Fighting Against Internal and External Threats Simultaneously: China's Police and Satellite Cooperation with Autocratic Countries

by Chisako T. Masuo

ABSTRACT

What direction will the Xi Jinping administration's foreign policy take over the coming years, and how will that affect the existing international order? The Chinese Communist Party harbours a strong sense of crisis about the internal and external threats colliding to supposedly destabilise its regime, and thus aims to strengthen cooperation with developing countries in order to prevent such danger. The Xi administration is consequently strengthening police and law-enforcement cooperation inside the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which includes Russia. Besides, China has launched a new initiative of collaborating with Moscow on satellite systems to monitor the entire Earth, in order to accumulate big data on various issues. The current Chinese foreign policy, which pursues a cultivation of deeper relations with autocratic countries by providing them with surveillance technologies, is likely to deepen the global divide with liberal democracies.

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Introduction

In October 2022, the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was convened, inaugurating the third term of Xi Jinping as CCP chairman (the de facto highest position in the country). One month before, in September, a summit meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. President Xi, who had frozen his foreign trips since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, finally left China to participate in this face-to-face meeting to restart putting his "great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics" into practice.

There is no doubt that China – the second largest economy in the world, which is proud to be "different" from Western civilisation – is challenging the global order, at least to some extent. The issue is, what direction will China's foreign policy take in the future? How will it affect the existing international order?

To answer these questions, this paper firstly analyses the Xi administration's security perceptions using the 20th Party Congress report. It claims that the CCP harbours a strong sense of crisis about the internal and external threats colliding to supposedly destabilise its regime, and thus tries to strengthen the cooperation with developing countries to ensure its own security. Secondly, by examining the recent SCO summit, it points out that China is strengthening police and law-enforcement cooperation with Russia and other Asian countries. Thirdly, it focuses on China's new initiative to collaborate with Russia in the field of satellite systems for monitoring the entire Earth, in order to accumulate big data. Finally, it argues that current Chinese foreign policy, which aims to cultivate relations with non-Western countries by using technology incentives, is likely to deepen the global divide between the world's liberal democracies and its autocracies in the coming years.

* Chisako T. Masuo is Professor at the Faculty of Social and Cultural Studies, Kyushu University, Fukuoka and Adjunct Research Fellow at the Japan Institute of International Affairs, Tokyo. She specialises in the foreign and maritime policies of China.

Since the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, the CCP has always feared what it calls "peaceful evolution" (*heping yanbian*), a scenario where foreign – or Western – powers would reach out to Chinese society with peaceful gestures; seduce the country's dissatisfied populations; and, finally, facilitate the overthrow of the CCP regime. The CCP maintains that this is what happened in the former Soviet republics that experienced "colour revolutions": Western countries were influencing their domestic dissidents in order to overturn their governments. Ultimately, Xi is working proactively to secure peace and CCP rule in China by preventing such possibilities. However, his efforts are threatening a split in the international order between liberal democracies and autocracies.

1. Crisis perceptions in the CCP Congress report

On 16 October 2022, Xi presented a report at the CCP's National Congress as its General Secretary. In general, party congresses raise new policy concepts for the next five years or longer. However, this time, Xi avoided doing so and sealed off sensitive keywords such as "Military–Civil Fusion (MCF)" and "maritime strong power", which have contributed to a growing wariness of China in other countries. Some foreign media focused on Xi's statement that China would "maintain the initiative and the ability to steer in cross-Strait [of Taiwan] relations, and unswervingly advance the cause of national reunification". Yet, he had made similar claims many times before and did not add any new content in October.

Nonetheless, the report did reveal that the CCP has been extremely vigilant against internal and external destabilising factors. In the first chapter, which explained the party's work over the past five years, Xi stressed that the CCP had "launch[ed] an all-out people's war to stop the spread of the [Covid-19] virus", restored order in Hong Kong despite the "turbulent developments" there and "resolutely fought against separatism and countered interference, demonstrating our resolve and ability to safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to oppose 'Taiwan independence'".[1] Similarly, he underlined the party's continuing struggles against foreign countries as follows:

> Confronted with drastic changes in the international landscape, especially external attempts to blackmail, contain, blockade, and exert maximum pressure on China, we have put our national interests first, focused on internal political concerns, and maintained firm strategic resolve. We have shown a fighting spirit and a firm determination to never yield to coercive power.[2]

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[1] Communist Party of China, *Full Text of the Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, 25 October 2022, Chapter 1, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202210/t20221025_10791908.html.

[2] Ibid.

The administration harbours the double-threat perception that discontented internal forces – such as ethnic minorities, religious groups and students in Hong Kong and others – would collide with external powers and endanger China's (or the CCP's) security. Particularly it is wary of the external powers – obviously, the United States and other developed (mostly Western) countries that are aligned with it. Xi and his staff believe that they should overcome the national crisis by actively fighting against those two kinds of threats.

Chapter 11, that appeared for the first time in Chinese congress report to shape its policies on national security and social stability, showed that Xi's government had prioritised security over any other issues. The general secretary claimed that "[n]ational security is the bedrock of national rejuvenation, and social stability is a prerequisite for building a strong and prosperous China". Calling for "a holistic approach", he urged the party members to "promote national security in all areas and stages of the work of the Party and the country, so as to ensure national security and social stability". In his eyes, the two kinds of threats coming from outside and inside China require integrated and comprehensive countermeasures. He argued, "[w]e will take coordinated steps to ensure external and internal security, homeland and public security, traditional and non-traditional security, and our own security and common security". He continued that China needs to "improve the mechanisms for [its] participation in global security governance" and build the "new security architecture" to "safeguard China's new pattern of development".[3] Therefore, his eyes are set on the reestablishment of an international security architecture for the purpose of securing China's peace.

To this end, Xi advocated the Central Committee's concentric and unified leadership in national security work. He urged improvements in the "coordination and command systems" for major projects in the fields of "economic, major infrastructure, financial, cyber, data, biological, resource, nuclear, space, and maritime security". To safeguard national security, he also requested capacity building in food, energy and critical supply-chain security not only in China but also abroad, and demanded the switching of the country's public security governance model to a proactive and preventive one.[4] The Xi administration considers it imperative for the Central Committee to take comprehensive and unified measures domestically and internationally at the same time.

What, then, does China plan to do internationally? The report's Chapter 14, on foreign policy, explained that the country promotes cooperation bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally but opposes protectionism, unilateral sanctions and maximum-pressure tactics. In addition, it claimed that China would be "committed to narrowing the North-South gap and supporting and assisting other developing

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[3] Ibid., Chapter 11.
[4] Ibid.

countries" to accelerate their development.[5] In short, China is against the Western countries that it regards as posing a threat to it. Conversely, it sees developing countries as potential associates and wishes to extend support for them.

Faced with the instability of the international order after Russia's Ukraine invasion, China's strong sense of crisis over its own security is likely to produce new initiatives in its relations with the anti-Western world or the developing countries with which it feels affinity. The next section will examine the SCO summit in September 2022 to grasp the emerging trend China is cultivating internationally.

2. Police cooperation within the SCO

On 14 September 2022, in his first foreign trip in almost three years, Xi Jinping left for Kazakhstan, where he was greeted by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, a Mandarin speaker who had secured his rule with Russian and Chinese support during domestic political turmoil the previous January. Xi then travelled to Samarkand, Uzbekistan, where he held face-to-face meetings with the leaders of eleven countries, participated in a China–Russia–Mongolia summit, concluded an "All-weather Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" with Belarus and attended the SCO summit.[6] Through these activities, Xi demonstrated that the SCO had become an organisation led solely by China, rather than by China and Russia as it used to be.

In his speech at the SCO summit, Xi strongly emphasised his anti-US posture and insisted that member states should promote security cooperation towards building a community of common destiny. He then explained the following three measures for achieving this goal:
1. SCO member states should continue joint anti-terrorism exercises to fight against the "three evil forces" (terrorists, separatists and extremists) to effectively address non-traditional security challenges such as data security, biosecurity and space security and crack down on cyber and transnational organised crime.
2. The training by China of 2,000 law-enforcement officers of SCO member states over the next five years, the establishment of the China–SCO Anti-Terrorism Expert Training Base and the strengthening of member states' law-enforcement capacity building in all fields.
3. SCO member states should establish a broad and comprehensive political framework with the Afghan authorities through platforms such as the "SCO-Afghanistan Liaison Meeting" to eradicate hotbeds of terrorism.[7]

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[5] Ibid., Chapter 14.

[6] China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: *Top Stories*, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805.

[7] Xi Jinping, *Full Text of Xi's Speech at SCO Samarkand Summit*, 16 September 2022, http://english.scio.gov.cn/topnews/2022-09/17/content_78424890.htm.

Xi's plans have profound implications. He recognised in point 1 that anti-terrorism measures are an effective way to counter "non-traditional security" challenges including space security. Generally speaking, terrorist organisations do not have the capacity to fulfil space missions. Rather, it is thought that Xi wants to deepen security cooperation with neighbouring countries in the name of SCO's "anti-terrorism" commitment in order to address other challenges. Point 2 indicates that China has plans to export its home-grown law-enforcement methodologies to neighbouring countries. Since there are seven other nations in the SCO as of September 2022 (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan), Beijing expects to train an average of 300 law-enforcement officers for each country. Furthermore, point 3 indicates that China is prepared to expand its involvement in Afghanistan after the American retreat for the security of its own and neighbouring countries.

On the basis of this summit, the SCO issued a lengthy Samarkand Declaration that pledged an improvement in security cooperation among the member states. There had been two permanent bodies established inside the SCO: the Secretariat in Beijing and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, which led the anti-terrorist missions largely in the form of police cooperation. The Chinese version of the Samarkand Declaration announced that the SCO would start considering an upgrade of the RATS to the "Universal Centre for Countering Challenges and Threats to the Security of the SCO Member States" to be located in Russia upon the decision made by the top leaders in Samarkand. The Declaration also included the plan to establish an "SCO Information Security Centre" in Kazakhstan and an "SCO Centre for Combating Cross-Border Organised Crime" in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the Declaration mentioned a third permanent body, called the "SCO Anti-Drug Centre", would be set up in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.[8] Interestingly, the English version publicised by the SCO Secretariat slightly differed from the Chinese and failed to mention an upgrade of the RATS.[9]

When the world was condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the initiative to upgrade the RATS and move it to Russia with the aim of deepening security cooperation among its members is very significant. The driving force behind this move must surely have been China, the country that plans to train 2,000 law-enforcement officers for other nations.[10]

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[8] SCO, 上海合作组织成员国元首理事会撒马尔罕宣言 (*The Samarkand declaration of the Heads of State Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*), 16 September 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zyxw/202209/t20220917_10767328.shtml. See also the English version: SCO, *The Samarkand Declaration of the Heads of State Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*, 16 September 2022, http://eng.sectsco.org/load/914622; China's State Council, *Leaders of SCO Member States Sign Samarkand Declaration*, 17 September 2022, http://english.scio.gov.cn/topnews/2022-09/17/content_78424919.htm.

[9] The English version only referred that the member states would establish the listed bodies to "implement" the relevant decision made at the summit. In both versions, it is unclear how the SCO is going to treat the existing RATS located in Tashkent. The official working languages of the SCO are Chinese and Russian but the author is unable to read the latter.

[10] The RATS' daily operation is carried by its Executive Committee based on the decisions made

The SCO has carried out anti-terrorism cooperation among its members since its inception in 2001, but accelerated this in 2014 during Xi's first term. At the Dushanbe Summit in September 2014, member states agreed on the importance of international information security and cracking down on organised cross-border crimes. Insisting that each country has a sovereign right to control and protect its own cyber security, the members pledged to cooperate further in the areas of police and law-enforcement cooperation.[11]

This was also the year in which Xi became more vigilant of what he perceives as threats to China's peace. In March 2014, a large number of students in Taiwan launched the Sunflower Movement in opposition to the signing of a Service Trade Agreement between the island and mainland China. This became the "fuse" for the Umbrella Movement, which erupted in Hong Kong the following September. In addition, in April of the same year, when Xi was visiting Xinjiang, large-scale bombings occurred at the Urumqi railway station. Xi must have viewed the attacks as an attempt to bring about "peaceful evolution" or even a "colour revolution" by the perpetrators under foreign influence. It should also be recalled that 2014 was the year when Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine and became strongly critical against the West after the latter imposed economic sanctions on it. An anti-Western worldview has undoubtedly brought the two leading SCO powers much closer together.

The SCO countries subsequently deepened security cooperation in order to protect their own regimes. In 2015, the RATS began conducting anti-terrorism cyber exercises. China and Russia also signed the bilateral "Agreement to Secure International Intelligence Cooperation", setting out principles for information exchange and protection. The SCO Astana Summit in 2017 adopted the "Statement on Joint Counteraction to International Terrorism", in which member states agreed on comprehensive measures to prevent and stop internet-based terrorism activities.[12] Information gathering on terrorists had also begun, and by March 2019 some 45,000 individuals were registered in the RATS database.[13]

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by the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee is normally chaired by a person who is from Central Asia and has military or security background. Currently, China dispatches an adviser who came from the Ministry of Public Security. RATS website: *About SCO RATS - Management*, https://ecrats.org/en/about/management.

[11] SCO, *Dushanbe Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, 12 September 2014, http://eng.sectsco.org/load/199902.

[12] SCO, *Statement by the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on Joint Counteraction to International Terrorism*, Astana, 9 June 2017, http://eng.sectsco.org/load/295671; Deng Hao and Li Tianyi, "上合组织信息安全合作：进展、挑战与未来路径" (Information Security Cooperation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Progress, Challenges and Future Roadmap), in 中国信息安全 (*Information Security of China*), August 2021, p. 73-75; Peter Wood, "China Deepens Information Security Cooperation with Central Asian Neighbors", in *OE Watch*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2022), p. 10-11, https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/oe-watch-past-issues/407738/download.

[13] Su Chang and Li Xinwei, "Security Cooperation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Achievements, Challenges and Paths for Further Development", in *China International Studies*, No.

Such cooperation has produced positive results for China. The country has, since 2014, intensified its repression of the Uyghurs, which has gradually drawn international condemnation. In Uzbekistan, where the RATS was located, the government showed no interest in this human-rights issue despite the fact that its majority population of Uzbeks are ethnically close to the Uyghurs. In fact, internet surveillance similar to China's began to be implemented in Uzbekistan at about the same time.[14] Its authoritarian government wished to stabilise and consolidate its power and must have found common cause with the Chinese regime.

The China–US trade war that started in 2017 led Beijing to desire a stronger international coalition with other countries that share its worldviews. Domestically, China first developed advanced technology to monitor the Uyghurs in Xinjiang but subsequently used it nationwide in the fight against Covid-19. In the eyes of a government in Beijing that fears the West is trying to penetrate its society to mobilise anti-regime groups from within, the related equipment and infrastructure of the SCO member states are needed to suppress the "terrorists" residing in each country.[15] Since these people often move across borders, China cannot secure the peace zone demanded by the SCO countries if it leaves the existing situation as it is. Therefore, as a next step in the coming years, China will help them by introducing Chinese-style law-enforcement measures, setting up related surveillance infrastructures and strengthening cyber control in their countries. In other words, at the heart of the Eurasian continent, a group of autocratic governments including Russia has begun regional integration through police cooperation – a very different approach from what has been observed in the European Union (EU).[16]

Furthermore, it is necessary to consider SCO expansion. The organisation has been adding new members and dialogue partners in recent years – especially from the Middle East. During the summit meeting in 2022, Iran's access process was moved forward, and Belarus also made an application. At the dialogue-partner level, the SCO granted new status to Egypt, Qatar and Saudi Arabia and allowed five more countries – Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, the Maldives and Myanmar – to submit applications.[17] All of them are either autocratic in nature or struggling with political instabilities domestically. A Chinese-style national-security formula is more than appealing for these governments.

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88 (May/June 2021), p. 74.

[14] Inga Sikorskaya, "Uzbekistan's Latest Answer to Facebook", in *IWPR Global Voices Central Asia*, 16 June 2016, https://iwpr.net/global-voices/uzbekistans-latest-answer-facebook.

[15] For example, see the following. Deng Hao and Li Tianyi, "上合组织信息安全合作" (Information Security Cooperation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation), cit., p. 76; Sun Chenglong, "边境地区联合反恐作战指挥研究" (Research on joint anti-terrorist operation commanding in border areas), in 武警学院学报 (*Journal of the Armed Police Academy*), Vol. 32, No. 7 (July 2016), p. 15.

[16] Chinese experts are aware of the problem that India, a new member of the SCO since 2017, is the only country not in favour of the governance model advocated by China and Russia. See Bai Lianlei, "印度参与上合组织网络合作的特点和前景" (Features and prospects regarding India's participation in SCO cyber cooperation), in 中国信息安全 (*Information Security of China*), August 2021, p. 89-91.

[17] SCO, *The Samarkand Declaration*, cit. See also SCO website: *Frequently Asked Questions*, http://eng.sectsco.org/docs/about/faq.html.

3. Cooperation between Chinese Beidou and Russian GLONASS satellite systems

Alongside law-enforcement cooperation on the ground, satellite collaboration between China and Russia is another area in the national-security domain that is making outstanding progress. In the future, these satellite systems can be linked together and serve in forming a new way of autocratic governance centred on China.

A new and comprehensive "National Spatial Program" (*guotu kongjian guihua*) has been formulated under the 14th Five-Year Program of China that started in April 2021. According to a document released in May 2019, the new programme would integrate all kinds of existing Chinese development plans on land and at sea, and draw the future of Chinese development and protection over its entire space into a "bird's-eye view". It would be designed in a top-down manner and expected to utilise big data to achieve the best sustainability and efficiency in the use of China's territorial resources.[18]

However, despite the clear importance of the programme, and in contrast to the fact that a number of provincial and city-level governments already published the local versions of it as of November 2022, the national-level "Spatial Program" that should lay the foundation for all of this has not been publicised yet. It is thought that the administration has decided not to do so because it reflects many new measures aiming to safeguard China's national security.

What is perhaps most important is the fact that the Chinese word in the title – *kongjian* – means not only "spatial" but also "space". The National Spatial Program intended to collect big data via various observation facilities, especially satellite systems. China's satellite network consists of the following:
1. a remote sensing satellite system, which is primarily maintained by the organisations under the Ministry of Natural Resources;
2. a communications and broadcasting satellite system, which is likely to be managed by China's state-owned telecommunication companies; and
3. a navigation and positioning satellite system, known as Beidou: the Chinese version of the global positioning system GPS, which is controlled primarily by the People's Liberation Army.

Although they are managed by different bodies, the CCP aims to operate these systems in an integrated manner under its command.[19]

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[18] China's Government, *Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Establishing a National Territory Spatial Planning System with its Supervision and Implementation*, 23 May 2019, http://en.planning.org.cn/planning/view?id=440.

[19] Chisako T. Masuo, "China's 'National Spatial Infrastructure' and Global Governance: Chinese Way of Military–Civil Fusion (MCF) over the Ocean", in *Maritime Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2021), p. 30-33, DOI

Among these systems, Beidou, which was developed earliest and completed in 2020 for global operation, is the most essential for Chinese national security as it can be used for missile guidance. Utilising its positioning function, various applied technologies have been developed not only for private users but also for public authorities. It was reported that, by the end of June 2022, two million pieces of equipment that rely on the Beidou system had been installed in national-security-related contexts in China – such as in the public-security and emergency-operation fields (with 1.8 million of these items being used in public security).[20] Big data gathering and its utilisation is the key to the Xi Jinping administration's Military–Civil Fusion (*junmin ronghe*) strategy.

On the basis of its Beidou satellite system, China had steadily advanced bilateral cooperation with Russia, which operates its own navigation-satellite system called GLONASS. On 4 February 2022, President Xi held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin just before the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics, and the two issued the joint statement that described Sino-Russian partnership as without limits. The two governments signed 15 cooperation documents, one of which was the "Agreement between the China Satellite Navigation Committee (People's Republic of China) and the Roscosmos State Corporation for Space Activities (Russian Federation) on Time Interoperation of Beidou and GLONASS Global Satellite Navigation Systems".[21] According to Chinese media, synchronisation of the time across the satellite systems is essential in order to achieve accurate positioning. Therefore, the signing of this agreement will allow users to receive better services using the information coming from both systems.[22] In other words, China and Russia have taken an important step forward in fusing their satellite networks.

Interestingly, it was again in the fatal year 2014 that China and Russia embarked on satellite cooperation. In June, the two governments signed a memorandum of understanding on satellite navigation cooperation. In January 2015, the China Satellite Navigation Committee and Roscosmos officially set up the "China-Russia Satellite Navigation Committee for Major Strategic Cooperation", under which four specialised working groups were established. During President Putin's visit

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10.1080/09733159.2021.2024383.

[20] China Association of Satellite Navigation and Positioning, 北斗系统发展进入新阶段，推动北斗' 走出去' (Beidou system's development enters a new phase, pushing Beidou to 'go global'), 10 October 2022, http://www.glac.org.cn/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=2&id=9014; China's State Council Information Office, *China's BeiDou Navigation Satellite System in the New Era*, November 2022, https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202211/05/WS6365cfe7a3105ca1f2274368.html.

[21] China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Wang Yi Meets with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov*, 3 February 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202202/t20220204_10638864.html; 中俄签署一系列合作文件 (*China and Russia sign a series of cooperation documents*), 4 February 2022, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/zyxw/202202/t20220204_10638957.shtml.

[22] Zhang Jiwei, "俄罗斯全球卫星导航系统的发展历程与合作现状" (History of Russian Global Navigation Satellite System development and current status of cooperation), in 中华网 (*Zhonghua Net*), 9 February 2022, https://military.china.com/news/13004177/20220209/41244501_all.html.

to China in 2016, the two countries signed an agreement on the full protection of intellectual property rights in space technology. They launched the "China-Russia Satellite Navigation Service Platform for Monitoring, Observation and Evaluation" in 2017. In November 2018, they again concluded the "Cooperation Agreement on the Peaceful Use of the Beidou-GLONASS Global Satellite Navigation Systems". Furthermore, in 2021, it was also decided that both sides would establish three ground stations on each other's territory. The February 2022 agreement was built on the foundation of these developments.[23]

Immediately after the Beijing Olympics ended, Russia launched the invasion of Ukraine. Despite this, China continued satellite cooperation with Russia. On 27 September, the "Committee for Major Strategic Cooperation" held an online meeting to sign another document that specified where to establish the three ground stations in each country: Russia in Shanghai, Urumqi and Changchun, and China in Obninsk (near Moscow), Irkutsk and Petropavlovsk Kamchatsky on the Pacific side of the Kamchatka Peninsula.[24]

China has high expectations of its cooperation with Russia. GLONASS is stronger than its Chinese counterparts in higher-latitude areas, as Russia's satellites are launched with a larger orbital inclination in order to cover its huge territory near the Arctic. This is attractive to the Chinese. According to Chinese news coverage, the accuracy of both Beidou and American GPS is currently about 2–3 m for civilian use, but Beidou reaches to 0.1 m for military use in contrast to 0.3 m for GPS. In China, it is held that Beidou has surpassed the quality of GPS thanks to its interoperability with GLONASS.[25]

Russia, which is struggling in its war against Ukraine, must see cooperation with China as an opportunity to rebuild its own satellite capabilities. During the war, the information gathered by Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellites, a type of remote-sensing satellite that can observe the Earth's surface even in cloudy weather, were provided to Ukraine by forces sympathetic to the country. At present, there is no information that China is providing SAR satellite information to Russia – but it will surely only be a matter of time before Russia increases its reliance on China's satellite network, which is stronger in confidentiality and has a wider variety of satellites (including the SAR variety).

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Defence Times Front Runner, "美国钳制中国无门！中俄互设卫星导航站，百度地图已从GPS切换为北斗优先定位 (No way for the US to clamp down on China! Baidu Maps has switched its priority positioning from GPS to Beidou as China and Russia set up satellite navigation stations for each other)", in 网易新闻 (*Wangyi News*) 9 October 2022, https://c.m.163.com/news/a/HJ5V9TKD0515CCSC.html; "China's BeiDou Outpaces GPS to Become Top Navigation Service Provider", in *Global Times*, 14 December 2022, https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202212/1281885.shtml.

[25] "中俄开展卫星导航合作，'北斗'+'格洛纳斯'能否对抗GPS？" (China and Russia launch satellite navigation cooperation: Can 'Beidou' + 'GLONASS' oppose the GPS?), in 电子技术设计 (*Electronic technology design*), 30 September 2022, https://www.ednchina.com/news/a9994.html.

Russia is not the only country in which China is promoting satellite cooperation. It has also signed cooperation documents on Beidou with African, Arab and other countries. Unlike the American GPS, Beidou is equipped with a two-way short-message-exchange function between the satellites and end terminals such as mobile phones. The Beidou 3 short-message function will soon be available to the public. China is also keen to develop application technology that utilises the big data collected from the sky and elsewhere to improve human life. Apart from the already-mentioned national-security sector, the Beidou system is already being used in various industries and domains in China – including transportation and logistics, disaster prevention and mitigation, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and also in power and telecommunications infrastructures.[26] China's affordable and advanced technologies are attractive to many developing countries not only from political and security perspectives but also from economic ones.

Conclusions

The Xi Jinping administration has pursued integrated and comprehensive responses to both internal and external threats simultaneously. Based on the fear of foreign orchestration of domestic mobilisation for "peaceful evolution" or "colour revolution", it has mobilised law-enforcement bodies and developed surveillance infrastructure in order to prevent foreign penetration into its territory. Its signature governance system of using big data to control society continues to be strengthened by connecting different types of information gathered by surveillance cameras on streets, space satellites watching the globe from the space and various observation devices in the ocean – all under the watchful eye of the CCP.

Due to the nature of perceived threats to China, the administration is also extending its protective efforts to other countries. It has deepened police cooperation within the SCO and initiated positioning-satellite collaboration with Russia. If the capacity building of the neighbouring countries progresses in this way, China could eventually establish a zone in Central Eurasia "liberated" from Western influence. If it could attract more non-Western countries, this zone would expand further and the construction of the "fair" international order advocated for so long by Beijing would gain momentum.

Unfortunately, the chances of success for such a Chinese dream are higher than many Europeans may imagine. From 7 to 10 December 2022, Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Saudi Arabia, also attending the first China–Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit and the first China–Arab States Summit. China and Saudi Arabia agreed to strengthen coordination in all areas of defence and security,

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[26] China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS), "China's BeiDou Records Remarkable Achievements in Practical Use by More than Half the World", in *CIFTIS News*, 15 March 2022, https://www.ciftis.org/article/11797665061924864.html.

including cracking down on "terrorists".[27] The GCC Summit announced in its joint statement that China and the Gulf states would deepen cooperation in many areas including energy, advanced technology and space technology.[28] The China–Arab States Summit also released the Riyadh Declaration, which underlined the importance of the "Digital Security Cooperation Initiative" signed by China and the Arab League, and promised to promote further cooperation to protect "global cyberspace governance".[29] It was reported in China that Xi proposed that the Arab states held various exchanges between the security forces and militaries of the two sides, as well as China's training of 1,500 law-enforcement personnel to construct "smart police" and to improve cyber security for Arab countries.[30] Chinese-style governance seems to be spreading, not only to Central Asia but also to the Middle East and beyond at a rapid speed.

Therefore, it is time for Europeans to think long and hard about how to protect their traditional way of life – perhaps by strengthening collaboration and providing technologies with and to developing countries together with other developed powers. Clearly, Chinese efforts are extremely convenient for autocratic governments seeking to prolong their rule. If it provides non-Western countries with practical "law-enforcement" methodologies – how to use cameras and satellites to control domestic society – rulers that would benefit from this will rally round China. This will naturally strengthen the solidarity of autocratic governments and put them at odds with the ideas of liberal democracies that oppose the oppression of individuals.

The Xi administration, troubled by perceptions of internal and external threats and actively engaged in the struggle against them, is working hard to build friendships with non-Western and developing countries. If Europe and its partners do not take this challenge seriously, China's paranoid threat perception will deepen a Cold War-like split in the global order of political systems and ideologies in the near future.

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Via dei Montecatini, 17 - I-00186 Rome, Italy
T +39 06 6976831
iai@iai.it
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