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Axis of Disruption: Chinese and Russian Influence and Interference in Europe

Introduction to a New RUSI Series on Russia and
China in Europe

Karin von Hippel



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Contents

I. Setting the Scene	1
II. The Evolving Threat	3
Russia and the West	3
The US and China	4
Europe and China	5
III. Russia and China: Convergence and Divergence	7
IV. The RUSI Series on Russia and China in Europe	11
V. Conclusions: Policy Considerations and the Coronavirus Pandemic	13
About the Author	15

I. Setting the Scene

IN TODAY'S MULTIPOLAR world, insecurity has increased due to a number of factors, notably: the developing great power rivalry between the US and China; the seeming withdrawal of the US from its traditional global leadership role; a revanchist Russia; and – for Europe – the implications of Brexit. The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated these tensions and added a layer of uncertainty and complexity. In response, many European states and institutions are rethinking and resetting their foreign and security policies.¹

For any of these revised policies to be impactful, however, the countries involved require an improved understanding of these tectonic shifts and how they affect Europe. Today, there are simply too many gaps in our knowledge. RUSI's new series on *Russia and China in Europe* focuses on one significant aspect of this challenge: what are the two countries doing in Europe, beyond their traditional bilateral relationships?

This introductory paper provides an overview of the series in four parts: first, it discusses the evolving threat to European countries posed by Russia and China; second, it compares and contrasts the behaviour, strategies and tactics of Russia and China in Europe; third, it outlines the issues that will be addressed in the series; and finally, it discusses future policy considerations.

1. For the purpose of this paper, 'Europe' and 'European' will include the UK, while if the EU as an institution is referenced, it will be understood to no longer include the UK.

II. The Evolving Threat

Russia and the West

SCHOLARS HAVE ANALYSED in great detail the ebbs and flows of the relationship between the West and the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War, its immediate aftermath, and later, with Russia.² The main point to emphasise here is that any hopes of a rapprochement between Russia and the West after the Soviet Union were dashed once Vladimir Putin became president in 2000. In the ensuing years, he began to consolidate his power and promoted a distinctly Russian vision and approach to international relations.³ Putin also harboured deep resentment about the collapse of the Soviet Union, describing it in a 2005 speech as ‘the greatest geopolitical catastrophe’ of the 20th century.⁴ He focused, single-mindedly, on improving and asserting Russia’s position and power on the world stage.

From the mid-2000s, he did not shy away from direct action to achieve his goals, including taking revenge on those who he felt betrayed the Soviet Union and Russia. A series of events confirmed the new reality and potential threat: the assassination of Alexander Litvinenko with radioactive polonium in London in 2006; the Russia–Georgia war in 2008; the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014; military interference in the Syrian civil war (from September 2015); the country’s subsequent election interference in the US and Europe; and the attempted murder of Sergei Skripal and his daughter with a nerve agent in Salisbury in 2018.

In contrast, concern about the threat posed by China to the West has only come into the spotlight in recent years. Hence, it requires closer analysis.

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2. For an overview of US–Russia relations, see Eugene Rumer and Richard Sokolsky, ‘Thirty Years of U.S. Policy Toward Russia: Can the Vicious Circle Be Broken?’, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2019. For an overview of EU–Russia relations, see Dmitri Trenin (ed.), ‘The End of an Era in EU–Russia Relations’, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Moscow Center, May 2013. See also Gordon Corera, *Russians Among Us: Sleeper Cells, Ghost Stories and the Hunt for Putin’s Agents* (London: Harper Collins, 2020).
 3. See Roy Allison, *Russia, the West, and Military Intervention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Corera, *Russians Among Us*.
 4. Again in 2018, before the presidential elections in Russia, he remarked at a public forum that he would reverse the collapse of the Soviet Union if he had the chance to alter modern Russian history. See Adam Taylor, ‘Putin Says He Wishes the Soviet Union Had Not Collapsed. Many Russians Agree’, *Washington Post*, 3 March 2018.

The US and China

For decades, relations between the West and China were grounded in a flawed hypothesis: that engagement with China would bring about desired democratic reforms. For the US, this notion can be traced back to October 1967, when then presidential candidate Richard Nixon published an article in *Foreign Affairs*, declaring: 'The world cannot be safe until China changes. Thus our aim, to the extent that we can influence events, should be to induce change'.⁵ Two years later, when he assumed the presidency, he initiated the 'opening to China' policy shift that would endure for the next five decades, despite several political challenges along the way, notably the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.⁶

The engagement policy began to erode during the Obama administration, especially after President Xi Jinping assumed power in 2012, and the public spotlight shifted to China's more blatant breaches of international law and norms, including the theft of intellectual property, cyber attacks and military expansion in the South China Sea.⁷ Publicly, however, the Obama administration still advocated a strategy of positive engagement. President Barack Obama's 2015 National Security Strategy 'welcomed the rise of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous China', but, in an indication of the shift, it also noted that the US government 'remain[ed] alert to China's military modernization and reject[ed] any role for intimidation in resolving territorial disputes'.⁸

When President Donald Trump moved into the White House in early 2017, the policy assumed a far more confrontational tone, albeit an inconsistent and erratic one. President Trump's 2017 National Security Strategy designated China as the US's main geostrategic, economic and military competitor.⁹ In May 2020, the White House published a document that went even further, publicly declaring that 40 years of engagement had failed and offering up a 'competitive approach'.¹⁰ Trump's administration has repeatedly decried his predecessors' naivety on China with respect to the engagement policy.¹¹ Trump has also challenged China in numerous ways, notably by launching a trade war, and, more recently, in blaming China for the coronavirus

5. Richard M Nixon, 'Asia After Viet Nam', *Foreign Affairs* (Vol. 46, No. 1, October 1967), pp. 111–25.

6. See Orville Schell, 'The Death of Engagement', *The Wire China*, 7 June 2020.

7. White House, 'National Security Strategy', February 2015, pp. 10, 13, 24. Some point to Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick's 2005 speech to the National Committee on US–China Relations, when he urged China to become a 'responsible stakeholder', indicating the mounting frustration that China was taking advantage of the current system.

8. White House, 'National Security Strategy', February 2015, pp. 2–3.

9. White House, 'National Security Strategy of the United States of America', December 2017.

10. See White House, 'United States Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China', May 2020, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/U.S.-Strategic-Approach-to-The-Peoples-Republic-of-China-Report-5.20.20.pdf>>, accessed 28 June 2020.

11. See, for example, Mike Pence, 'Remarks by Vice President Pence on the Administration's Policy Toward China', 4 October 2018.

pandemic.¹² China has responded in kind, accusing the US of starting the pandemic and hitting back hard with various tariffs.¹³

Europe and China

For the EU, the embrace of the engagement policy was perhaps less fulsome than it had been in the US, as the block itself was evolving and expanding ever since its forerunner, the European Economic Community, established formal diplomatic ties with China in 1975.¹⁴ Over the past few decades, there have been various attempts to craft a distinct European policy towards China. Individual European countries – principally the UK, Germany and France – have also occasionally attempted to build a privileged relationship with Beijing. There have even been disagreements between Europe and the US over China – notably in the early 2000s, when the EU made an unsuccessful attempt, hindered by US pressure, to lift the arms embargo on China that had been imposed after the Tiananmen Square massacre. Overall, however, the EU's China policy has remained close to that of the US.

That being said, European countries – including its largest economy, Germany – adhered to the engagement policy slightly longer than the US.¹⁵ Europeans had, of course, also been delighted with significant Chinese investments, especially in those countries recovering from the Eurozone crisis. China formally moved up the European threat barometer in early 2019, as many countries became increasingly alarmed by several aspects of China's behaviour. As Valbona Zeneli explains: 'Concerns include the perceived role of the Chinese state in the economy, the lack of reciprocity and fair competition, risk of losing national competitiveness and technological leadership, as well as more traditional security concerns related to critical infrastructure, strategic assets, and defense technologies'.¹⁶ In March 2019, the European Commission referred to China as a 'systemic rival' for the first time.¹⁷ This is when EU policy shifted from 'convergence' to 'divergence'.¹⁸

12. For a description of the actions taken by the Trump administration since it assumed power, see White House, 'United States Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China'.

13. See, for example, Tanner Brown, 'Inside China's Campaign to Blame the U.S. for the Coronavirus Pandemic', *Market Watch*, 15 March 2020, <<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/inside-chinas-campaign-to-blame-the-us-for-the-coronavirus-pandemic-2020-03-15>>, accessed 28 June 2020.

14. See Julianne Smith and Torrey Taussig, 'The Old World and the Middle Kingdom: Europe Wakes up to China's Rise', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2019; Congressional Research Service, 'The European Union and China', *In Focus*, last updated 1 April 2019.

15. Author interview with German minister, London, September 2019. See also Smith and Taussig, 'The Old World and the Middle Kingdom'; Noah Barkin, 'Germany's Strategic Gray Zone with China', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 25 March 2020, <<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/03/25/germany-s-strategic-gray-zone-with-china-pub-81360>>, accessed 18 June 2020; Andreas Fulda, 'Germany's China Policy of "Change Through Trade" Has Failed', *RUSI Commentary*, 1 June 2020.

16. See Valbona Zeneli, 'Mapping China's Investments in Europe', *The Diplomat*, 14 March 2019.

17. European Commission, 'EU-China – A Strategic Outlook', 12 March 2019.

18. Mathieu Duchâtel, 'A Defensive Europe in Search of Rebalance', *Echowall*, 28 May 2020.

Effort has subsequently gone into establishing new procedures at the EU level as well as in some individual countries, such as blocking external investments in critical industries. The Trump administration has also been applying significant pressure on European countries to move away from partnerships with China, with the Huawei debate being the most public.¹⁹ But some analysts assert that US pressure played less of a role in European policy decisions than the very real concerns that European countries were facing in their respective relationships with China.²⁰

Even then, notwithstanding official documents and public policy pronouncements by EU officials, views about China have been far from uniform across the continent, and indeed across the Atlantic. In fact, one significant takeaway from the 2020 Munich Security Conference, attended by a mix of senior European, US, Chinese and Russian officials, was that there was no common approach on China. Divisions existed within Europe, and between Europe and the US. These have hindered the West from adopting a unified strategy and response, which can only strengthen China's geopolitical position.

19. Trump's pressure on senior European officials was cited in several author interviews.

20. See Duchâtel, 'A Defensive Europe in Search of Rebalance'. For a recent example, see Thomas Erdbrink and Christina Anderson, 'Fears for Volvo Expose Sour Turn in Sweden's Ties With China', *New York Times*, 14 June 2020.

III. Russia and China: Convergence and Divergence

EUROPEAN STATES MAY be growing more alert to Russian and Chinese challenges to the Western-dominated international order, but their assessments of the threat and responses to it are not in sync. This is further complicated because – superficial similarities notwithstanding – China and Russia have different short- and medium-term goals and strategies in Europe. Moreover, it is still not known to what extent they are learning from each other and working together, though early assessments indicate that both are happening to a degree.²¹ Yet, it would be a mistake to lump the two countries together, whether by objectives or methods, or to assume they are working in tandem, even if their ultimate goal of challenging the West may be similar.

On the one hand, Russia is playing the long game in Europe and uses a range of hybrid and covert tactics to shake the public faith in European and Western democratic and security institutions. Russia perceives these institutions, especially the EU and NATO, as existential threats to its own way of life and future ambitions.²² Under Putin, Russia has no interest in joining the European or Western clubs. Instead, its foreign policy and actions demonstrate that it aims for these clubs to be as weak as possible. When the evidence suggests Russian involvement – for example, in shooting down the Malaysian Airlines flight in 2014, or with their ‘little green men’ in Crimea, or in France’s presidential elections in 2017, or in the attempted poisoning of Skripal – Russian officials blatantly deny it. In today’s post-truth world, it seems that truth can be set aside with little consequence.

China, on the other hand, has a different strategic objective: ensuring that Europe does not make common cause with the US in circumscribing China’s global room for manoeuvre, while deflecting any European criticism of China’s human rights record. So, while acting covertly in some areas, China has also been operating very openly in Europe, making major investments in strategic industries, building critical infrastructure and providing large-scale loans to a number of European countries, as well as globally through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).²³

21. Discussion with Five Eyes experts on China, RUSI, 5 April 2019.

22. See Mark Galeotti, *Controlling Chaos: How Russia Manages Its Political War in Europe* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, August 2017), pp. 6–16; John Arquilla et al., ‘Russian Strategic Intentions: A Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) White Paper’, US Department of Defense, May 2019, pp. 43–53; Corera, *Russians Among Us*.

23. Launched in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) seeks to strengthen global connectivity and cooperation with China through hard and soft infrastructure projects. While China has promoted the initiative as a development strategy, questions have arisen over project quality and indebtedness to Chinese lenders, often Chinese state-owned banks. See Raffaello Pantucci and

In addition to bilateral investments and partnerships, China launched its own scheme for central and eastern European countries, often referred to as the 16+1 initiative (though now it is '17+1', with the addition of Greece), to forge partnerships with countries where there will likely be a more sympathetic view of Chinese interests. Presumably, this will also provide a bulwark against a common EU approach.²⁴

Thus far, this tactic seems to be working, even if the reality of Chinese investment is less than the promise.²⁵ On repeated occasions, China's closer European friends, notably Greece, Hungary and Portugal, have blocked EU policy on China.²⁶ For example, in March 2017, Hungary prevented the EU from reaching a common stance by refusing to sign a joint EU letter on human rights violations in China.²⁷ Hungary has also recently used emergency powers, which the government legislated in order to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, to push through a highly controversial rail project with China, and decreed that the details of that deal must remain secret for years to come.²⁸

Ironically, in many respects, one could even argue that the one European country now deeply concerned about China – Germany – was also partially responsible for smaller and poorer European countries turning to China for financial support in the first place. Austerity measures put in place by the EU, led by its wealthiest member after the 2008 financial crash, indirectly forced countries such as Greece and Portugal to seek bailouts where they could find support. It is, therefore, understandable that these countries occasionally defend China in European decision-making bodies.²⁹

Like Russia, China also consistently denies interference in European affairs. In China's case, this includes the same range of activities that the US is concerned about: industrial espionage, theft

Sarah Lain, *China's Eurasian Pivot: The Silk Road Economic Belt*, RUSI Whitehall Paper 88 (London: Taylor and Francis, 2017). For a comprehensive overview of Chinese global investments and construction since 2005, see AEI, 'China Global Investment Tracker', <<https://www.aei.org/china-global-investment-tracker/>>, accessed 15 June 2020.

24. See Justyna Szczudlik, *Seven Years of the 16+1: An Assessment of China's 'Multilateral Bilateralism' in Central Europe* (Paris: Ifri, 2019).
25. Andreas Vou, 'Subsiding Promises: China's Weakening Grip on Central and Eastern Europe', Visegrad Insight, 24 March 2020.
26. For example, Greece blocking an EU statement in June 2017. See Robin Emmott and Angeliki Koutantou, 'Greece Blocks EU Statement on China Human Rights at U.N.', *Reuters*, 18 June 2017; Laurens Cerulus and Jakob Hanke Vela, 'Enter the Dragon', *Politico*, last updated 25 June 2018; Keegan Elmer, 'Europe's "17+1" Countries Dissatisfied with China Relations, Report Says, as Summit is Postponed', *South China Morning Post*, 7 April 2020.
27. See Valerie Hopkins and Michael Peel, 'Hungary Tests EU Diplomatic Unity with Go-It-Alone Foreign Policy', *Financial Times*, 7 January 2020.
28. See Valerie Hopkins, 'Hungary To Keep Details of Beijing-Funded Rail Link Secret', *Financial Times*, 2 April 2020.
29. See Emmott and Koutantou, 'Greece Blocks EU Statement on China Human Rights at U.N.'.

of intellectual property, cyber attacks and data breaches, such as the hack of EU cables that lasted for several years.³⁰ China also refutes the claims that its large-scale civilian port projects (the Maritime Silk Road) will ever be used for military purposes.³¹

Unlike Russia, China will allow some of these issues, such as intellectual property protection and a fair trading environment, to be discussed in various trade and other negotiations.³² In late April 2019, President Xi remarked at an international forum in Beijing on the BRI: 'We will overhaul and abolish unjustified regulations, subsidies and practices that impede fair competition and distort the market'.³³ That said, over the years, China has made similar promises and simply not fulfilled them.³⁴

The coronavirus pandemic has only accelerated the learning curve and reinforced the growing concern about China. Far too many countries now realise how overly dependent they have been on China for critical goods, often to their detriment. On 14 July, partly due to US sanctions, but also due to pressure from a number of Conservative MPs, the UK government announced that Huawei equipment must be removed from the UK's 5G network by 2027.³⁵

30. David E Sanger and Steven Erlanger, 'Hacked European Cables Reveal a World of Anxiety About Trump, Russia and Iran', *New York Times*, 18 December 2018.

31. For some observers, Chinese outward investment through the BRI has raised concerns over a potential Chinese grand strategy involving dual-use military-civil infrastructure and the promotion of Chinese technology and standards. See Veerle Nouwens, 'China's 21st Century Maritime Silk Road: Implications for the UK', *RUSI Occasional Papers* (February 2019).

32. See, for example, Jenny Leonard et al., 'Trump Touts U.S.-China Phase One Trade Deal, Delays Tariffs', *Bloomberg*, last updated on 12 October 2019; *BBC News*, 'Trade War: What You Need to Know about US-China Talks', 30 April 2019.

33. *BBC News*, 'Xi Jinping Vows Transparency Over Belt and Road', 26 April 2019.

34. Keith Johnson, 'How Europe Fell Out of Love With China', *Foreign Policy*, 25 June 2020.

35. Leo Kelion, 'Huawei 5G Kit Must Be Removed From UK by 2027', *BBC News*, 14 July 2020.

IV. The RUSI Series on Russia and China in Europe

RUSI HAS PUBLISHED numerous studies on Russia and China over the years, but we have not combined analysis of both in one series.³⁶ Events over the last few years indicate that such an approach could now make an important contribution. The onset of the coronavirus pandemic has added to the significance of this series. The upcoming presidential elections in the US – and the divergent foreign policy paths the US could take if Joe Biden or Donald Trump wins – are inevitably factoring into government thinking as well. The results will be crucial to the future of the transatlantic alliance, and indeed, international security more generally.

Meanwhile, Russia has not backed off its interference activities. For example, US lawmakers were warned in February 2020 that Russia was again meddling in the US elections, while other leaked stories have alleged that Russia was paying the Taliban to kill US troops in Afghanistan.³⁷

Through this series, we will dig deeper to understand what is happening in a number of European countries. We explore whether there has been any collaboration or learning between Russia and China. Critically, we investigate whether these various activities and investments – both overt and covert – have made an impact, and if so, how and where.

In particular, the country studies examine five main themes, depending on the specific country context, as follows:

1. **Political interference and influence.** Chinese and Russian political tactics and strategies in Europe, with a focus on salient power politics and dynamics.
2. **Media.** Media activity by both Russia and China and the impact on strategies of influence in the host country and on Europe more widely.
3. **Economic strategies, interests, critical industries and infrastructure.** Russian and Chinese investment strategies in Europe, niche industries of interest, the impact of

36. See, for example, Charles Parton, 'China–UK Relations: Where to Draw the Border Between Influence and Interference?', *RUSI Occasional Papers* (February 2019). Parton revealed the extent of China's involvement in the UK – in universities, in politics, in business, in critical national infrastructure and elsewhere, and discussed both the positive and negative aspects of the relationship to help raise awareness in the UK.

37. Adam Goldman et al., 'Lawmakers Are Warned that Russia is Meddling to Re-Elect Trump', *New York Times*, 20 February 2020, last updated 1 July 2020; Ellen Nakashima et al., 'Russian Bounties to Taliban-Linked Militants Resulted in Deaths of U.S. Troops, According to Intelligence Assessments', *Washington Post*, 29 June 2020.

those strategies on the host country, and the response to these investments (such as laws passed to protect industries deemed critical to national security).

4. **Culture and education.** Existing cultural, historical and religious ties between Russia and China and the host country, and how these ties are used to influence local culture and educational systems.
5. **Intelligence, cyber attacks and organised crime.** The evolution of such activities by Russia and China in the host country historically, and how these developed over time to employ modern techniques.

V. Conclusions: Policy Considerations and the Coronavirus Pandemic

THE GOAL OF this series is to help fill the knowledge gaps through country studies, and thereby contribute to more informed decision-making by all concerned, including the public, civil society, the private sector and governments. This should also help countries build necessary resilience to mitigate against any negative impacts.

While it may not always be possible to demonstrate Chinese or Russian government involvement, as much of it is carried out in the shadows, at the very least, shining a light on their attempts to influence can be instructive. Neither country wants the negative publicity that comes with reports by universities, think tanks, the media and civil society organisations. Bellingcat, an online investigative journalism organisation that uses open source techniques and taps into citizen journalism, has been highly successful in exposing illegal activities by states and criminal groups, including Russia (such as the country's involvement in the Skripal poisoning).³⁸ This is one way of raising the cost of malign behaviour.

At the same time, it will also be important for European countries to determine how and when to engage with both countries. Thus far, policies of engagement as currently constructed have not worked. To state the obvious, neither Russia nor China have become liberal democracies, as many had hoped. It may be that we need a new term, given that so many others, such as 'constructive engagement', have negative connotations.³⁹

What is clear is that bespoke engagement policies are required, even in the face of pressure from the Trump administration to make what in reality is a false choice between partnering with China or the US. Angela Merkel's oft-repeated remark, that 'we are not just partners, but also competitors', applies to both Russia and China. Europe needs Russia and China, and vice versa, even if European countries will have to collaborate in a careful and considered way. At the same time, they will need to articulate what they are doing and why to their publics, which have grown understandably nervous about the two countries.

38. For more information, see Bellingcat, 'News', <www.bellingcat.com>, accessed 2 July 2020; Bellingcat Investigation Team, 'Identifying the Separatists Linked to the Downing of MH17', 19 June 2019, <<https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2019/06/19/identifying-the-separatists-linked-to-the-downing-of-mh17/>>, accessed 15 June 2020.

39. These negative connotations include, for example, Ronald Reagan's policy towards South Africa during Apartheid.

Finally, it is still too early to determine how the coronavirus pandemic will impact longer-term relationships with China. Some governments, as in Austria, Hungary and Serbia, are content with continued Chinese investment, and do not perceive anything particularly threatening in being influenced by or in currying favour with powers such as China and Russia. As noted, Hungary has used its emergency powers to finalise a controversial rail deal with China (the most expensive such investment in Hungary's history), while Serbia has repeatedly made unflattering comparisons between the supposed largesse of China's humanitarian aid and the allegedly inferior help Serbia got from other European nations, despite the fact that the EU is Serbia's largest donor and has sent millions in loans and grants to help during the pandemic.⁴⁰

Other countries, such as Germany, France and the UK, are taking a harder look at their supply chains and just-in-time delivery mechanisms, as well as the overreliance of some industries on China. They are also worried about misinformation campaigns from China and Russia. In June 2020, the EU publicly warned that both countries were spreading misinformation about the origins of the virus.⁴¹ In addition, post-pandemic, it is also not clear if the Chinese government will be able to continue its overseas investments at the same pace, given the likelihood that a financial crisis will endure for some years to come. How a reduced investment environment will impact these relationships is still to be seen.

There is one critical area, however, where European countries could pursue closer collaboration with both Russia and China. While the coronavirus pandemic has taught us how deeply interdependent we are, it should have also taught us how important it is to come together to solve these types of crises. Unfortunately, that important lesson appears to have been overlooked, as we find ourselves instead locking down borders and going it alone in a zero-sum manner. Strengthening the global architecture for tackling these complex, interconnected threats – including anticipating, planning, managing and mitigating them – needs to be done in partnership with all countries. The opportunity to 'build back better and greener' should be seized upon as, ultimately, this would promote the economies of all countries over the long term.

40. Dusan Stojanovic, 'China's "Mask Diplomacy" Wins Support in Eastern Europe', *AP News*, 14 April 2020.

41. For more information about Chinese and Russian misinformation on the pandemic, see Katarina Rebello et al., 'Covid-19 News and Information from State-Backed Outlets Targeting French, German and Spanish-Speaking Social Media Users: Understanding Chinese, Iranian, Russian and Turkish Outlets', Computational Propaganda Project, University of Oxford, 29 June 2020; *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, 'COVID-19 Disinformation From Russia, China More Influential Than Domestic News Sources, Study Finds', 29 June 2020.

About the Author

Karin von Hippel is Director-General of RUSI.

Dr von Hippel joined RUSI after serving for nearly six years in the US Department of State as a Senior Adviser in the Bureau of Counterterrorism, then as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, and finally, as Chief of Staff to General John Allen, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter-ISIL.

Prior to that, she co-directed the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC and was a senior research fellow at the Centre for Defence Studies, King's College London. She has also worked for the UN and the EU in Somalia and Kosovo, and has direct experience in over two dozen conflict zones. She has numerous publications to her name, including *Democracy by Force: US Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War World* (2000), which was short-listed for the RUSI Westminster Medal in Military History. She holds a PhD from the London School of Economics, an MSt from Oxford University, and a BA from Yale University.