

↓ Chronology of China-Russia Relations

May 21, 2014: The China and Russia Purchase and Sales Contract on East Route Gas Project and a memorandum were signed in Shanghai. The contract will see the east route pipeline start providing China with 38 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually from 2018.

March 2013: The two countries pledged to push forward their comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination into a new phase and ratified the 2013-16 implementation guidelines of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation.

June 2012: A joint communique on deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination between China and Russia was signed.

June 2011: The two countries issued a joint statement on a broad range of key international issues.

September 2010: The two sides signed a joint statement on comprehensively deepening strategic partnership of coordination.

September 2009: A program on planning for cooperation between China's

northeastern region and Russia's Far East and Eastern Siberia region (2009-18) was approved.

June 2009: The program for China-Russia investment cooperation planning was approved.

July 21, 2008: The two countries sign an additional protocol on the eastern section of the border between China and Russia in Beijing. The protocol, with a map affiliated, marked the completion of the China-Russia 4,300-km border survey and determination.

June 2005: China and Russia exchanged the ratification of the Supplementary Agreement on the Eastern Section of the China-Russia Boundary Line, ending border problems between the two countries.

October 2004: The guidelines for implementing the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation were approved.

May 2003: The two countries signed a joint statement in which both sides agreed to develop good-neighborly and friendly relations and a strategic partnership.

July 2001: China and Russia signed the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, which has laid a legal foundation for the two countries to develop a strategic partnership.

April 1996: The two countries declared the establishment of a partnership of strategic coordination based on equality and trust and oriented toward the 21st century.

September 1994: The second China-Russia joint statement was signed, announcing the two countries are resolved to establish a constructive partnership with a perspective toward the 21st century.

December 1992: A joint statement on the foundation for bilateral ties was signed, calling for China and Russia to regard each other as "friendly countries."

December 27, 1991: China and Russia sign a memo to ensure Russia would inherit the diplomatic relations the Soviet Union and China established.

October 2, 1949: China establishes diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

(compiled by Beijing Review)

erful China. As time goes on, Russia is gradually desalting its concerns and becoming more reassured in the current bilateral relationship.

Russia is a unique power. At the moment, Russia is one of the targets of the United States' containment policy on a global scale. While the United States is an established power, Russia is regarded as a challenger. But within the sphere of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS) that groups former Soviet Union nations, Russia sees other CIS members as its "backyard." In this sense, Russia is an established power trying to defend its sphere of influence. The Ukrainian crisis reflects the mindset of Russia. Russia is on the alert for any countries that might compete with it in the region. With the increasing cooperation between China and CIS countries, "China-Russia competition" has surfaced increasingly in the Russian media. Putin also addressed the issue during his

presidential campaign.

However, Russia has gradually been aware that most CIS countries pursue multilateral diplomacy and seek independent political, economic and security policies. It has also realized that China, though seen as a "challenger," respects Russia's traditional influence in the region. Actually, the interests of the two countries are compatible. China is a reliable partner of Russia that can help it stabilize the regional situation. During Xi's Central Asia trip in September 2013, he made very clear that China will never interfere in the internal affairs of Central Asian countries, nor seek dominance or build a sphere of influence in the region.

Regarding economic cooperation, both China and Russia have a strong wish to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation and raise their quality and level. Russian people are increasingly aware that without China, the major buyer of Russian resources, Russia

might suffer from much slower economic growth. Russians are also gradually changing their attitudes toward Chinese immigrants in Russia's Far East region.

A recent survey by Russia's Public Opinion Foundation shows that 57 percent of Russian people believe that a powerful China is not a threat to Russia while 19 percent believes it is. As recently as 2009, about 44 percent of Russian people considered China a threat. The new survey shows about 74 percent of Russian people believe China and Russia are friendly partners while just 9 percent disagree. ■