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THE RUSSIA-CHINA ENTENTE & STRATEGIC RIVALRY WITH THE WEST

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The emergence of a new 'containment-like' consensus in Washington has potential to stimulate further rapprochement between Moscow and Beijing. However, it has been Russia, rather than China that has attempted to capitalise on this situation. Moscow has pushed for closer cooperation with Beijing in the military sphere, while Vladimir Putin depicts the relationship as one of an alliance type (*soyuznicheskiye otnosheniya*). Yet in its 2019 White Paper, it states that China 'advocates partnerships rather than alliances and does not join any military bloc.' The case of Russia and China raises a number of questions about the strength of commitment and support: abandonment or entrapment are both equally possible. However, in today's multipolar world, alliances are highly mutable and we need to see Sino-Russian relations in this context. Strong commitment means realignment at a later stage becomes more difficult, and makes an autonomous foreign policy harder. Given the declared aim for Russia and China to move towards greater multipolarity and resist hegemonism, the strategic rivalry between the US and China should be examined in this context.

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