the only way for China to 'cut the Gordian knot' of the problems and contradictions it faces. In this event, the interests of the U.S. and the PRC will come into conflict, which may be resolved by channeling Chinese expansion in Russia's direction with Washington's consent."

Mr. Khranchikhin's conclusions appear to be based on two myths.

- The first myth is China's constantly growing overpopulation, which is associated with an acute shortage of land in the country. Of course, 1.3 billion people (according to the latest census) is a large amount, but the population increment amounts to only 0.55%, which corresponds to the average European index and is the result of the authorities' consistent policy of birthrate control. In addition, the country is conducting a policy aimed at providing the population with pensions, whereas just recently elderly people could only count on assistance from their children, which, naturally, boosted the birthrate.

China boasts a vast area (almost 10 million sq. km) and is the world's third largest country in terms of size after Russia and Canada, a significant part of the territory of which is located in the Arctic zone, while only small western regions of China are in the uninhabitable desert zone.

So, the Chinese have good opportunities for developing land within their own country. Today, the population density in the districts of so-called Northern China, south of the Amur (the provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, and part of the province of the autonomous district of Inner Mongolia), the area of which amounts to approximately 1 million sq. km, is not much higher than that on the river's Russian banks; a much higher population density is noted 1,000 km further south.

- The second myth is China's acute shortage of natural resources, which in actual fact are not that scanty in the country. In terms of coal, iron, manganese, copper, tungsten, tin, aluminum, gold, and other reserves, it occupies one of the first places in the world. Moreover, the country produces approximately 200 million tons of oil a year (this amounts to half of the volume produced in Russia) and is also carrying out active exploration of new deposits.

This gives reason to believe that in the near future, oil fields will be opened in the west of the country, as well as offshore, which will burgeon the existing reserves even more.

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<sup>4</sup> A. Khranchikhin, "Pochemu Kitai slomaet ves' mir," available at [<http://www.apn.ru/publications/article20310.htm>].

As for natural gas deposits, according to the forecasts, the province of Sichuan has tens of trillions of cubic meters of this energy resource.

A methane production program is also being implemented in coal mines.<sup>5</sup> However, the need for hydrocarbons is constantly growing and in order to maintain its economic development rates, China must continue to import them from abroad.

When talking about Chinese expansion, Mr. Khranchikhin does not want to admit the obvious fact that in present-day conditions, strong states are achieving their goals using non-military means, including indirect action strategies (putting financial and economic achievements into practice, organizing Color Revolutions and bringing to power regimes that encourage them, public awareness campaigns, and so on).

Today, the world community is doing its best to avoid any wars. It does not make sense to fight against countries that have unassailable military power and nuclear weapons. An exception is the collective use of force under the banner of peacekeeping and peace enforcement.

So-called peacekeeping campaigns are leading to changes in the world's political map; some states are disappearing, others are appearing. In this respect, it should be noted that whereas China did not participate in such undertakings in the past, now it willingly sends its military contingents to join UN operations, particularly those aimed at settling conflicts among the oil-producing countries of Africa.

### ***China Has Its Sights Set on Central Asia (CA)***

This is another myth that appears in the writings under review.

"In the short term, China will move toward CA. It has large reserves of natural resources, relatively few people, and the region provides access both to Russia's "underbelly" and to the Middle East with its oil and gas resources... It is very likely that contingents of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) will show up in Turkmenistan. The official pretext for this will be to defend the pipeline from terrorists. Since the pipeline is a transit route through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, Chinese troops could quite easily also show up there... If contingents of the PLA appear in the CA countries, Kazakhstan will not be able to resist China's forceful pressure... Whereas Beijing may regard the Central Asian states as promising puppets and springboards for deploying troops, Kazakhstan (like Russia) is a target of direct expansion. It (like Russia) has a vast amount of unpopulated territory that is quite habitable, as well as colossal natural resources. It is symptomatic that China is making territorial claims precisely on Kazakhstan and Russia."<sup>6</sup>

In these arguments, the author intentionally ignores the repeated official statements by the PRC leaders about how China is not making territorial claims on its neighboring countries, nor does it plan to hinder the activity of the special commissions of China, Russia, and the CA countries, which is leading to the final settlement of all issues regarding disputed territories.

Moreover, when examining this question, it is unforgivable to ignore the fact that Russia and the CA republics (apart from Turkmenistan) are members of the military-political Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). According to its basic documents, aggression against any of its participants will automatically arouse a response from all of its members.

The same can be said about Mr. Khranchikhin turning a blind eye to the Memorandum on Mutual Understanding between the CSTO Secretariat and the SCO Secretariat, which, in addition to every-

<sup>5</sup> See: M. Yuriev, "Pravda i mify o kitaiskoi ugroze," *Profil*, No. 1 (557), 14 January, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> A. Khranchikhin, "Tikhaia ekspansiia," available at [<http://www.apn.ru/publications/article1896.htm>].

thing else, envisages the development of joint cooperation programs in the military sphere within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), of which China is a member.

Nor should we ignore the fact that at present China is buying oil in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Nigeria, and Angola, and liquefied natural gas in Iran and Australia, which are delivered by sea. In this situation, the PRC leadership understands that in the event of a serious conflict with the U.S., the American fleet could block deliveries of hydrocarbons to the country.

In that event, Beijing would have to count on Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Russia, since it is precisely from these countries that oil and gas pipelines will be laid to China. So it is extremely advantageous for it to retain friendly relations with Kazakhstan, as a reserve oil supplier, and with Turkmenistan, as an alternative gas supplier, as well as with Russia. Any fomenting of aggression against them and subsequent hostilities would inevitably deal a heavy blow to the abovementioned supply lines.

### ***Chinese Migration and Chinese Demographic Pressure on Russia***

In his articles, Alexander Khramchikhin also places the emphasis on the following traditional misconception: "Population growth and limited resources give rise to natural demands for territorial expansion to support China's further economic activity and increase its natural habitat... Chinese immigrants have already established sustainable communities in Russia, which can receive an unlimited number of their fellow countrymen and help them to adapt. And these communities feature not only in Eastern Siberia and the Far East, but can also be found throughout the country, including in Moscow and St. Petersburg... The Chinese still see us as a country that seized at least a million square kilometers of their territory..."<sup>7</sup>

First, it should be noted that China has never regarded emigration as betrayal of the Homeland. It has always been encouraged and continues to be encouraged by the Chinese authorities.<sup>8</sup> The main vector of present-day Chinese emigration is not directed toward Russia, but toward the countries of the Asia Pacific Region and the West. Today, the Chinese diasporas in different parts of the world comprise more than 40 million people<sup>9</sup>; they are particularly large in Singapore, the U.S., Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia, where well-known China towns abound.

The Chinese government has also sent hundreds of thousands of young people to study at the best Western higher educational institutions, most of whom, after receiving the relevant diplomas, remain abroad to work. But this does not mean that they have dismissed their Homeland. They are assimilating various high-tech spheres of industry and many of them eventually return home, bringing with them the vast experience and new knowledge they have accumulated, as well as impressive amounts of capital in some cases.

Even those who have lived almost their entire lives abroad and amassed immense fortunes strive to return to the land of their ancestors in their later years, whereby some of them were not even born in China. At home, they are called Huaqiao, which translates as "Chinese living abroad."

The number of Chinese immigrants in Russia is lower than in the West. In Russia, the Federal Immigration Service (FIS) and Ministry of Internal Affairs keep strict tabs on them. As for the Chi-

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<sup>7</sup> A. Khramchikhin, "Kak Kitai razdavit Rossiiu: vojna budet korotkoi, u Rossii net shansov," available at [<http://www.apn.ru/publications/article20421.htm>].

<sup>8</sup> For example, if a family goes to Africa, it is given a travel allowance of \$7,000. If families organize a village, they receive \$70,000.

<sup>9</sup> [<http://zhidao.baidu.com>].

nese developing the natural riches of Siberia and the Far East by means of the rotating scheme, this is advantageous for the Russian authorities, primarily because there are not enough local labor resources.

If crime is exposed among the Chinese migrants, the FIS and Ministry of Internal Affairs deport all of those even indirectly involved in breaking the law. Moreover, Chinese immigrants, as a rule, do not become Russian citizens, and there is no information about their influx in Russian scientific-intensive production enterprises and research centers, just as there is no data about Chinese millionaires who reside permanently in Russia.

### **Possible Scenario of China's War against Moscow**

According to Mr. Khamchikhin, the scenario of China's military aggression against Russia might unfold as follows: "It will begin in the winter, most likely during the New Year holidays when the Russian people, including the country's military-political leaders, are almost entirely out of service. Also, the Amur River and Lake Baikal freeze over in the winter, making it easier to cross them. The Trans-Siberian Railroad will be cut off during the first hours of the war, and, to be on the safe side, Chinese diversion groups will blow it up in many places to the west of the Enisei. The most powerful tank and mechanized PLA contingents will strike from the Hailar district westward in the direction of Chita-Ulan-Ude-Irkutsk. They will not retain Mongolia's sovereignty (they regard this country as an integral part of China). The enormous distances, poor roads, and inconvenient local terrain will pose no problems. The army will advance at a rate of 1,000 km a week (or 150 km a day).<sup>10</sup> After Irkutsk has been taken, the PLA's next target will be to reach the Enisei. The willingness of the current Russian leadership to use nuclear weapons against a nuclear state is extremely doubtful. All of Russia's territory to the north and south of Chita will be completely isolated from the rest of the country after the aggression begins. The PLA commanders will send infantry divisions to seize the Amur Region and the Primorye and Khabarovsk territories... They will rapidly repress any resistance by mass force. After seizing the south of the Far East and Eastern Siberia, they will acquire an enormous amount of territory for settling people (thus removing the birth-rate restrictions), all kinds of raw mineral fields, as well as the main treasure, for the sake of which they will be quite happy to lay down a couple of million soldiers, the water of Lake Baikal. The high level of unemployment among young people and the shortage of marriageable women make losing large numbers of their own soldiers during the hostilities not only permissible, but even desirable in the eyes of the PRC's military-political leadership. The residents of the Kremlin will not be willing to defend Russia, if this means having to suffer."<sup>11</sup>

I think the alarmist scenario presented above should be examined more closely in order to prove its groundlessness, to put it mildly.

- First, there can be no talk about any sudden invasion of Russia. The Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian General Staff (GRU), Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as a number of other state structures are all engaged in ongoing monitoring of the military-strategic situation in the countries neighboring on the Russian Federation. All kinds of technical reconnaissance keep round-the-clock tabs on the military

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<sup>10</sup> See: A. Khamchikhin, "Kitai protiv Rossii: Pobeda budet ne za nami," *Populiarnaiia mekhanika*, No. 2 (88), February 2010, p. 89.

<sup>11</sup> A. Khamchikhin, "Kak Kitai razdavut Rossiiu: voina budet korotkoi, u Rossii net shansov."

activity of foreign states. Anyone who has ever served in the Russian army knows that on holidays (particularly during the New Year holidays), the level of combat readiness of the armed forces rises. In the event of a temporary breakdown in government in conditions of aggression, there are documents at the command posts of all levels that set forth the initial actions to be taken in the absence of administrative commands from the highest departments until they are restored.

- Second, the scenario described of the course of the hostilities is reminiscent of the events during the Great Patriotic War, or even earlier wars; today, this is unrealistic.

We will note that in the current Russian Federation Military Doctrine, which says in particular: "The main general features of modern war are: its coalition nature; the extensive use of indirect, non-close-quarter, and other (including nontraditional) forms and means of operation, and long-range effective engagement and electronic engagement; attacks against troops (forces), rear-service and economic facilities, and means of communication throughout the territory of each of the warring parties; a high likelihood of new states being drawn into the war, the escalation of warfare, and the expansion of the scale and range of the means employed, including weapons of mass destruction."<sup>12</sup> The abovementioned methods of conducting war are not mentioned at all in the offered scenario.

It is worth taking a closer look at the possibility of using nuclear weapons. The military doctrine of 2000 notes: "In present-day conditions, the Russian Federation proceeds from the need to possess nuclear potential capable of guaranteeing the infliction of certain damage on any aggressor in any conditions. In so doing, the nuclear weapons with which the Russian Federation armed forces are equipped are regarded as an aggression-curbing factor and for ensuring the military security of Russia and its allies. The Federation reserves itself the right to use nuclear weapons in response to large-scale aggression using conventional weapons in situations that are critical for Russia's national security."

There can be no doubt that the military specialists and politicians of foreign countries, in particular the PRC, are not only familiar with contents of the abovementioned doctrines, but also take them into account.

- Third, we also think the author's evaluation of the pace at which a winter advance would be made by the Chinese army in mountainous, wooded, and marshy areas (the Far East and Siberia), as well as in conditions of the difficult terrain and climatic characteristics of Central Asia, is unsubstantiated. We will note that during Operation Enduring Freedom, the speed with which the U.S. contingents moved on foot in the mountains of Afghanistan was no more than 200-500 meters an hour, which is 10-15 times slower than movement in the valleys.<sup>13</sup>
- Fourth, Alexander Khramchikhin's conclusions do not correspond to the fundamental principles of China's military polity reflected in the state's official documents; just leafing through the White Book *China's National Defense* provides enough proof of this.<sup>14</sup>

In particular, it can be said quite definitely on the basis of these documents that certain changes have been occurring recently in the views of the Chinese leadership on the existing threats to the country's security. For example, Beijing essentially excludes the possibility (in

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<sup>12</sup> *Russia's Military Doctrine*, Part II: "Military-Strategic Principles," Point 3.

<sup>13</sup> Yu. Morozov, "Prospects for U.S.-Russia Cooperation in Central Asia," *Carnegie Council Electronic Journal (USA)*, Aug. 2009 (see also: Yu. Morozov, "Afghanistan: Potential Field of Russia-U.S. Regional Cooperation," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (57), 2009).

<sup>14</sup> The latest issue of *China's National Defense* was published in December 2008.

the foreseeable future) of any major armed conflict arising on the country's perimeter and of China's involvement in it, never mind the waging of any full-scale hostilities.

At the same time, the use of armed forces is permitted for protecting the state's integrity (the Taiwan problem) and upholding the PRC's sovereignty over disputed territories and water areas (the area of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in Southern Tibet, the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, the Diaoyudao Islands in the East China Sea, and several others), but this has absolutely nothing to do with Russia.

Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that as China accumulates its might and, consequently, expands its political, economic, and other interests, and as its great nation ambitions grow and the current contradictions become aggravated, these factors could create a potential threat to Russia's national security (in the long run).

### **Possible Ways to Resolve the Taiwanese Problem**

Alexander Khramchikhin asserts that "after victory of the Kuomintang at both the parliamentary and presidential elections in Taiwan, Taipei's capitulation will essentially be guaranteed. So China will not have to spend vast resources on a war on Taiwan; on the contrary, it will acquire Taiwan's huge financial and technological resources."<sup>15</sup>

This is actually far from the truth. We know that the U.S., which has never refused military support of Taipei, is one of the most influential forces that is not interested in Beijing annexing Taiwan. In 2010, Beijing and Washington found themselves on the brink of a new diplomatic conflict over America's intentions to sell \$6.4 billion-worth of weapons to the Taiwanese. In response to this, China announced it was breaking off its military relations with the Pentagon and instituting sanctions against American companies participating in the transaction, Boeing and United Technologies probably being the ones that would suffer most.

This conflict became just one more episode in the growing alienation between the PRC and the U.S.; a perceptible cooling off in their relations also occurred after Barack Obama's first visit to Beijing in November 2009. China was asked to share the responsibility of world leadership with the U.S. within the G2. The Chinese leaders politely listened to Obama's proposal, but firmly declined it, whereby they did this publicly.

"We do not agree with the proposal to create a G2 out of the U.S. and PRC. China is a developing country with a huge population and we still have a long way to go in our modernization. China will conduct an independent policy and will not enter an alliance with any country," announced Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao.<sup>16</sup>

In confirmation of this position, at the economic forum in Davos in February 2010, the Chinese representative ranked his country as a developing state and noted that it does not claim world supremacy.

At present, relations between China and the U.S. remain very cool, and the tone of the official statements by the sides gives no indication of their warming. The PRC is actively calling for American government bonds to be disposed of (China has accumulated \$755.4 billion dollars' worth of these bonds, becoming one of the U.S.'s largest debt holders). However, the sale of American bonds could have severe consequences and Beijing has still not taken the plunge.

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<sup>15</sup> A. Khramchikhin, "Kitai utochniaet voennuiu politiku," available at [[http://www.chaskor.ru/article/kitaj\\_utochniaet\\_voennuyu\\_politiku\\_2932](http://www.chaskor.ru/article/kitaj_utochniaet_voennuyu_politiku_2932)].

<sup>16</sup> A. Gabuev, "A ved' oni preduprezhdali," *Kommersant*, No. 16 (4316), 1 January, 2010.



## Who to Believe; What Could the Myths About the Chinese Threat Lead To?

Indeed, readers interested in political issues often come across articles on the Internet by titled authors who work at prestigious institutions, which, naturally, arouses trust in such writings. The clearest answer to the question “Who is who?” can be found on websites such as “The Forum on Politics and Politicians,” “List of Military Experts,” or “Exposure Sessions.”<sup>17</sup>

Readers should pay heed to articles written by experts on China (from the Russian Academy of Sciences structures) recognized in Russia and abroad, such as Mikhail Titarenko, Sergey Tikhvinskiy, Sergey Luzianin, Alexander Ostrovskiy, Yakov Berger, P. Kamenov, and Anatoli Klimenko. To these serious authors can be added the names of well-known Chinese political scientists, such as Wu Xiaoding, Li Yihong, and Pu Ying.

The viewpoints of well-known Western experts, such as Margaret Thatcher, Marilyn Albright, Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and others, are also of a certain amount of interest, although they often espouse anti-Russian and anti-Chinese positions.

All the abovementioned authors and experts have rich practical work experience in international relations and profound knowledge; their publications are rather few and far between, since they are the result of long and careful analysis. They are also well substantiated and underpinned with references to the relevant documents; these authors have a very high quotation index.

We will note that many of the abovementioned highly qualified specialists and experts avoid addressing topics that are beyond the limits of their competence, particularly those concerning defense issues. Professional military people, on the other hand, particularly those still in active service, publish very little in the open press due to the specific features of their activity. It is their retired colleagues who are most likely to be engaged in this, but even they are not always willing to apply their knowledge and experience in a new field. So people frequently appear in the Russian media who believe they are able to freely discuss problems on the military theme.

Apart from the names of the authors, attention should also be paid to who is publishing their articles. Prestigious experts usually give their articles to reputable Russian publications that cherish their image. These include the journals *Vlast*, *Rossia v global'noi politike*, *Geopolitika i bezopasnost'*, *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka*, and *Voennaia mysl'*, as well as the newspaper *Voенно-promyshlennyi kurier*, etc. There are also Russian-language publications, *Tsentral'naia Azia i Kavkaz* and *Indeks bezopasnosti*, as well as English-language, *The Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, etc.<sup>18</sup>

But despite the pluralism of opinions declared by the West, Russian authors often have a very hard time defending their point of view; and there is no point in mentioning publications that place the top priority on commercial interest and are not loath to publish dubious articles.

Nevertheless, it cannot be claimed that superficial and, mainly, detrimental articles are entirely ignored. For example, several years ago Lieutenant Anatoli Klimenko rebuked authors of articles on the growing Chinese threat.

In an article entitled “Military Doctrines of the APR Countries: Coordination Issues,”<sup>19</sup> while arguing with A. Sharavin,<sup>20</sup> he noted that China poses no threat to Russia in the foreseeable future.

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<sup>17</sup> [<http://www.politforums.ru/foreign/1234697591.html>].

<sup>18</sup> The journals *Rossia v global'noi politike/Russia in Global Affairs*, *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka/Far Eastern Affairs*, *Voennaia mysl'/Military Thought*, *Tsentral'naia Azia i Kavkaz/Central Asia and the Caucasus* (published in Sweden and distributed in 50 countries), and *Indeks bezopasnosti/Index iSi* are also published in English.—Ed.

<sup>19</sup> See: A. Klimenko, “Voennye doktriny stran ATR: voprosy soglasovaniia,” *Voennaia mysl'*, No. 2, 2002.

<sup>20</sup> See: *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, No. 36, 2001, p. 5.

This was explained by an improvement in interrelations between these countries, development of mutually beneficial cooperation, and an understanding by the Russian and Chinese political elite that the past confrontation had significantly hindered development of the two countries and did not yield anything positive for the people.

Deputy Director of the Institute of Russian-Chinese Strategic Cooperation A. Deviatov is of the same opinion.<sup>21</sup> When addressing the PRC's possible seizure of Russia's Amur and Primorye regions, he notes that China has developed (for the foreseeable future) a strategy of peaceful assimilation of those resources it needs for the prosperity of the Chinese state.

The journal *Central Asia and the Caucasus* also does its part to dismiss the myths about the Chinese threat by repeatedly presenting articles on this topic. In particular, issues No. 4-5 (58-59) for 2009 gave an in-depth analysis of China's influence on the CA republics (in light of the financial and economic crisis). But against the background of the mass publication in the media of articles on the Chinese threat, this is probably not enough.

## **Detriment from the Activity of Apologists of the Myths about the Chinese Threat**

Such activity could be of perceptible detriment both to the positive development of Russian-Chinese relations and to Russia itself.

- First, articles on the so-called Chinese threat play into the hands of anti-Russian and anti-Chinese forces, which do not like the fact that Russian and Chinese positions coincide on many security issues.

For example, beginning in 1992, the press, particularly the Western, actively circulated such statements, thus promoting the infiltration of ideas into Russian public consciousness that China was a source of strategic danger. Unfortunately, some Russian media are also participating in this.

For example, in February 2010, issue No. 2 of the journal *Populiarnaia mekhanika* published an article by Alexander Khramchikhin called "China against Russia." The circulation of the publication, by current standards, can be classified as average (200,000 copies), whereas in terms of its content, it is oriented toward businessmen who have very little conception of military issues. What is the point of such a publication? To make businessmen nervous about an imminent disaster or make them distrustful of potential Chinese partners? If we keep in mind that the headquarters of the founders of this publication is in New York, the answer speaks for itself.

- Second, it is difficult not to agree that publications of this kind promote the image of China as an enemy in the public consciousness. In order to protect itself, Russia will have to draw more closely to the West. If it tries to defend itself independently, it will have to at least pump more resources into parrying this mythic threat and in so doing create new difficulties for itself.

Moreover, if these public awareness tactics yield results, further strategic rapprochement between Russia and China will slow down. Keeping in mind, however, that the Amer-

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<sup>21</sup> See: A. Deviatov, "Rossiia i Kitai—sosedni na flange," *Gazeta*, No. 1, 11 January, 2010.

icans regard China as a very real, and not at all as mythical threat to their world hegemony, they will welcome this development of events. And before you know it there will be more opportunity for implementing the G2 plan.

- Third, public awareness tactics are often reinforced by actual events. For example, the author of this article was a UN military observer in the conflict zone between Georgia and Abkhazia, and he noted the following: whereas before 2000 Georgians were mainly displeased with the domestic and foreign policy of their own government, after 2001, they began putting the exclusive blame for all the troubles on Russia. This was due to the impact of the anti-Russian rhetoric of Mikhail Saakashvili and the Georgian media, as well as to the halt in broadcasting of Russian television stations.

Nor is the Chinese media entirely blameless, since there is enough evidence to state that it also periodically throws out articles containing myths about the Russian threat.

- Fourth, this situation is advantageous to certain circles in those states whose interests are related in one way or another to an alleged increase in the Chinese threat. This gives them reason to lobby an increase in military spending in the power structures.
- Fifth, this idea is also directly or indirectly supported by other interested individuals and organizations. Some make a living for themselves by coming out with dubious analyses and participating in various discussions, thus allowing them to keep their heads above water. Others, for example, flag wavers and various kinds of nationalists, use this for propaganda purposes. Still others, mainly marginal politicians, also take advantage of it, since it allows them to place the blame for their blunders on an external enemy.

Unfortunately, there are also similar publications in China, and they in no way promote an improvement in international relations. This applies, for example, to Liu Yazhou's<sup>22</sup> monograph "Daguo ce-2" ("Strategy of the G2"),<sup>23</sup> which contains theses on China's possible expansion to Russia and CA, the author of which claims that China lived for 150 years under Russia's "heavy yoke." And whereas at its current stage of development, the Russian Federation is still weak, China can still use its territory and resources. But if the PRC wants to carve out a global niche for itself in the 22nd century, it must resolve all its problems in the present century by conquering the world's strategic outpost—Central Asia.

It is obvious that Liu Yazhou's ideas are augmenting the worries prevailing in the world about the so-called Chinese threat and in no way promote strategic rapprochement among the peoples of China, Russia, and the CA countries.<sup>24</sup>

This publication can evidently be regarded as a discharge of true sentiments and thoughts from the Chinese volcano, and today it is very difficult to forecast what reverberations this may have in the future.

Of course, there is no reason to claim that the publications examined could have a direct impact on the official positions of the Russian and Chinese leadership. However there can be no doubt that they are detrimental to interstate relations.

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<sup>22</sup> Author of the monograph *Daguo ce-2* Liu Yazhou is a high-ranking general in the PLA.

<sup>23</sup> [<http://dlog.lanue.com>].

<sup>24</sup> According to Yakov Berger, Chief Researcher at the Institute of Far Eastern Studies Center, RAS.