As the authors acknowledge, the book is intended to be a basic reference source and not an object for enjoyable armchair reading. However, the compelling candor of the authors and the welcome change in seeing such material available from Russian scholars draws in Western readers in ways that even the best reference books normally fail to do.

The decision to trace the development of weapons systems separately in terms of land-based systems, sea-based systems, and aircraft is a good organizational tool and allows a clear focus on all three elements of the triad. However, because the development of weapons was often a function of geopolitical and technological shifts that were not exclusive to a single system, readers might not find it easy to discern the main threads in the bilateral arms race with the United States.

Three technical aspects of the book make it especially valuable as a reference. First, the detailed noting of sources and the inclusion of editorial observations in each chapter will be of help to other scholars who are pursuing related research. Second, the detailed and accurate index exceeds what is often found in Russian sources, allowing readers to find requisite information quickly. Finally, the quality of the translation appears to be excellent, with none of the awkward structures or confusing passages that are often introduced in translations of both narrative and technical data.

As the world has entered a time in which the entire arms control enterprise and the benefits of mutual transparency are being brought into question, this volume could not be more timely in providing a parallel to the extensive existing Western literature on U.S.-designed programs and systems.

This reference will certainly find a favored spot on the shelves of scholars and of those in government who wish to understand and appreciate the military dimension of the Cold War. My gratitude to the diligence, the intelligence, and the courage of those who made it possible.

Elizabeth Wishnick, *Mending Fences: The Evolution of Moscow’s China Policy from Brezhnev to Yeltsin*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001. 196 pp. $45.00.

Reviewed by Herbert J. Ellison, University of Washington

Few relationships between major powers have undergone more dramatic changes than the ties between the Soviet Union/Russia and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) since the years of Leonid Brezhnev. Elizabeth Wishnick begins her book with the clashes along the Sino-Soviet border in the late 1960s and follows the story through the expanding conflict of the 1970s, the reconciliation after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in Moscow in the mid-1980s, the conflict following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and yet another reconciliation during the “strategic partnership” under Russian President Boris Yeltsin in the 1990s. She focuses on the Soviet/Russian views of these changes, giving close attention to the ongoing domestic debates and political conflict affecting policy toward the PRC. She brings to this important subject a
mastery of Russian and Chinese sources, an impressive command of the relevant scholarship, much new material from Soviet state and party archives, and extensive interviews with Russian policy makers and with leading Russian specialists on China.

Wishnick’s book is of great value for both specialists and more general readers interested in Russian and Chinese history and politics, the history of the Cold War, and the history of world Communism. She lucidly explains the major stages and causes of the complex evolution of the Soviet/Russian-Chinese relationship. For each stage she skillfully provides an analysis of the changing relationship, combining it with attention to contemporary domestic politics, bilateral relations, and relationships vis-à-vis other states.

Wishnick’s discussion of the impact of the Sino-Soviet conflict on the world Communist movement provides much new information and insight. China’s denunciation of the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia was a blow to the Soviet Union, and Beijing was able to entice East European leaders who wanted leverage with the Soviet Union. The vigorous challenge to the Soviet economic “model” posed by the reforms of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s strengthened the resolve of some East European officials to press for reforms of their own economic systems. China’s example, both in economic reform and in bold challenges to the traditional Soviet dominance of the world movement, was also favorably received by the West European Communist parties, especially those in Italy and Spain, further weakening Soviet control within the Communist world.

The book is also informative in showing how U.S. efforts to expand cooperation with China in the 1970s affected the Soviet Union. The burgeoning U.S.-Chinese relationship greatly magnified Soviet security concerns and added huge costs to an already overburdened defense budget. The relationship also lent weight to the arguments of Soviet experts on China who wanted to seek a better relationship with the PRC—experts who found new opportunities during the Gorbachev years.

Wishnick’s analysis of the Soviet Union’s reconciliation with China under Gorbachev offers much new insight both on the issues and the leading personalities. The removal of the main opponents of policy change and the introduction of the new policy under the leadership of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze were highly effective. However, Gorbachev’s triumphal visit to Beijing in the spring of 1989, when he was warmly greeted by Chinese democratic activists, was followed a few weeks later by the crushing of the Chinese democracy movement at Tiananmen Square. The visit also was soon followed by the collapse of Communist power in Eastern Europe and, two years later, by the demise of the Soviet Union itself.

The book provides much new insight into the Russo-Chinese relationship during the Yeltsin era. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Chinese leaders held Gorbachev responsible for the fate of Soviet and East European Communism, and they found the democratizing policies of Yeltsin at least equally objectionable. But the Russian government’s growing disillusionment with the United States, especially in light of the meager economic assistance provided by Western countries and the effective exclusion of Russia from the U.S.-led security systems in Europe and East Asia, encouraged the “Eurasianists” in Moscow to call again for an “eastward” reorientation.
of Russian foreign policy. Admiration for the success of Chinese economic reforms, which provided a vivid contrast to the problems of Russia's economic transition, was also an important factor in the new Russian approach to China. Both sides of the reinvigorated Sino-Russian partnership believed that the American “New World Order” carried with it the danger of American “unipolar” domination. The shared premise of the “strategic partnership” that Moscow and Beijing formed by 1996 was that a “multipolar world” was the only means of balancing U.S. power.

Wishnick provides a cogent assessment of the criticism within Russia of Yeltsin’s policy toward China. Security specialists in Moscow were concerned about the growth of Chinese military power (growth that was aided by Russian weapons transfers), and local government officials in Russia’s Far Eastern provinces along the Chinese frontier were worried about penetration by Chinese traders and settlers. Wishnick also astutely highlights the areas of agreement and disagreement in bilateral economic relations, the role and influence of both Russia and China in Central Asia, and general issues of East Asian security. Comparing Russian policy toward China today with the experience of the past, she argues that “the post-Cold War international environment has not simplified matters” (p. 193).

Wishnick summarizes some fascinating contradictions underlying the current Russo-Chinese partnership. Although extensive economic integration of their neighboring territories in the Far East would make sense from an economic standpoint, security concerns in Russia, especially about Chinese immigration, are an impediment to any significant progress. Both sides, especially China, continue to rely much more on economic relations with the West than with each other. Although the Russian government welcomed Beijing’s support in condemning NATO’s military actions in Kosovo in 1999, China’s virulent charges against the United States after the accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade was an uncomfortable reminder to many Russians of the tone of earlier Chinese statements about Russia’s acquisition of Chinese territory under the “unequal treaties” of the nineteenth century.

For American policy makers, Wishnick’s concluding comment could not be more timely:

As the twentieth century drew to a close there was a real danger of creating what John Garver called a new “Far Eastern Rapallo” by painting Russia and China as global outcasts and thereby causing them to form a closer partnership (p. 195).

Among the many distinguished Russian policy makers she has quoted in this remarkable book are many who believe that this is precisely the impact of American policy.