



Russian Concerns over Chinese Espionage

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past several years there has been much discussion regarding closer relations between Russia and China, particularly within the military realm. As an example of this growing proximity, the first excerpt from the pro-business daily *Business Online* quotes President Putin, who remarked during the recent Valdai Conference, that while there are no discussions at present regarding a military alliance with China, “theoretically it is quite possible to imagine such a thing,” and “in principle, we are not going to rule it out.”

Some of President Putin’s hesitancy may stem from concerns over certain trends within China. The second excerpt from the centrist *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye* [*Independent Military Review*], describes how recent Chinese legislation has “ordered all Chinese citizens and companies to work for the intelligence services.” According to this legislation, “all [Chinese] citizens of the PRC and all Chinese companies are obliged to unconditionally cooperate with the special services.” The author stresses that “tens of millions of Chinese scattered around the world are obliged to voluntarily become spies or counterintelligence agents.” He concludes by arguing that even before this legislation took effect, the “ordinary Chinese were not only ready, but also willing to provide assistance to the special services. For a Chinese patriot, this behavior is a matter of honor, valor and heroism.... This approach is fueled by centuries of cultivated respect for people in uniform and patriotism.”



President Vladimir Putin with President of the People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping during a tour of the Moscow Kremlin. June 2019.

Source: Vitaly Kuzman, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60669/photos> CCA 4.0

The third excerpt from the official Russian news agency, *TASS*, suggests that despite the warmer relations with China, Russian officials are still willing to use forceful measures to protect their interests. The article describes the recent arrest of a Russian scientist for allegedly “transferring to China secret Russian developments ‘associated with alternative power sources.’” This is not the first such arrest; this past summer, another Russian scientist was detained for supposedly passing classified information about Russian submarines to the Chinese. While relations between Russia and China have grown closer over the past decade, mutual mistrust may prevent the development of a full-fledged military alliance. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“In practice, this means that nearly one and a half billion Chinese citizens and tens of millions of Chinese scattered around the world are obliged to voluntarily become spies or counterintelligence agents.”

Source: “Путин не исключил, что Россия и Китай могут заключить военный союз (Putin does not rule out that Russia and China could conclude a military alliance),” *БИЗНЕС Online*, 22 October 2020. <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/news/485588>

Russian President Vladimir Putin did not rule out the possibility of a military alliance between Moscow and Beijing, although this is not necessary for both states at the moment. “You can imagine everything. We have always assumed that our relations have reached such a degree of interaction and trust that we generally do not need this, but theoretically it is quite possible to imagine such a thing,” Putin said during the Valdai discussion club.

...Putin stressed that such cooperation enhances the defenses of both armies. “And Russia is interested in this, and China. How it will develop further, life will show, but now we are not setting such a task (about a military alliance), but, in principle, we are not going to rule it out. Let’s see,” added the head of state.

Source: “Тотальная разведка по-пекински (Peking Total Intelligence),” *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye*, 5 November 2020. https://nvo.ng.ru/gpolit/2020-11-05/10_1116_gpolit1.html

The secret services of the PRC are constantly and very active in all parts of the world and cause endless headaches for almost all government leaders and heads of private structures in developed countries.... The spies of the Celestial Empire are engaged in all types of theft of secrets: from economic, industrial and commercial to purely everyday, but for various reasons kept secret....

...The Law on National Intelligence was adopted in the PRC in 2017. It ordered all Chinese citizens and companies to work for the intelligence services. Article 7 of this act states that “any organization or citizen must support, assist and cooperate with the state intelligence in accordance with the law.” And Article 14 empowers intelligence agencies to demand such support. It reads: “State intelligence agencies in the legitimate conduct of intelligence work may require the relevant authorities, organizations or citizens to provide the necessary support, assistance and cooperation.”

Thus, all citizens of the PRC and all Chinese companies are obliged to unconditionally cooperate with the special services. And we are not talking about their right or desire, but about their duty. In practice, this means that nearly one and a half billion Chinese citizens and tens of millions of Chinese scattered around the world are obliged to voluntarily become spies or counterintelligence agents.

...Ordinary Chinese were not only ready, but also willing to provide assistance to the special services. For a Chinese patriot, this behavior is a matter of honor, valor and heroism. The law is law, but ordinary Chinese even before it cooperated with their special services, and without any coercion and with great willingness. This approach is fueled by centuries of cultivated respect for people in uniform and patriotism.

Source: “Источник: суд Томска арестовал ученого Луканина по делу о госизмене в пользу Китая (Source: Tomsk court arrested scientist Lukanin in the case of high treason in favor of China),” *TASS*, 2 October 2020. <https://tass.ru/proisshestiya/9618095>

The court in Tomsk sent to the pre-trial detention center scientist Alexander Lukanin, who had been detained earlier in the framework of a criminal case on treason in favor of China....

In turn, a law enforcement source clarified to TASS that Lukanin was detained on suspicion of transferring to China secret Russian developments ‘associated with alternative power sources.’