

Preface

The Slavic Research Center (SRC) of Hokkaido University held an international symposium entitled “Eager Eyes Fixed on Slavic Eurasia: Change and Progress” in Sapporo, Japan, on July 6 and 7 of 2006. The symposium was mainly funded by a special scientific research grant from the Japanese Ministry of Education’s Twenty-first Century Center of Excellence Program (“Making a Discipline of Slavic Eurasian Studies: 2003–2008,” project leader, Ieda Osamu) and partly assisted by Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (“An Emerging New Eurasian Order: Russia, China and Its Interactions toward Its Neighbors: 2006–2009,” project leader, Iwashita Akihiro).

The symposium started with an opening speech, Martha Brill Olcott’s “Eyes on Central Asia: How To Understand the Winners and Losers.” The aim of the symposium was to redefine the former Soviet space in international relations, paying closest attention to the “surrounding regions” of Eurasia. Well-known specialists on the region came together in Sapporo to debate topics such as “Russian Foreign Policy Reconsidered,” “South Asia and Eurasia,” “Central Asia and Eurasian Cooperation,” “Challenges of the Sino-Russian Border,” and “Russia in East Asia.”

All of the sessions noted China’s presence in the region. Central Asian issues and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization were mentioned in the sessions on South Asia and East Asia. Every participant recognized the crucial importance of increasing interactions in and around Eurasia. Eighteen papers were submitted to the symposium: four from Japan, three from China, two each from Russia and the United States, and one each from Korea, Hungary, India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, and Australia. As China is a decisive factor in the region, differences within the country

should be taken into account: the Chinese speakers came respectively from Beijing, Shanghai, and Harbin. At the symposium, the SRC showed the will to function as a hub center for Eurasian Studies on Northeast Asia as it forges new ties of research cooperation with academic institutions in South Asia that share common interests on the topic.

Considering the topics we debated during the symposium were far reaching and diversified, we decided to invite experts in various specific fields. Five excellent contributions come from Russia, China, India, Korea, and Japan. They covered the new dynamics of the bilateral and multilateral relations emerging and developing in Eurasia as an entity. The discussion undoubtedly strengthened the contents of the proceedings.

The second volume is entitled “Russia and Its Eastern Edge.” We selected eleven papers for Sino-Russian relations, multilateralism for regional cooperation, and the Russian presence in East Asia. As a guide to the volume, Alexei D. Voskressenski’s contribution is especially useful. He elaborately depicts the recent rise of China and the transformation of Sino-Russian relations. He also provides a structural overview and clues on China and Russia in East Asia to add fuel to the discussion on related topics that are thoroughly reviewed in the volume.

In the fourth part of the series, “Beyond Conflict: A New Era for Partnership in Russia and China?” Neville Maxwell and Dmitri Ryabushkin had a heated debate on the past “tragedy” of Zhenbao/Damanskii Island of 1969. Maxwell’s argument firmly places the incident in the long run of Sino-Russian/Soviet relations. He traces chronological trends of the relations and shows how China and Russia finally reached a deal to resolve the deeply troubled border problems. In contrast, Ryabushkin clings tenaciously to debunking the myth of the 1969 incident and ascertaining the truth regarding the following questions: Which side was mainly responsible for the incident, or why and when was the island in question de facto controlled by China? Some facts that Ryabushkin found are a must to be considered for researchers. Nevertheless, interpretations of the incident are not necessarily finalized. Even if China intentionally planned a “sneak attack” on the Soviet border guard on the island, failure of the 1964 Sino-Soviet consultation on the border undoubtedly caused China’s frustration with “unfair” borders that had been “forced” by the Russian Empire since the late nineteenth century to peak. Historic judgments both on “intentions” and “structural

background” are always fraught with difficulties. Nonetheless, the discussion provides rich materials for further analysis and review.

Su Fenglin, a Harbin historian on Russia, suggests a different image of Sino-Russian relations. His message is that a researcher should not play up the conflictual aspects of relations. His work sheds light on the positive history of the early period and draws an apt analogy between the past and the present. Su’s argument serves as a counterbalance vis-à-vis the former two chapters.

The fifth part of the series, “Multilateralism: An Emerging Test for Regional Cooperation,” is newly added. Kato Mihoko’s article was presented at the Third International Workshop for Young Scholars at the SRC on July 5, on the eve of the symposium. She uniquely covers Russia-Southeast Asian relations. Her contribution is also closely related to the part on “Russian Foreign Policy Multivector” in the first volume. Jia Qingguo and G. V. C. Naidu’s papers presented at the Slavic Eurasian Seminar “The Quadrangle on Eurasia: Russia, China, India, the US, and Central Asia” at the SRC on December 13, 2006. Both articles clarify some of the new trends in multilateral approaches in East Asia. Jia’s article refers to China’s will and policy orientation and gives details on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as an illustration. Naidu’s contribution touches upon some of the various tendencies of multilateralism, simultaneously considering the “balance game” played by the great powers.

The final and sixth part of this series, “Russia’s Perspective in the East Asian Community” is the highlight of the volume. Ha Yongchool and Shin Beomshik’s presence provide enlightening accounts of Russia’s dilemmas in the Korean nuclear crisis. Readers learn much about the limited but constructive commitments made by Russia as an intermediary during the crisis. Feng Shaolei, a talented Shanghai scholar with a command of both Russian and English, and Sergey Vradiy, a Russian sinologist in Vladivostok, do a great job covering Sino-Russian relations. The former also conducts comparative studies on Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese relations in the whole of East Asia, while the latter pays attention to the relatively unknown relations between Russia and Taiwan. Finally, Yokote Shinji wraps things up by explaining the context and strategic environment emerging in East Asia and tackles Japan’s possible involvement with Russia.

The fruits of the contributing authors' intellectual endeavors are much appreciated. It is our goal that these small but important academic contributions by some of the leaders of our field of study prove to be an impetus for further academic inquiry. If this goal is achieved, it will be our great pleasure.

This volume greatly benefited from the contribution of Japan's sinologists, who participated as discussants in some sessions. For the second volume, we owe much to Ishii Akira, professor at the University of Tokyo, for playing the role of moderator in the heated debate on the Zhenbao/Damanskii Incident. Nakai Yoshifumi, professor of Gakushuin University, Mifune Emi, associate professor at Komazawa University, and Zhao Hongwei, professor of Hosei University, were highly appreciated for their contributions to the seminar dated December 13 as mentioned before. We also thank Takagi Seiichiro, professor at Aoyama Gakuin University, for offering pertinent comments for all of the papers in the sixth part.

I would like to express unchanging gratitude to Seth Cervantes, lecturer at Tomakomai Komazawa University, for his special contributions during the editing phase of this volume. I owe much to Ito Kaoru for kindly agreeing to take on the laborious task of designing the cover of the volume. I would also like to thank Hosono Mitsue, Okada Yukari and Miyazaki Haruka for their tireless efforts towards the completion of this volume.

Iwashita Akihiro
Editor
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The Rise of China and Russo-Chinese Relations in the New Global Politics of Eastern Asia

Alexei D. VOSKRESSENSKI

Preface

There has been pointed discussion about the character and the orientation of global leadership after the post-Cold War world in the international analytical community over the last ten years. This theoretical discussion became even more poignant, with many more practical considerations, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. Clearly, the terrorist acts in the US and elsewhere, and the decision of the administrations of President Bill Clinton (Yugoslavia) and, more recently, President George W. Bush (Afghanistan, Iraq) to begin acts of revenge as well as the power restructuring of the new post-bipolar world based on American unilateralism have complicated the situation and sharpened the discussion on the character of global leadership.¹ The problem of a peaceful rise of

¹ Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, *Imperial Crusades: Iraq, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia; A Diary of Three Wars* (London: Verso, 2004); Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004); George Soros, *The Bubble of American Supremacy: Correcting the Misuse of American Power* (London: Phoenix, 2004); Will Hutton, *A Declaration of Interdependence: Why America Should Join the World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003); James F. Hoge Jr. and Gideon Rose, eds., *American Foreign Policy: Cases and Choices* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2003); Nancy E. Soderberg, *The Superpower Myth: The Use and Misuse of American Might* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2005); Clyde Prestowitz, *Rogue*

China and its accommodating stance toward the existing global order in its new capacity as an economic giant, or its power to subvert or partly restructure it, occupies one of the main places in this discussion.² Indeed, it is more or less clear to the majority of the international analytical community that the rise of China will sooner or later emerge as the most formidable regional security challenge in East Asia³ and also, as some have argued, globally, because there is no historical precedent for a peaceful rise and fall of a major power together with alteration of the world system. Thus, many are concerned that this regional and probably global restructuring may proceed at the expense of their countries' status and interests. There are also very influential alternative views that are mainly, but not necessarily, associated with researchers from the PRC who argue that China can rise regionally and globally without posing any threat to the international community or the international system (*heping jueqi* or the "peaceful rise" concept).

However, this problem is interesting not only from the viewpoint of practical geopolitics and diplomacy as generally assumed, but also from a theoretical angle regarding how to assess the applicability of theoretical constructions in international relations theory as to what extent China can aspire to acquire regional and even world leadership (or hegemony?), in what spheres, and at what pace. Questions that are usually asked in this connection are: Does China really represent a new pole of political-economic power that emerged after the collapse of the USSR and is developing as a major competitor with Japan and the United States regionally and perhaps also with the United States globally, both economically and strategically? Or should we decouple economic and strategic development in the case of China as happened with Japan? Should China be integrated into the political economic development of Asia-Pacific as a benign pole as liberal theoretical approaches propose, or should it be balanced, contained, encircled, and deterred as realists suggest? Should China be given a chance for a peaceful rise that probably

Nation: American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

² Ronald Keith, "China as a Rising World Power and its Response to 'Globalization,'" *The Review of International Affairs* 3, no. 4 (June 2004).

³ NAM Changhee and TAKAGI Seiichiro, "Rising China and Shifting Alliances in Northeast Asia: Opportunities and Challenges Facing America and its Allies," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 16, no. 2 (2004): 154.

will also mean giving China an opportunity for democratic development? Should the international community ignore the possibility of China's having good intentions in this peaceful rise? Or is China's rise *a priori* malign, and thus, requiring security precautions be taken against it? How can China readjust the regional environment in practice in view of strengthened US-Japan and US-ROK alliances, mostly, as some argue, in the realm of Russo-Chinese strategic partnership coupled with the strengthening of the Russia-China-India triangle? What will be the consequences of diplomatic moves in this new direction? How should the regional asymmetries of China and Japan be addressed in view of their relative strategic and economic positions, while taking into consideration China's development trends? Or are traditional theoretical perspectives and the security worries associated with them perhaps simply too shallow to address the most current international and regional developments?

I would argue in this essay that in a new global context, relations between the United States, Japan, Russia, and China need not be adversarial as the four countries may search for areas of cooperation in economic and security areas. The United States, the European Union, Japan, Russia, China, and India can, by working together, forge a future world and regional order that is beneficial to all states seeking peaceful and just development.⁴ The chances of a peaceful rise of China must not be ignored since it may eventually lead to China being more democratic

⁴ For a detailed understanding of the evolution of this concept, see Alexei D. Voskressenski, "China in the Perception of the Russian Foreign Policy Elite," *Issues and Studies* 33, no. 3 (1997): 1–20; Alexei D. Voskressenski, "Rossiia i Kitai: problemy dinamiki i preemstvennosti mezhgosudarstvennykh otnoshenii," in *Rossiia i Kitai: perspektivy partnerstva v ATR v 21 veke* (Moscow: Institut Dal'nego Vostoka RAN, 2000), 37–47; Alexei D. Voskressenski, "Sbalansirovanoe mnogomernoe partnerstvo: optimal'naia strategiiia dlia Rossii," in *Global'noe Soobshchestvo: novaia sistema koordinat; podkhody k probleme*, ed., A. I. Neklessa (St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2000), 96–107; Alexei D. Voskressenski, "Russia's Evolving Grand Strategy toward China," in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment of International Peace, 2000), 117–146; Alexei D. Voskressenski, "Mezhdunarodnii Kontext Rossiisko-Kitaiskikh Otnoshenii Posle Kosovo," in *Rossiia i Kitai v sovremennoi mire* (Moscow: MGIMO-University, 2000), 43–57; Alexei D. Voskressenski, "Russian-Chinese Partnership in a 'New' Global Context," in "Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership: A Threat to American Interests?" *Asia Program Special Report* 99 (September 2001), 8–13; Alexei D. Voskressenski, "'Sterzhen' aziatskogo azimuta vneshnei politiki Rossii," *Pro et Contra* 6, no. 4 (Autumn 2001): 74–93, etc.

and also more responsible for regional and global security burdens.⁵ This choice is extremely important for Eastern Asia and Northeast Asia, particularly due to the predominance of traditional security considerations, a lack of trustworthy multilateral relations, and suspicions in the region related to a future burdened by a historical past, and also may be endangered by emerging markets with high financial volatility and political risk. Northeast Asia remains characterized by an atmosphere of distrust between the regional powers, which has already become an obstacle to any real coordination against common threats to regional security. The start of six-party talks on the North Korean issue is indeed an optimistic sign of a more inclusive regional dialogue format beginning, which may help the creation of a new multilateral regional security environment. However, the transformation of this new regional security view into a mechanism that can resolve these challenges has not yet been realized.

Some analysts have completely ignored the emerging Russo-Chinese partnership and its influence on a rising China in East Asia.⁶ Some have argued informally that the Russo-Chinese partnership generally, and Russo-Chinese military technological cooperation especially, are causing concern in the West, particularly the United States, and in Japan.⁷ American analysts point to the impact of the Russo-Chinese partnership on the regional strategic balance that comprises the global international system. They are not happy with the similarity between the official Russian and Chinese views on East Asia and the Taiwan Strait—i.e., in

⁵ Bruce Gilley, *China's Democratic Future: How It Will Happen and Where It Will Lead* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); ZHENG Yongnian, *Will China Become Democratic? Elite, Class and Regime Transition* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2004); James F. Hoge Jr. and Gideon Rose, "How Should the United States Deal with a Rising Power?" in Hoge and Rose, *American Foreign Policy*, chap. 1.

⁶ See, for example, Nam and Takagi, "Rising China and Shifting Alliances"; Michael K. Connors, Rémy Davison and Jörn Dosch, *The New Global Politics of the Asia-Pacific* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).

⁷ Robert H. Donaldson and John Donaldson "The Arms Trade in Russian-Chinese Relations: Identity, Domestic Politics, and Geopolitical Positioning," presented to the 2001 Hong Kong Convention of International Studies "Globalization and Its Challenges in the 21st Century," Hong Kong, PRC, July 26–28, 2001; Stephen Blank, "Which Way for Sino-Russian Relations?" *Orbis* 42, no. 3 (1998), 345–360; John J. Dziak, *The Military Relationship Between China and Russia, 1995–2002: Russia's Role in the Development of China's Strategic Potential* (Washington, DC: American Foreign Policy Council, 2002).

regions where the interests of the United States and Japan are considered vital. These analysts view the Russo-Chinese partnership mostly through the prism of traditional Cold War-time alliances. At the same time, some Japanese and Korean analysts, ignoring the influence of the Russo-Chinese strategic partnership on East Asian international development and arguing that Beijing intends to completely accept the rearrangement of America's alliances with the ROK and Japan,⁸ tend to underestimate the impact of Russo-Chinese military and technical cooperation on the balance of power in Eastern Asia. There are also new trends worth consideration: China became Russia's number one trade partner in 2006 (Chinese-Russian trade surpassing German-Russian trade),⁹ and Wen Jiabao proclaimed that Russo-Chinese bilateral trade would reach \$100 billion by 2008–2010, far beyond Russian trade with any other European or Asian state. The emerging Russo-Chinese energy projects have become a new and important economic/security factor in regional development in Northeast Asia as this source of energy is becoming an important factor helping to transform China into a dominant regional power and a global player.

The reason for this intellectual controversy and underestimation is not misperception or bias as sometimes happens in academic writings (indeed, no one can blame the scholars for the shallow analysis). But the speed of the formidable changes in the region, especially in Eastern Eurasia, which are far beyond reflections in scholarly writings, as well as the transformation of the former ideological biases of the Cold War period into post-Cold War prejudices where the future is flexible, can be formatted according to our perceptions. So, the political establishment tends to be viewed more comfortably through “proved over time,” i.e., orthodox, theoretical lenses by the traditionally conservative academic community.¹⁰

⁸ Nam and Takagi, “Rising China and Shifting Alliances,” 154–155, 173–178.

⁹ As China consequently did with Taiwan and the ROK each the preceding year.

¹⁰ Indeed, it became normal in the English-language literature on world politics not to cite current Russian writings that are not suspected of being outdated in their perception or even misperception regarding current cutting-edge analysis. See, Connors, Davison and Dosch, *The New Global Politics*; Greg Austin and Stuart Harris, *Japan and Greater China: Political Economy and Military Power in the Asian Century* (London: Hurst, 2001); Peter Ferdinand, ed., *The New Central Asia and Its Neighbours* (London: Pinter, 1999); YAMAMOTO Yoshinobu, ed., *Globalism, Regionalism and Nationalism: Asia in Search of*

It must be clearly understood that although some analysts and even politicians point out that there are some signs that the Russo-Chinese partnership is imposing strain on Russian and Chinese relations with the West, the United States, and Japan, this must not be seen as the main purpose of the Russo-Chinese partnership. Instead, it is a by-product of the necessity to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries due to Russian attempts to construct new cooperative regional arrangements more favorable to Russia and also, in part, as a reaction most recently to the US-Japan and the US-ROK strengthened security arrangements that are following lines of traditional security considerations. Notwithstanding all dangers, pitfalls, and challenges to the Russo-Chinese strategic partnership, it is clearly the strongest constructive trend in the transformation of Northeast Asia and the Russian Far East in parts that were least developed or that even “failed” economically.

I will argue that Russo-Chinese relations are not generally an alternative to Russian and Chinese relations with the United States and do not constitute an “anti-Western” or “anti-Japanese” bloc. The main rationale of the Russo-Chinese partnership from the Russian side is to construct a new type of relationship aimed at promoting a new and just world community of equals rather than of leaders and followers, where the legitimate interests of all states (and thus also of Russia) are kept under consideration, and where all states, notwithstanding their position in the international system, can develop peacefully without fear that their

Its Role in the Twenty-first Century (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), etc. The argument that most debate on international relations in Russia is, for certain reasons, for internal consumption and cannot withstand criticisms because of the lack of understanding on most current Russian views, at least in academia. Indeed, this trend corresponds with spiritual unilateralism reflected in the attempts to bury area studies because of a lack of “disciplinary rigorosity.” See, for example, a lively debate at Hokkaido University’s Slavic Research Center Conference on the rejuvenation of Eurasian studies (December 9, 2004) reflected in Klaus Segbers, “Area Studies, Comparative Approaches: Is a Peaceful Co-existence Possible? Or: Can or Should Area Studies Survive?” presentation at a symposium of the Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, December 9, 2004, <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~segbers>; Alexei D. Voskressenski, “Regional Studies in Russia and Current Methodological Approaches for Social/Historical/Ideological [Re]construction of International Relations and Regional Interaction in Eastern Eurasia,” in *Reconstruction and Interaction of Slavic Eurasia and Its Neighboring Worlds*, ed. IEDA Osamu and UYAMA Tomohiko (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2006), 3–42. The rare exception to this trend is Gilbert Rozman, *Northeast Asia’s Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

internal policies will be heavily damaged by external factors and influences.¹¹ The aim of the partnership as seen by the Russian policy-making community is to strengthen regional economies, economic multilateralism, and also partly the security-economic nexus in Northeast Asia through bilateral economic ties, and thus to move the regional Northeast Asian agenda from traditional security cooperation to fostering regional economic development. This Russian idea basically corresponds with the idea of a Northeast Asian coprosperity zone. These ideas are extremely important for Russia due to difficulties in envisaging policy ensuring the stable economic development of the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia and its peaceful entry into the market system of Eastern Asia.

Since viable structural economic cooperation is shallow between Russia and Japan and its potential is still low between Russia and the ROK (and probably close to nil among the Russian Far East, Siberia, and the United States),¹² the only strategic possibility that Russia could embrace to aid entering the Eastern Asian and Pacific Community is to develop strong strategic and economic ties with China, one of the major economic driving forces in Asia and also a major manufacturing base in the Asia-Pacific region. Regional cooperation between Russia and China has obviously greatly increased in Northeast and Central Asia since their joint leadership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, yet there has been no strategic partnership of Japan or either of these two countries on a comparable level,¹³ making in Russian eyes the Northeastern economic-security nexus shaky and thus detracting from the regional economic cooperation that is key to the rejuvenation of the Russian Far East and Siberia as well as for Russia entering the East Asian markets.

¹¹ Alexei D. Voskressenski and Nikolai Maletin, eds., *Aziatsko-Tikhoookeanskii region i Tsentral'naia Aziia: kontury bezopasnosti* (Moscow: MGIMO, 2002); Alexei D. Voskressenski, ed., *Kitai v mirovoi politike* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001); Alexei D. Voskressenski, ed., *Rossia, Kitai i novyi miroporiadok XXI veka: problemy i perspektivy* (Moscow: MGIMO, 2001).

¹² The share of eleven Asia-Pacific countries (PRC, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Honk Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Mongolia, Vietnam, and India) in Russian foreign trade is 13.4 percent and the share of the US and Australia is 4.3 percent. "Budushee Azii i Politika Rossii," *Rossia v Global'noi Politike* 4, no. 2 (2006): 118–119.

¹³ Austin and Harris, *Japan and Greater China*, chap. 9.

Indeed, the Russo-Chinese partnership is quickly evolving from a traditional security arrangement to a broader bilateral, regional arrangement. The broader structure of these future arrangements is currently the only benign external leverage for the speedy development of the Russian Far East and Siberia. In this sense, the most current trend in Russo-Chinese strategic partnership vividly contradicts the most current trend in US-Japan and US-ROK relations that during the second term of President Bush are quickly moving to strengthen the traditional security agenda dominated by the perception of a malign China that needs to be encircled.¹⁴ Thus, the new free trade agreements between the United States and Taiwan, and the trade arrangements between the United States and Japan, detract from strengthening the economic stability of Northeast Asia and helps the separation of the region into Russo-Chinese and Japan-Taiwan “zones.”¹⁵

In constructing a new world order and also reconstructing a new regional order, interaction between the United States, Russia, Japan, and China need not be purely competitive or adversarial. At least, the Russian political elite does not currently desire such a situation, although the more disappointed and disillusioned with cooperation with Western countries the Russian political elite becomes, the greater the incentive it has for fostering cooperation with China as well as with countries that are also disappointed by the cooperation with the Western world that is moving the world to new and dangerous levels of polarization. However, the United States, Russia, Japan, and China can and must find areas of cooperation, especially in the spheres of economic development and security in Northeast Asia, although the rise of China does constitute a real challenge to the existing international and regional order based on unilateralism. But this challenge is not necessarily malign, and thus must be properly and carefully addressed from regional and global perspectives. However, the solution to an ascending China may not necessarily lie only with containment policies through the US-Japan and the US-ROK security arrangements and the presence of US military bases in Central Asia. A rising China can be also balanced by strengthened Russo-Japanese, Russo-Korean, and Russo-American economic partnerships, multilateral regional

¹⁴ Nam and Takagi, “Rising China and Shifting Alliances,” 153–180.

¹⁵ *East Asian Strategic Review, 2006* (Tokyo: The Japan Times for the National Institute for Defence Studies, 2006).

economic agreements, and also by encouraging new levels of economic cooperation between Russia and ASEAN countries and between Russia and the Western world in general.

The Rise of China and Its Meaning for the Structure of Global Leadership in the Twenty First Century¹⁶

One of the major points of international debate on the meaning of the rise of China for the structure of the international system is usually the success of Chinese reforms, which, if projected into the future, would raise many questions about which state will be responsible for the majority of world economic growth and what the global market share of the United States, the EU, China, and Japan will be. This question is also indirectly connected to the question of possible economic/military coupling or economic/military decoupling as a theoretical question related to how we consider the world: as a world of interdependence with multiple opportunities where rising economically does not necessarily coincide with a rise in military power or a global balance of power where an economic rise inevitably leads to military build-up.¹⁷ However, this is only part of a whole set of provocative arguments *pro et contra*. One of the key structural points in elaborating a framework of arguments, I believe, is in fact a new strategic assessment of China's Asia-Pacific regional strategy that is being transformed into China's new leadership approach to multilateralism and thus constitutes a sort of global strategy that has started to compete intellectually with a strategy proposed by the US to the rest of the world.

The major standing points of this new Chinese approach are:

- Rejecting the deliberate exaggeration of declining state sovereignty in the face of globalization;

¹⁶ Arguments for this section were developed in Alexei D. Voskressenski, "The Rise of China and Its Meaning for the Structure of Global Leadership in the 21st Century: A Russian Perspective," in *Readings in European Security*, ed. Dana H. Allin and Michael Emerson, vol. 3 (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies; London: International Institute for Security Studies), 107–119.

¹⁷ Alexei D. Voskressenski, *Russia and China: A Theory of Inter-State Relations* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

- Suggesting the state's innovative capacity to adapt to basic changes in international conditions and consequently having more respect for self-determination (especially compared to Russia);
- Influencing the rules of international organizations and regimes to ensure maximum benefit for the priorities of China's own development;
- Accenting multilateralism and multipolarity as an indirect predisposition of China to take on international responsibility compared to the American unilateralist approach;
- Elaborating the sophisticated "third world" strategy that consists of maximizing opportunities for economic globalization, while a state retains its own sovereign options in order to offset the malign consequences of the uneven effects of globalization;
- Proclaiming multilateralism an important instrument to achieve domestic economic goals;
- Stressing concepts of "comprehensive security" consisting of two integral parts, "common security" and "common prosperity," as a necessary condition to create a security community based on sovereign equality and not on "absolute security" or the "balance of power" as the United States proposes.¹⁸

If we agree not only with the emergence but also with the importance of these concepts for a structural understanding of regional and, to a certain extent, global international developments, we would start to consider what the cumulative structural effect of these developments together with China's projected economic development trends would be in the medium-term future.

It is more or less clear that the epoch of straight, crude "hegemony" in the global international system has passed. As the globalization process has been much more complex and includes the process of regionalization, regionalism, and fragmentation of the world,¹⁹ the essence and concept of "hegemony" has become much more refined by its contents and

¹⁸ See, for example, Keith, "China as a Rising World Power," 2–4.

¹⁹ See the extended argumentation by the Indian scholar Rajan Harshe in Alexei D. Voskressenski, ed., *Vostok/Zapad: regional'niye podsystemy i regional'niye problemy mezhdunarodnykh otoshenii* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002), 44–60.

terminology. The international hegemon in the past was understood as a state that responded with military force and with the creative potential for unilaterally structuring and restructuring the global international system according to its interests. The twentieth century has added another important characteristic—it could be not one state but two: a hegemon and a counter-hegemon. After the disintegration of the USSR and the strengthening of the arguments of the school, which argues for a decline of the classical hegemony, concepts of “structural hegemony,” “soft hegemony,” and “global dominance” have also appeared. If the hegemon has military force and the creative potential to unilaterally change the global system, these parameters are insufficient for a “global dominant” state. In the new post-bipolar system of international relations, the “global dominant” state (compared to the hegemon) or a large majority of its political elite must additionally have the desire and the conscious support of the international community to structure a global system and world politics. The support of the international community may be rendered differently: in the form of resolutions by the UN Security Council, formal or informal global coalitions such as the initial antiterrorist coalition, formal or informal international consensus on strategic international issues, etc.²⁰

The emergence of the EU and Eurozone, and later the new ad hoc diplomatic coalition of France, Russia, and Germany opposing the US unilateral view on the future of Iraq, which is transforming gradually into the “new European axis” with a broader diplomatic agenda, and the Islamic offence on the West and the US in particular may show the transition of the US as a world leader from the category of “hegemon” to the category of a “global dominant” state. Other informal arguments in favor are the necessity of benign leadership, and the structural, soft leadership of the United States itself. It seems that in addition to the above-mentioned conditions, the main structural difference between a

²⁰ An extended summary of the arguments is presented in Alexei D. Voskressenski, *“Bol’shaia Vostochnaia Aziia”: mirovaia politika i energeticheskaia bezopasnost’* (Moscow: URSS, 2006); Alexei D. Voskressenski, *Rossiisko-kitaiskoe strategicheskoe vzaimodeistvie i mirovaya politika* (Moscow: Nikitskii Club, 2004); Voskressenski, *Kitai v mirovoi politike*; Voskressenski, *Rossiia, Kitai i novyi miroporiadok v XXI veke*; Alexei D. Voskressenski, ed., *Severo-Vostochnaia i Tsentral’naia Aziia: dinamika mezhdunarodnykh i mezhregional’nykh vzaimodeistvii* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004); Voskressenski, *Vostok/Zapad*.

global dominant state and a hegemon is that the global dominant state loses the potential for unilateral control and for determining the parameters of the extended reproduction and construction of the armed forces of large regional states.

A state should meet three major conditions to be a hegemon or a global dominant state in the international system:

1. It must have an effective economic mechanism based on the manufacture of innovations, financially dominate the system of world currencies, and have a leading position in global trade and dominate in large transnational corporations.
2. Such a state must have military power capabilities on a global scale, unilaterally lead, create, or control powerful military coalitions, and carry out effective global military policy.
3. It must create and promote a society that is internationally attractive from the viewpoint of political and civic culture based on open, competent leadership and a sense of the necessity of significant public sacrifice or donorship, i.e., the readiness of this society and its political elite to endow material and nonmaterial resources in the name of global leadership and the international community. Such a state must have an attractive society in terms of ideology, it should be and simultaneously be perceived as a global center of education and scientific innovation, and must have a vigorous and vibrant population.

If we consider all these three conditions to be, and to be perceived as, global hegemony or global dominance with reference to the United States, the current global leader, we can argue that there has been an erosion of the undisputed leading role of the US in all these three groups of parameters mentioned, although the key parameters are still intact; for this reason, the transition from the category of hegemon to the category of a global dominant state does not mean the complete loss of US global leadership.

The next group after hegemons and global dominants consists of states that can be called “leaders” (or regional leaders). These states do not fulfill the criteria for being a global dominant according to all three groups of these parameters, even if these parameters are eroded, but they have a

certain degree of creative global or large regional potential and their own global or large regional economic and military capabilities, as well as a certain amount of support from other leaders, from a global dominant, or from certain peripheral states to direct or to correct global/regional development, at first in a concrete region/area in which they are located geographically or in which they have historical/geopolitical/economic/cultural interests. Some researchers simply refer to these states as “large regional states.”

There is no uniformity in this group of states. There are “leaders” (or regional leaders) in this group, i.e., states that can strengthen their role to be a global dominant, or even play the principle role of a regional dominant with the consent of a global dominant, which can be silent and informal, or fixed through a set of agreements and coalitions (also formal and informal). There are also “anti-leaders,” i.e., states that can under certain conditions and to a certain extent resist a global dominant and even act on certain decisions that may run counter to the policy of the global dominant.²¹

Anti-leaders have obvious problems with the transformation of their destructive potential into constructive, creative potential. Anti-leaders cannot under any circumstances replace the leader. Under certain conditions, an “anti-leader” can play the role of regional anti-leader, i.e., carrying out in a certain region a policy contradicting (or even challenging) the policy of a global dominant. Certainly, a global dominant will not look neutrally on such an attempt, as the position of regional anti-leadership is key to the position of a “counter-leader,” and probably to the position of a “counter-dominant” (and possibly also to the position of a “counter-hegemon”), i.e., a state that is challenging the existing global dominant and that, in principle, is able to occupy this position in the future. The basic distinction between an anti-leader and a counter-leader is the basic impossibility of the first to turn itself into a global dominant or a hegemon. Besides, there are “non-leaders” in the global system, i.e., states that are unable under any circumstances to turn themselves into leaders, and accepting as a whole the existing structure of the international system, notwithstanding their place in it.

²¹ For these arguments in detail, see Voskressenski, “*Bol'shaia Vostochnaia Aziia*”; Voskressenski, *Rossiisko-kitaiskoe strategicheskoe vzaimodeistvie i mirovaia politika*.

Because of the steady economic growth that has been ongoing for the past three decades and because of its sheer size, enormous market, huge potential, and alternative ideology, the PRC occupies the most important place in this theoretical discussion about the character of the evolving leadership. However, the phenomenal planned economic growth of this huge state over three decades in view of realizing reform policies and its “special” foreign policy position has moved this theoretical discussion into practical spheres related to diplomacy and, in particular, to foreign policy forecasting as well as to the calculation of military projections related to the foreign and economic policy of states like China.

It is expected that more than 50 percent of global economic growth will be related to the Asia-Pacific region where China is playing an increasingly important role, and also to China itself. The emergence of the PRC among the major trading states and possible world economic superpowers may question the existing global economic and political order because China habitually complains that it suffers from the structural/economic leadership of the West, never hiding its discontent with the past economic and political order. For this reason, both the Western and Chinese analytical communities today are intensely discussing China’s “peaceful entry” into the system of global relations. Chinese analysts, accordingly, are discussing the question of the future role of China as it is acquiring the status of *daguo* (a “great power”) and whether it should simultaneously become *fuzeguo* (a “responsible state”), and what this last notion means in Chinese terminology compared to Western political science and international relations.²² China has formulated itself flexibly enough, and different from the Soviet model, the socialist model with Chinese characteristics, having successfully integrated socialist ideas with a Confucian ethical system and with at first rudimentary, and later quite sophisticated “capitalist” market mechanisms, while attempts to create a new system of “socialist morals and ethics” and of a “socialist economy” obviously failed in the USSR.

In this connection, the actual essence of the Chinese economic system, i.e., how much “socialism” is actually in it, is less important than

²² Li Wuyi, *Daguo Guanxi yu Weilai Zhongguo* [Great Power Relation and Future China] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2003); *East Asian Strategic Review*, 2004, 2005, 2006 (Tokyo: The Japan Times for the National Institute for Defense Studies, 2004, 2005, 2006); HU Angang, ed., *Zhongguo da zhanlue* [Great Strategy of China] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 2003).

China's economic system being perceived as an alternative to the "pure capitalist" Western market system. In this sense, mainland China or, more precisely, Greater China (mainland China plus connected territories inhabited partly and influenced mainly by the Chinese diaspora) is quite capable of challenging Western trading blocs (NAFTA and EU) and the United States not only economically, but also through its formulation of a "spiritual alternative" to the Western system of values and the Western system of economic structure and management.

However, it is clear that this challenge is different from those faced in the Soviet era, and for this reason, it will be very difficult to formulate an acceptable answer to meet this challenge.

First of all, communist China is not unanimously perceived as the leader of the "third world" or the developing world. The major argument here is economic: China, contrary to the USSR that argued that the socialist Soviet economic system was developing according to socialist economic rules/laws that were different from those of a market economy, has incorporated into its mainstream theory of international political-economic neo-Marxist innovation the idea that the world economy has three interconnected structures: a united and uniform global market; a political system of independent competing states; and a three-layer spatial structure consisting of, first, a "center" that specializes in manufacturing the most effective high-cost goods and technologies and thus fully uses the effect of freeing the resources needed for its own super-fast development, second, a "periphery"—i.e., less developed countries specializing in exporting raw materials and goods made with manual labor, acquiring mostly luxury goods for the price of that export, investing money in the "center," and transferring its capital to offshore zones, and, third, a "semi-periphery."²³

The "semi-periphery" is not homogeneous. It consists of countries relatively industrially advanced, which as a whole cannot specialize in the production of economically "more effective" high-cost goods, but can still produce technology that can be sporadically sold at relatively low prices in the periphery in those niches where it is possible to compete with the "center"; of the new industrialized countries (NIC), which have based their modernization on the innovational model but oriented their

²³ Voskressenski, "Bol'shaia Vostochnaia Aziia," 20–22; Voskressenski, *Rossiiskokitaiskoe strategicheskoe vzaimodeistvie i mirovaia politika*, 10–25.

production toward exporting goods to the “center”; and of countries exporting crude oil. From a neo-Marxist viewpoint, which has been effectively applied in China, economic relations in the modern world are independent from political relations. Thus, Chinese economists have come to the conclusion that the market is a notion not only intrinsic to the capitalist way of production, but also to all others including socialism. Thus, it was possible in theory to separate the state, the economy, and society. This conclusion made it possible to exclude, or minimize, the role of the state in the economy. But this minimization is not from the viewpoint of its role in principle, but from the viewpoint of its functioning separately in the economic system where it should help functioning economic laws, and in politics where it can form a civil society in democratic states or rigidly structure society on the basis of ideological concepts in authoritarian states with a market economy. In practice, it may be possible to transform totalitarian states into authoritarian models of industrial development. These ideas in theory were first elaborated and applied by Chiang Kaishek in Taiwan, and in other regions, for example, in Latin America—by Augusto Pinochet. In the PRC, these ideas made possible the successful effectuation of reform policies. However, the Chiang Kaishek and Pinochet models of authoritarian development both consciously paved the way for further political reform and political transformation toward democratic rule, but there are still no pervasive arguments that the PRC will follow this model.²⁴

If the global “capitalist” economy is based on the fragmentary possession of capital and competitiveness, the global (globalized) economy requires a “center” (or “leader”). This means that there are two ways of overcoming the status of being a “periphery” or a “semi-periphery”: it is possible to form a global (or macro-regional) economic system according to one’s interests, or to carry out unilateral adjustment of the internal sphere of the state according to the requirements of the international globalized economic system. The specificity of China is that it successfully develops in both directions, understanding that is possible to be integrated into a global system as a part of the “periphery” or as a large, developing country from which a new nucleus (part of the center, or

²⁴ David Shambaugh, ed., *Is China Unstable? Assessing the Factors* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000); Charles Wolf Jr., “Fault Lines in China’s Economic Terrain,” in “China’s Economy: Will the Bubble Burst?” *Asia Program Special Report* 111 (June 2003): 4–7.

an alternative center) can crystallize. What distinguishes the center from the periphery and the semi-periphery, and what is very well understood by the Chinese leadership, is the necessity of creating conditions for self-centered accumulation of capital, i.e., a definition of the conditions of accumulation through national control of the reproduction of labor, the national market, and the centralization of profit, capital, resources, technologies, etc.

It is clear that crystallization of new centers is very difficult today, that models of “catching-up development” are not working smoothly, and that external forces have become more important than internal forces or can very strongly influence internal factors. Systemic, carefully elaborated policy can nevertheless bear fruit. And the fruit of these reforms is visible throughout China. The rate of GNP growth in China in 1979–2006 surpassed nine percent, i.e., it was two times higher than during the preceding thirty years, and the GNP volume in 2002 exceeded \$1.2 billion with a per-capita GNP of about \$1,000. It is expected reach \$1,300 dollars by 2020 or even earlier. Exports over the last 20 years have increased some twenty fold. If the existing trend prevails, by 2012, China could possibly have a volume of GNP, counted in terms of purchasing power, on a level with the United States.²⁵

At the same time, the transition of China from the status of a “closed” continental power to the status of the largest national economy and the largest trading state of the world (or one of the two largest) means that this state will try to secure the sea communications lines around its borders that could be the inevitable cause of conflict with the US and/or Japan.²⁶ It is clear that the PRC does not yet possess military capability comparable to that of Russia, notwithstanding that of the US. And as the military capability of China grows, its economic capability and interests in the very near future could be much more significant than those of Russia. But the capability of China is dictated by the cumulative size of its economy and its geographic and demographic resources, not by its per-capita GNP, a parameter that is still low by international standards. So, the “Soviet” type of leadership that China can conduct in the foreseeable

²⁵ Vitalii Mel'iantsev, “Razvivaiushchiesia strany: rost, differentsiatsiia, ekonomicheskii vyzov,” *Vestnik Moscovskogo universiteta, Seriia XIII: Vostokovedenie*, no. 2 (2006): 14–46, esp. 15–17.

²⁶ WU Lei, *Zhongguo Shiyou Anquan* [Oil Security of China] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2003).

future may not be recognized by the whole global community. However, the Chinese leadership does not even try to pretend that it may realize this type of leadership. The above-mentioned theoretical considerations have enabled China to reject the idea of declining state sovereignty in the face of globalization and suggest as an alternative the state's capacity to adapt to fundamental changes in international conditions.

The character of the economic transformation that is taking place in China and its foreign policy strategy are aimed at updating the rules of the global system and the formation of a huge zone of "close interaction with China." China argues that, as a world power, it will be more predisposed to accept international responsibility than the US because of its adherence to multilateralism and multipolarity. Russia and Central Asia are particularly responsive to these ideas. The Chinese approach respects national self-determination and thus hails "comprehensive security" consisting of "common security" and "common prosperity" where the need for a security community is based upon sovereign equality. Thus, China is proposing a strategy to offset uneven globalization, which consists of maximizing opportunities for economic globalization while retaining the sovereign option of the state. This strategic policy can essentially correct and maybe even completely transform the system of international and regional relations. It is clear that this transformation will take a lot of time and will be attenuated by numerous "ifs." Nonetheless, such a trend is more possible than it was ten years ago.

The three conditions for obtaining the position of a hegemon or a global dominant as formulated above cannot be met by China in the near future, and may not be achievable at all as some have argued. But it only seems so at first sight. Today, the Eurasian continent produces approximately 75 percent of the world's GNP, is home to some 75 percent of the world's population, and has 75 percent of the world's resources, which could be key to the future of global development. Forty-seven years was required for the US to double its per-capita GNP, thirty-three years, for Japan, ten, for South Korea, and seven, for China. The GNP of Asian countries grows six percent per year on average, i.e., the rates of growth in Asia are twice the world's average. It is expected that by 2020, Asia will produce 40 percent of the world's GNP and have sixteen of twenty-five of the world's largest cities, while five of seven of the largest national or supra-national economies will reside in Asia. And in terms of GNP volume, the Chinese economy may occupy first place. In 1950, the PRC

produced 3.3 percent of the world's GNP, and by 1992, this figure had increased to 10 percent and continues to grow, although not as fast as before. In terms of GNP volume (the size of the economy), China from 2003 occupied third place behind Japan and the United States, fourth place in the world as measured by export volume, and third place, by import volume. The PRC currency reserves occupy more than 11 percent of the world's currency reserves and have grown steadily, making China the largest holder of currency reserves in the world. Communist China has opened its economy to foreign direct investment, welcomed large-scale imports, and joined the World Trade Organization on a larger scale and with greater speed than the USSR, and did so earlier than democratic Russia, spurring prosperity within China and across the region.²⁷

If the contribution of China's economy to global economic growth is calculated by purchasing power parity, the US from 1995 to 2002 contributed 20 percent, China, 25 percent, and other industrial countries of Asia contributed some 18 percent. If the economic and political unification of the PRC and Taiwan were to take place, all the trends mentioned earlier would become even more obvious with much greater strategic consequences.

China has obviously managed to create a viable economic model that differs from Western forms of capitalism. Thus, it is not very important what it is called; what is more important is the fact of its viability and its alternative character. By 2025, 21 percent of the global population will live in the area of Greater China or within the area of the Chinese civilization. There will be obvious attempts by the PRC to structure this economic space in various ways (free economic zones, custom unions, ASEAN+3, creation of a yuan currency zone, etc.).

China also has sought to preempt a potential regional US-led coalition by deepening economic ties with American allies such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Australia. These countries would pay a considerable economic price if they were to openly support any US-led policies aimed against China. China has adroitly exploited every manifestation of regional dissatisfaction with America's obsessive and overbearing "war on terror," seeking to cast itself as a friendly, non-interfering alternative to US power in the region. It is even proposing new institutional arrangements wherein China can exercise a leadership role

²⁷ Voskressenski, *Kitai v mirovoi politike*.

that excludes the US, such as the East Asian Economic Zone and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. China is now intensively creating transnational corporations and buying world brands, making its economy global and thus more globally competitive.²⁸ China is doing this at a pace and with an ability incomparable to any other large developing states, states with restructured market economies, or states with emerging market economies (e.g., India, Brazil, and Russia).

The Chinese army is the largest in the world in terms of the number of soldiers, although it has been reduced according to its new tasks. The PRC military budget is increasing in real figures, and there is a strategic task to double it, or even triple it, in the long term in view of the development of double-use technologies and their commercial implementation. In Asia as a whole, military expenditure has increased by 50 percent.

According to a white paper on China's national defense, China will maintain the size of its People's Liberation Army (PLA) at 2.3 million members through this current restructuring, aiming at optimal force structure relations and better quality. China plans to build a streamlined military with fewer numbers but higher efficiency. Under the current military restructuring, China will achieve streamlined forces through such measures as reducing the number of PLA officers and the number of personnel by about 15 percent, and reducing the number ordinary troops that are technologically backward while strengthening its navy, air force, and second artillery force (rocket forces).

In its drive towards modernization, the PLA takes informatization as its strategic focus. Computers and other IT equipment have been gradually introduced into routine operations. The ability to provide operational information support has been greatly enhanced, while more and more IT elements have been incorporated into the main Chinese battle weapon systems. In its drive for informatization, the PLA adheres to the criterion of combat efficiency and the direction of integrated development, the enhancement of centralized leadership and overall planning, the development of new military theories and operational theories while

²⁸ "The US-Japan-China Triangle: Who's the Odd Man Out?" *Asia Program Special Report* 113 (July 2003); *Asia-Pacific Response to U.S. Security Policies* (Honolulu, HI: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2003); *Asia-Pacific Security Outlook*, 2002; Gennady Chufirin, ed., *Russia and Asia: The Emerging Security Agenda* (Solna: Oxford University Press for SIPRI, 1999).

optimizing the management system and force structure, updating systems of statutes and standards, and emphasizing training in informationalization. The PLA is accelerating the modernization of weaponry and equipment, depending on national economic development and technological advances.

Since the collapse of the USSR, Russia has emerged as China's principal source of advanced military hardware and technology. By the mid-1990s, Russia's need for hard currency forced a restructuring of military trade with China to trade conducted on a cash basis. However, the Russians are now increasingly hard pressed to come up with something new for China, and this pressure may grow due to possibly emerging competition for the hard currency that may arise between Russia and the EU, if the EU arms embargo on China is lifted.

China is eager to renew defense cooperation with Western countries. During his EU tour, the Chinese premier Wen Jiabao pressed for a decision to lift the ban, arguing that the embargo was a form of discrimination. He argued that the maturation of China's ties with the EU made the arms embargo a meaningless artifact, a remnant of the Cold War. He was encouraged by French president Jacques Chirac's remark that the ban "no longer corresponds to the political reality" and "makes no sense," a view that was supported by German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. Wen may also have thought that European arms industries would push for a share of the \$11 billion in arms agreements that China has signed since 1999. So, if some countries are complaining that they have a trade imbalance favoring China, they may try to correct it by selling weapons to China.

It is clear that since the early 1990s, the PRC has been upgrading its conventional and nuclear forces and improving its operational capabilities to match the standard of the US armed forces. China's defense budget has increased at a double-digit annual rate since 1995. The entirety of China's defense spending is virtually concentrated on strengthening its ability to project power in its immediate south and southeast neighborhood. If the current trend in China's military modernization continues, the balance of power in East Asia will shift in China's favor. However, there is no unanimous view in the international analytical community on the probable impact of China's rapidly growing economic and military power on the regional and international order. Is it possible for China to use that power in an attempt to establish new spheres of influence in areas where civilized ties with the Chinese diaspora are strong or where China can

claim a historical legacy especially if it would support its energy needs?²⁹ Or does China's military modernization simply mean the necessity to streamline and modernize its military forces according to its new economic status, thus ensuring and strengthening regional security?

From the point of view of achieving regional leadership in the spheres of science and ideology, this presents a more difficult task for China. Communist ideals can hardly inspire the masses; however, China does try to dynamically modernize these ideals and to adapt them to meet modern ideological purposes, reducing the most odious of them and combining them with a Confucian system of values and ethics. Confucian ethics can be compared with Protestant ethics in its creative potential. In this updated Chinese ideology, ideas of paternalistic authority and stoicism are very important. There is a vigorous hailing of Asian culture in regions that adhere to Asian values: diligence, discipline, respect for family values, respect for authority, subordination of individualistic ideas to collective values, a belief in a hierarchical society, the importance of consensus, and the aspiration to avoid confrontation by any means. Such a society preaches the domination of the state above society and society above the individual, but the Asian individual is inspired by the absence of internal social conflict and the support of the community. Thus, this relatively benign enlightened authoritarianism helps to develop societies that currently feel demographic and ecological tension. Of course, not all of these values are universal, but the developing East Asian half of the world has found them inspiring.

In 2003, Chinese president Hu Jintao's advisors put forward a new theory. Called China's "peaceful rise," it held that, in contrast to the warlike behavior of ascending great powers in the past, the economic ties between China and its trading partners not only made war unthinkable but would actually allow all sides to rise together. The theory did not survive the internal power struggles within the Communist Party, but the general idea lives on in new and updated formulations such as "peaceful development", "peaceful coexistence" of "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*).

In addition, China has started to actively position itself as a state encouraging science and innovation. There are 120 so-called technoparks

²⁹ "China's 'Good Neighbor' Diplomacy: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?" *Asia Program Special Report* 126 (January 2005).

in the country, and in 1995, a special state program for the development of China's high-tech industry was elaborated. The following priority fields in this program included: electronics, computer science, space and optic-fiber communications, and energy-saving technology. The state has already invested more than 10 billion yuan for the development of this program. The Chinese state actively invests in the development of the infrastructure of universities. China became the third country to successfully effectuate a manned space flight program, which has become a symbol of China's technological and innovation leap. It is clear that the space program also has certain military, surveillance, and intelligence components aimed at developing continuous surveillance capability in East Asia comparable to that of the US.

Thus, intentionally or not, China has succeeded in transforming itself into a dominant regional power with certain global interests, and has achieved globally perhaps even more than any other large regional state (for example, Russia, India, or Brazil). China has done this so cautiously and smoothly that this policy has not yet caused any open counteraction from other states or the formation of any anti-Chinese coalitions.³⁰

We should explore in this connection how developed China's relations with its most important land border partner—Russia—are, and how both Russia and China have adapted to the new situation in Eastern Asia following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of China as a possible new regional leader.

The International Milieu of Russo-Chinese Relations³¹

A decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia and China established a relatively weak but growing alliance comprising military and

³⁰ Except for new trends in the US-Japan and the US-ROK security arrangements, which are not necessarily aimed against China but are aimed forward strengthening regional security arrangements. However, they are considered as a threat in the PRC. Nam and Takagi, "Rising China and Shifting Alliances."

³¹ The aim of this paragraph is to summarize from the Russian perspective the major arguments elaborated in the literature on Russian-Chinese strategic partnership published in Russia, China, the US, and elsewhere since the appearance of Garnett, ed., *Rapprochement or Rivalry?* This is the reason for my heavy reliance on the appraisals and opinions presented in the literature. For the literature published before 2002, see Alexei D. Voskressenski, *Russia, China and Eurasia: A Bibliographic Profile of Selected International Literature* (New York: Nova Science, 1998); Voskressenski, *Russia and China*.

economic cooperation. Russia and China signed the Treaty on Good Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation on July 16, 2001. The treaty was not a traditional alliance because its signatories insisted that the agreement was not directed against any third country and thus did constitute a structural challenge to the traditional security alliances of the US-Japan or the US-ROK security agreements. However, contrary to the heads of states of China and Russia, many independent analysts have argued that Russia and China's relationship is indeed intended to counterbalance US dominance in the world. However, different from past alliances (including the former Russo-/USSR-Chinese alliance), the military component of the Russo-Chinese alliance is weak, notwithstanding their first joint military exercise in 2005. American analysts have pointed out that neither side can reasonably expect the degree of commitment from the other needed to balance US power, especially under conditions of open hostility. Other analysts believe that the treaty is marked by intermittent efforts on both sides to reach out to the United States, even as each work to resolve mutual differences with the other.

However, these explanations seem to be a clear misperception of the new and emerging type of alliance in the new multipolar world. This new type of alliance is established not "against," but rather "for," a common cause (stable economic development, a just and equal world with collective pluralistic leadership based on a multipolar world system and without differentiation between leaders and followers), and not necessarily strictly for rebuffing common military threats as it was before, although rebuffing military threats could also be a goal of such an alliance under certain circumstances.³² The creation of this new type of alliance, called "strategic partnership," seems to be one of the new characteristics of the post-bipolar world.³³

For many analysts, the alliance of such powers as Russia and China was and is surprising because of the intrinsic structural problems in their relationships that some analysts believe exist. They argue that Russia's China problem stems from the fact that today, China already surpasses

³² Sergei Lavrov, "Pod'em Azii i vostochnyi vektor vneshnei politiki Rossii," *Rossia v global'noi politike* 4, no. 2 (2006): 135–137.

³³ These arguments are developed in detail in Vladimir N. Baryshnikov, ed., *Kitaiskie analitiki o sovremennom sostoianii kitaisko-rossiiskikh otnoshenii i o politicheskom i ekonomicheskom polozhenii v Rossii* (Moscow: Institut Dal'nego Vostoka RAN, 2002), 8–27.

Russia in aggregate national power. World Bank estimates show that in terms of purchasing power parity, China has the world's third-largest GDP behind America and Japan. This is equivalent to about 35 percent of the total GDP of the US.³⁴ By the mid-1990s, China's Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) GDP was four times the size of Russia's. According to other data, Chinese GDP increased some twelve fold from 1950 to 1997.³⁵ However, as Chinese reforms deepen, it will be harder to sustain high rates of growth, and extensive development will be limited.³⁶ The need for deeper economic reforms in China, the gradual yet painful transition from the use of extensive growth factors to the greater use of intensive factors, and, finally, the overall development of Asian financial markets will determine the slowdown in the growth rate of China's GDP. Even if the Chinese growth rate were to drop to six percent in the near future and Russia were to ascend economically with a growth rate of four to six percent a year, within ten years, the gap between the two countries' GDP levels would increase six to tenfold, making Russia much more reactive to Chinese influences. This reflects the larger size of China as a country in terms of population and thus economy, an Eastern power that has never existed in Russian history before in terms of economic, political, and even cultural influence on Russia. However, the clear attempts of the Russian president to consolidate the means of state power in Russia may reverse the process of decreasing state power that Russia saw in the late nineties. This is because the ability of the Russian state and the Russian people to restructure the Russian economy was always underestimated by other countries and may considerably slow down this inevitable trend. Another answer to the above-mentioned trend is the concept of Russia-China codevelopment that is intended to use the shortcomings of each state in order to maximize their joint economic effectiveness and thus joint global competitiveness.³⁷

³⁴ I think that, basically, the correlation between the US's and the PRC's GDP is close to the correlation of the GDP between the US and the USSR that enabled the USSR to create a formidable military force to compete with the US military.

³⁵ For figures, see Dmitrii Trenin, *Kitaiskaia problema Rossii* (Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center, 1998); Anatolii I. Utkin, *Amerikanskaia strategiiia dlia 21 veka* (Moscow: Logos, 2000); Donaldson and Donaldson "The Arms Trade in Russian-Chinese Relations."

³⁶ Boris Kuzyk and Mikhail Titarenko, *Kitai-Rossiiia 2050: strategiiia sorazvitiia* (Moscow: Institut ekonomicheskikh strategii RAN, 2006).

³⁷ Kuzyk and Titarenko, *Kitai-Rossiiia 2050*. However, the concept of codevelopment does

If reforms in China fail, there will be even more problems for Russia and China's neighboring countries.³⁸ Not only will the Far Eastern and Siberian regions be deprived of their principal source of food and consumer goods, the Russian authorities will find it practically impossible to contain the migration of huge masses of unemployed people from across the border.³⁹ The population of China is 1.3 billion and growing, while Russia's population stands at 146 million and is declining.⁴⁰

A major limitation to China's economic growth is its insufficient resource base. Many sources of extensive development have been or are on the verge of being exhausted. In the 1990s, it became obvious that China depends on imports of not only advanced technologies but also food and energy. Russia's abundance of natural resources, especially energy, is one of the few areas where Russia seems to be securely superior to China. The terms of China's access to these resources will be one of the key problems in future Russo-Chinese relations and a key factor for China's new global economic role. The Russo-Chinese strategic partnership is, indeed, a tool to ensure China's access to these resources and is thus vital for China's status as a new rising Asian power.

Addressing China's social problems is no less daunting than addressing its economic problems. Russian sinologists conclude that the situation in which everybody stood to gain from the reforms in China is nearing its end.⁴¹ The forthcoming inevitable reform of state-run enterprises will create large social groups that will clearly be on the losing end. The number of unemployed in the country already amounts to 150

not necessarily mean the equal prosperity of both participants, Russia and China.

³⁸ Shambaugh, *Is China Unstable?*; Wolf, "Fault Lines in China's Economic Terrain."

³⁹ *Vyzovy i ugrozy natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossii v Aziatsko-Tikhookeanskom regione*. (Moscow: Institut Dal'nego Vostoka RAN, 2001); Herman Pirchner Jr., *The Russian-Chinese Border: Today's Reality* (Washington, DC: American Foreign Policy Council, 2002), 1–15. For a summary of Chinese migration in Russia from a historical perspective, see Aleksandr Larin, *Kitaitsy v Rossii Vchera i segodnia: istoricheskii ocherk* (Moscow: Muravei, 2003).

⁴⁰ IWASHITA Akihiro, ed., *The Sino-Russian "Strategic Partnership": Current Views from the Border and Beijing* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2003); ARAI Nobuo, ed., *The Russian Far East Today: Regional Transformations under Globalization* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2003); Anatolii Boliatko, *Da'lnii Vostok: v poiskakh strategicheskoi stabil'nosti, problemy natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossii na Dal'nem Vostoke i strategicheskoi srabil'nosti v Aziatsko-Tikhookeanskom regione* (Moscow: Institut Dal'nego Vostoka RAN, 2003).

⁴¹ See, for example, Voskressenski, ed., *Kitai v mirovoi politike*.

million, slightly more than the entire population of Russia; the pension system covers only a small sector of the population, while housing problems remain acute. In the past, China managed to funnel social pressure into creating millions of small factories and shops and holding back the growth of personal income in order to make huge economic leaps. Future economic reform and intensive development will prove more costly to China as groups within its population who are negatively affected by these reforms grow.

For China's neighbors and partners, including Russia, the gradual fading of China's authoritarian regime has indefinite consequences. On the other hand, the democratization of Chinese society would be a lengthy process requiring an entire epoch and would not be without negative outcomes. The experiences of post-Soviet states reveal a link between the process of democratization and the growth of nationalism and outwardly directed aggression.

To summarize, we must conclude that the seriousness of the problems in Russia and in China as well as their mutual interdependence or at least the influence they have on each other have fostered an understanding of the necessity to formalize ties between each other in order to form an alliance; the reason for this, even in view of its complexities, are the internal factors of their shared development. Here, we will try to elaborate on the understanding of the congruity and incongruity of Russian and Chinese interests and find out what the medium-term prospects for the relationship and its influence on the Northeast Asian development are.

Spheres of Congruity in Russian and Chinese Interests

The United States occupies the most important place in Chinese foreign policy, and Chinese analysts have proclaimed American-Chinese relations are its most important bilateral relations in the world.⁴² During President Clinton's era, pragmatic advocates of the friendly involvement of China in

⁴² JIANG Xiyuan, *Daguo zhanlue yu weilai Zhongguo* [The Strategy of the Great Powers and China's Future] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2003); LI, *Daguo Guanxi yu Weilai Zhongguo*; Iurii Galenovitch, *Kitai i sentiabr'skaia tragediia v Amerike* (Moscow: Nauchno-obrazovatel'nyi forum po mezhdunarodnim otnosheniiam, 2002); Benjamin L. Self and Jeffrey W. Thompson, eds., *An Alliance for Engagement: Building Cooperation in Security Relations with China* (Washington, DC: Henry L. Stimpson Center, 2002); *Asia-Pacific Security Outlook*, 2002.

the US-led system of international relations have prevailed over both more conservative advocates of containment of China and liberal upholders of human rights. In the late nineties, Washington proposed a constructive strategic partnership with Beijing, but China, of course, entertains no illusions that the US will try to curb the power of their potentially most serious competitor.⁴³ In developing its relations with Washington, Beijing is seeking to carefully limit or reduce American influence, first of all in East and Central Asia.

Such actions are based on the notion of a multipolar world, which entails countering hegemony. This concept is the official basis of the early stage of the Chinese-Russian strategic partnership. Beijing publicly sided with Moscow regarding the expansion of NATO, even though its criticism was much more muted. It seems this is not simply *quid pro quo* in response to Moscow's support of the Chinese position on Taiwan.⁴⁴ If long-term relations between Moscow and NATO become more amicable, it will complicate China's strategic position. Institutionalized Russia-NATO confrontation serves as a barrier against the encirclement of China by the West. However, it is becoming obvious that Beijing, unlike Moscow, is mostly concerned with the intensified activities of NATO and the US in Central Asia.⁴⁵ China's strategic interests are concentrated in precisely this region, which is rich in fuel and energy resources and which serves as a potential hinterland for Xinjiang separatists. Beijing may have no sympathy for the growth of US and Western influence in this Chinese periphery instead of a diminished Russia. The new developments in this direction are intriguing: Russia ceased to argue against NATO enlargement, understanding that NATO's most serious security problem at the moment is the incorporation of new NATO members; China dropped its anti-hegemonist stance, arguing now, along with Russia, that US moves, although unilateral, nevertheless serve to strengthen the stability of Central Asia and the world as a whole; Russia established military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Central Asia and the Middle East with their energy resources became the focus of the "new" international politics, a

⁴³ For arguments, see, for example, JIANG, *Daguo zhanlue yu weilai Zhongguo*; LI, *Daguo Guanxi yu Weilai Zhongguo*; Galenovitch, *Kitai i sentiabr'skaia tragediia v Amerike*, and elsewhere in the Chinese and Russian literature.

⁴⁴ This is explored in detail in Voskressenski, *Rossiia, Kitai i novyi miroporiadok XXI veka*.

⁴⁵ See Mikhail M. Narinskii and Artem V. Mal'gin, eds., *Iuzhnyi flang SNG: Tsentral'naia Aziia-Kaspii-Kavkaz; vozmozhnosti i vyzovy dlia Rossii* (Moscow: Logos, 2003).

situation that was once a major part of the global political landscape in the nineteenth century.

It is also clear that the US intends to abandon the US-Russia-China triangle model of relations, more often speaking of a regional triangle that includes Japan.⁴⁶ The US-Japan-China triangle is clearly dominated by the US because of its security arrangements with Japan. But that also means that Beijing infers Tokyo's status as much lower. The Chinese purpose is thus to weaken the Japan-US alliance in the triangle where China is the weakest participant. However, if this happens, Tokyo will have to either accept Beijing's hegemony or revise its non-nuclear principles and establish some kind of strategic partnership with Russia, all with very serious regional consequences.⁴⁷

Relations with Russia are establishing a favorable external environment for China. Their main goal is to remove any potential political-military confrontation with North Korea and help monopolize the energy resources of the Russian Far East, which are out of the control of the US and its allies and thus a very important source of resource diversification.

During the early nineties, Chinese leadership worried about the prospect of Moscow becoming Washington's partner. However, this did not happen; moreover, special relations between Russia and China were established to ensure that there was no threat from Russia in the foreseeable future. The strategic partnership with Moscow guarantees that Russia will not participate in any potential anti-Chinese coalition, thus always ensuring a secure buffer between NATO and China and also

⁴⁶ Gilbert Rozman, "Sino-Japanese Relations: Mutual Images and the Balance between Globalization and Regionalism," in "The US-Japan-China Triangle: Who's the Odd Man Out?" *Asia Program Special Report* 113 (July 2003): 8–13.

⁴⁷ QIU Yongfeng, "Ribei 40 Nian Hewu Jihua Juedui Neimu" [40 Years of Underground Decisive Plans for Japanese Nuclear Weapons], *Qingnian Cankao*, November 5, 2003, A3–A4; "Zhongri Guanxi Bianhua yu Fengqi" [Change in China-Japan Relations and Their Differences], *Huanqiu Shibao*, October 17, 2003; "Zhang Huankan: Ribei Zaici Dafu Xiaojian dui Hua Yuanzhu" [Japan Again Greatly Reduces its Aid to China], *Guoji Xianqu Daobao* (October 31–November 6, 2003); "Razvitie i stabil'nost' v Severo-Vostochnoi Azii," *Svobodnaia mysl'*, 2003, no. 11 (total no. 1537): 40–52; *Svobodnaia mysl'*, 2003, no. 12 (total no. 1538): 29–41; "Razvitie i stabil'nost' v Severo-Vostochnoi Azii" Materialy rossiisko-iaponskoi nauchno-prokticheskoi konferentsii, MGIMO, Moscow, April 10–11, 2003; "The US-Japan-China Triangle: Who's the Odd Man Out?" *Asia Program Special Report* 113 (July 2003).

probably in Northeast Asia in the absence of any tangible Russian-Japanese economic and security arrangements. No matter how relations between China, Japan, and the West develop in the future, China will never be isolated because of its special relationship with Russia.

The most positive material result of the Russo-Chinese partnership for Russia is the border agreements between Russia, China, and the Central Asian states.⁴⁸ For the first time in the history of Russo-Chinese relations, the entire length of the border is not only accurately defined but also demarcated. Confidence-building measures and limitation of armaments in the 100-kilometer zone on both sides of the border reinforce political and military stability and make a very considerable contribution to security in East and Central Asia. Once bound-to-death adversaries over the border issue, Russia and China have finalized an honorable border compromise that removed the last obstacle to fostering of their strategic ties.

In contrast to American and even EC attitudes toward Russia, China has emphasized the equal nature of its relationship with Russia.⁴⁹ It was interpreted in the Chinese mainstream literature on international relations as confidence of the Chinese people that Russia is suffering temporary difficulties and that in the future, Russia will become one of the poles in the new international structure. But this only partially explains the Chinese attitude. Serious economic and political problems in Russia would be a source of serious danger to China. This is why, from the mid-nineties, China has bolstered relations with Russia's federal government, not regions or political forces on the left of the Russian political spectrum. It is clear that China, as well as Russia, is interested in Russian political and economic stability in China. It is not clear, in contrast to wonderful wording, to what extent China (as well as the US) wants Russia to become a stronger global and regional player; hence, the economic relationship between them started to develop with considerable speed only in the late nineties.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Genrikh V. Kireev, *Rossiiā–Kitai: neizvestnye stranitsy pogranichnykh peregovorov* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006).

⁴⁹ Voskressenski, *Rossiiā, Kitai i novyi miroporiadok XXI veka*.

⁵⁰ See, *Vyzovy i ugrozy natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossii v Aziatsko-Tikhookeanskom regione*.

Apart from its geopolitical and geostrategic significance, Russia is important to China as a source of energy and raw material.⁵¹ China believes that Russia can play a stabilizing role regarding the Central Asian countries, including in the economic and political spheres, as well as countering pan-Turkish tendencies and Islamic political movements trying to gain control over Xinjiang.

In addition to the interest in Russia energy resources, China is interested in Russia as a partner in military-technical cooperation. In view of their relative high quality and low cost, Russian arms may be essential to the modernization of China's military. At the same time, China is now more interested in purchasing licenses for production on its own territory in order to lower its dependence on Russian arms in the near future.

Another sphere of cooperation, very tempting for China, is the joint development of advanced weapons systems.⁵² This is needed for China to achieve a qualitative shift in the military balance in Asia, especially in the Taiwan Strait, in its favor. However, it must be clear that military modernization is not the first priority for China because the twenty-first century will probably not see large-scale wars. To be a modern state in aggregate power for China means to have a strong economic system and a stable political system as its number one goal. This is why the importance (and a danger for other neighboring countries) of Russo-Chinese military cooperation should not be overestimated.⁵³

China's strategic partnership with Russia ensures a reliable rear for China in the north and a certain measure of stability in the northwest. Russia is not seen in China as either a potential aggressor or as the most likely theater of a future war. Thus, Beijing has the opportunity to concentrate on its southern and southeastern flanks.⁵⁴

⁵¹ WU, *Zhongguo shiyou anquan*; GU Qing, "Bie Wei Shiyou Shangla Youyi" [Do Not Let Oil Harm Friendship], *Huanqiu Shibao*, October 20, 2003.

⁵² For detailed information on Russian-Chinese military-technical cooperation, see Konstantin Makienko, *Voенно-tekhnicheskoe sotrudnichestvo Rossii i KNR v 1992–2002 godakh: dostizheniia, tendentsii, perspektivy* (Moscow: Gendal'f, 2002); Dziak, *The Military Relationship between China and Russia, 1995–2002*; Ian Anthony ed., *Russia and the Arms Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁵³ There is a very intense discussion between military experts and analysts on these issues reflected in CHEN Yun. "Rossiisko-kitaiskoe strategicheskoe sotrudnichestvo v globaliziruiushchemsia politzentrchnom mire," *Vestnik VEGU*, Special Issue, *World of Orient* (Ufa, 2006), 102–113.

⁵⁴ For detailed argumentation and alternative reservations, see Voskressenski, *Kitai v*

However, somewhere between 2010 and 2015, parity in the number of nuclear warheads may emerge between the PRC and the Russian Federation, while China's nuclear capability will have a stronger impact on the military balance with Russia. However, in terms of nuclear and military technology, Russia is still, and will be in the indefinite future, a formidable power, one of two countries in the world that can initiate a military disaster for any state on the earth. Also, as most Asians seem to forget, together with the US, Russia has a powerful military presence in Asia of which others still constitute the second tier.⁵⁵ However, as it is clear from Russia's new foreign policy strategy, Russia is interested in looking not only westward when orientating itself, but also increasingly eastward, and is not seeking to increase its military or traditional security role in Asia, as it did during the Soviet era, but to act as an indispensable and reliable economic partner and a stable energy provider to Eastern Asia and Asia-Pacific.⁵⁶

In the twenty-first century, due to the obvious trends in its economic development, China will influence Russia's foreign, defense, and domestic policy, its economy, and the development of its demographic processes more than any other state.⁵⁷ This fact is underestimated in Russia, and also in Asia. This is why Russia is very interested in a prosperous and stable China that can increasingly satisfy the needs of its population and that will open its market to Russian goods and services. This strategic Russian attitude to China only strengthens the rationale for future Russo-Chinese strategic cooperation.

Russia and China established a strategic partnership in order to balance a number of common threats. Russia and China are clearly worried about the long-term prospect of any unilateralist actions that might threaten Russian and Chinese national interests. Both Russia and China are concerned about their military shortcomings vis-à-vis the US although to different degrees. Both sides opposed modification of the

mirovoi politike.

⁵⁵ Pavel B. Kamennov, *KNR: voenno-tekhicheskie aspekty modernizatsii oborony* (Moscow: Institut Dal'nego Vostoka RAN, 2001).

⁵⁶ Kuzik and Titarenko, *Kitai-Rossiiia 2050*; Anatolii V. Torkunov, ed., *Vneshniaia politika i bezopasnost' sovremennoi Rossii 1991–2002: khrestomatia v chetyrekh tomakh*, (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002); Anatolii V. Torkunov, *Sovremennye mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia i mirovaia politika* (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 2004).

⁵⁷ Trenin, *Kitaiskaia problema Rossii*.

1972 ABM Treaty, fearing that deployment of missile defenses by the United States might diminish their own strategic forces. Another source of threat that could endanger Russo-Chinese interests is the Islamic extremist and separatist movements in Central Asia. Each state also has its own individual security concerns, not necessarily shared by the other. For Russia, this was an enlargement of NATO; for China this was the US presence in Central Asia. Washington's defense arrangements with Taiwan are a constant reminder to China of the limits in fostering its reunification with Taiwan. Beijing more strongly than Russia opposes theater missile defense systems of the type that could be used to protect Taiwan. Officially, Russia declared its opposition to Taiwan's independence, but certainly does not welcome the use of force to impose unification. China feels constrained by the strengthening of the US-Japan and the US-ROK security alliances although Russia sees them indifferently or even favors them as a source, among others, of strengthening regional security. The Russo-Chinese partnership does not hinder either state in addressing these concerns individually. However, the main rationale of the partnership is not balancing common threats but fostering newly evolving bilateral and regional economic cooperation that can redirect regional developments from traditional security considerations to a new regional economic cooperation agenda in order to strengthen economic interdependence and, thus, comprehensive security that consists of common security and common prosperity.

Spheres of Incongruity in Russian and Chinese Interests

A number of independent analysts suggest that Russia's political elite as well as a considerable part of the population, especially in the Russian Far East, perceives China as a proximate threat⁵⁸ even though the Russian and Chinese leadership have fostered a viable strategic partnership. Three key variables—aggregate power, offensive power, and especially geographic proximity—each suggest that Russia could perceive China as a potential challenge, danger or even threat. Many Russian political and military figures worry about selling China advanced conventional weapons and

⁵⁸ For arguments, see Viktor Larin, *Kitai i Dal'nii Vostok Rossii v pervoi polovine 90-kh: problemy regionalnogo vzaimodeistvii* (Vladivostok: Dal'nauka, 1998); Trenin, *Kitaiskaia problema Rossii*; Vilia G. Gel'bras, *Kitaiskaia real'nost' Rossii* (Moscow: Muravei, 2001).

technologies at a time when modernization of Russia's naval and nuclear forces in the East is very slow.⁵⁹ The source of concern is that the benefits of this relationship are all too one sided.⁶⁰ China appears to be modernizing its navy and air force at a rapid pace, while in return, Russia is receiving a modest amount of hard currency at a level far lower than needed to modernize its defense industry.⁶¹ However, at the same time, most of these political and military figures present no sound alternative to a cooperative relationship with China in this sphere except military cooperation with India, who signed new agreements with the US and Europe and now have an alternative to Russian weaponry. Thus, according to analysts, the most important near-term consequence of the Sino-Russian partnership is the Russian contribution to Chinese military modernization that may be dangerous to Russia itself in the medium and long term.

For the foreseeable future, China will have an enduring need for Russian military technology, while Russia's own economic reasons and the ideological motivations of some parts of the Russian foreign policy and military community create incentives for such sales.⁶² The broad Russo-Chinese defense and technology cooperation that is linked to arms sales could in the long run alter the regional military balance of power in East and Southeast Asia or the Taiwan Strait. However, most Russian analysts prefer to think from short- and medium-term perspectives, correctly arguing that the most acute short- and medium-term danger for Russia is its economic shortcomings vis-à-vis other world powers.⁶³ It is also clear that since Japan is reluctant to ameliorate its tense relations with Russia, and since China happened to be the only regional power in Eastern Asia to highly welcome the reemergence of Russian economic might and influence in the region, Russia needs to pay a price for this kind

⁵⁹ For detailed information on the Russian discussion, see Viktor Larin, *Kitai i Dal'nii Vostok Rossii*, 68–71. See also essays in *Eksport Vooruzhenii*, <http://cast.ru>.

⁶⁰ Vasilii Mikheev, ed., *Kitai: ugrozy, riski vyzovy razvitiu* (Moscow: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005); Andrei S. Kuminov, *Kitai: Nadvigaetsia Voina?* (St. Petersburg: 100azh, 2005); Iurii Galenovitch, *Rossiiia-Kitai-Amerika: ot sopernichestva k garmonii interesov?* (Moscow: Russkaia Panorama, 2006).

⁶¹ Chinese counterarguments can be found in CHEN, "Rossiisko-kitaiskoe strategicheskoe sotrudnichestvo," 102–113.

⁶² CHEN, "Rossiisko-kitaiskoe strategicheskoe sotrudnichestvo," 102–113.

⁶³ Kuzik and Titarenko, *Kitai-Rossiiia 2050; Rossiiia i Kitai: sotrudnichestvo v usloviakh globalizatsii* (Moscow: Institut Dal'nego Vostoka RAN, 2005).

of support, something that it can do in the present situation mostly by military sales, military technology transfers, military cooperation projects, and future energy exports.

Another incompatibility of Russian and Chinese interests covers their strategic vision, especially regarding the Asia-Pacific region. Russia, having already experienced a serious decline in its economic, political, and military strength, is essentially a status-quo power in the region, clinging to territories and positions that it won during the Soviet period. Moscow seeks to reduce regional tensions while concentrating on rebuilding its economic strength. It seeks to minimize or eliminate threats and maintain its dominant presence within its security zone, which encompasses the territory of the Russian Federation as well as the entire Commonwealth of Independent States. Both regionally and globally, Russia opposes hegemonism and seeks a multipolar balance, with a dual role for itself as a great power (or great regional power) and as a crossroads between Europe and Asia. Although its military strength has declined, Russia seeks to maintain its strategic deterrence over all other states in Asia. It seeks to integrate its economy with those of the Asia-Pacific region, although its major economic orientation is toward the West.

China, on the other hand, is essentially a revisionist power, seeking to gather the economic and military capabilities to compete with the United States and Japan on the regional and, in the near future, on the global stage.⁶⁴ In order to do so, it needs continued access to the energy

⁶⁴ Arguments summarized in Robert H. Donaldson and John A. Donaldson, "The Arms Trade in Russian-Chinese Relations." I agree that both the PRC and the US are revisionist powers, and because of this, I mention this argument in the section elaborating the incongruity of Russian and Chinese interests. From a theoretical point of view, the analysis presented by Robert H. Donaldson and John A. Donaldson is very robust and persuading. However, I do not share their perception of the impossibility of a coalition between Russia as a status-quo power and the PRC as a revisionist power because one revisionist power, the PRC, is clearly competing with an ideologically hostile revisionist power—the US, and also with another revisionist regional power—Japan, and Russian neutrality, at least, could be critical in maintaining the balance. The current development of Russo-Chinese relations does not support the skepticism of Robert H. Donaldson and John A. Donaldson. This was also analyzed as a theoretical possibility in Voskressenski, *Russia and China*. For further detailed argumentation and the implications for the US, see also Walter B. Slocombe, "Staying the Course: Opportunities and Limitations in U.S.-China Relations" (policy paper, The Atlantic Council of the United States, Washington, DC, September 2002); Gang Lin, ed. *U.S.-China Relations since the End of the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2000).

resources of Russia and Central Asia, as well as to Russia's advanced military technologies. Having reached a border compromise with Russia and having demarcated the whole Chinese-Russian border, China is determined to gain its territorial objectives in Taiwan and the South China Sea, while retaining its position in Tibet and increasing its influence over Mongolia and the states of Central Asia. It seeks to maintain military superiority in the region, while trying to reduce the US presence regionally.

In the economic arena, as was already mentioned, Russia and China have experienced one of the most stunning reversals of economic position.⁶⁵ Once one of the most industrially advanced, Russia's economy because of the collapse of the USSR and the need for complete economic restructuring, in fifteen years has declined to almost half of its former value, indirectly raising the credibility of Chinese arguments for cautious state-centered reforms. Once among the world's poorest countries, China, over the same fifteen years, twice doubled its GDP. Its GDP now ranks third in the world (second by purchasing parity), and its rate of growth is the fastest among all major countries. Even with its growing population of 1.3 billion, and Russia's declining population of 146 million, China is on course to surpass Russia on a GDP per-capita basis sometime in the future. So the directions of their economies are diverging, and they still cannot find a mutually beneficial and complementary economic model except for the selling of Russian energy and other nonrenewable resources in exchange for the products of Chinese light industries. China seeks to satisfy its demand for advanced industrial equipment in the West not in Russia. The main trading goods between them are: Russian energy and arms, Chinese foodstuffs, and cheap consumer goods. There are several long-term high-technology Russo-Chinese projects, but they are few, and the level of mutual investment is very low.

The demographic perspective of the relationship over the long term is not very bright, especially for Russia's border regions of the Far East. Capital investment in this area has fallen and remains stagnant. The region's labor resources have also declined; it lost some nine percent of its population in the 1990s, in spite of a large influx of immigrants, both legal

⁶⁵ For a detailed comparison of Russian and Chinese reforms, see Peter Nolan, *China's Rise, Russia's Fall: Politics, Economics and Planning in the Transition from Stalinism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).

and illegal.⁶⁶ A policy of open borders was reversed by the Russian authorities in 1993; however, with a population density ten times larger on the Chinese side of the border than on the Russian side, it is estimated that there may be 1–2 million Chinese living in Russia by the middle of the century. Newspapers in Hong Kong in 2003 reported that there are at least 200,000 Chinese in the Russian border regions. These articles were later republished by some central newspapers in China without any comments.⁶⁷ Although the figure of 1–2 million itself is not too large for these low-population territories (there were about half a million Chinese in the Russian Far East at the beginning of the twentieth century), it may be crucial for Russian local and central authorities in implementing very tough measures to take into account the considerable loss of the Russian population in the region.

Another problem is a cultural one. Levels of trust between Chinese (Asians) and Russians in the regions hover near the bottom. These figures do not show the hatred Russians have toward the Chinese or Japanese or vice versa. The figures show the low level of cross-cultural understanding and the fragility of benign attitudes that may change very quickly to distrust or even hatred. Russians still do not show much interest in China, its language, or its culture, and prefer that the Chinese learn their language because it is believed to be simpler linguistically.⁶⁸ The Russian government has not done much to change this situation, notwithstanding the proclaimed 2006, the Year of Russia in China, and 2007, the Year of China in Russia. Many Russians are afraid of the prospect of a significant Chinese population appearing in Russia. The situation has improved over the last two years, but it is not structurally better, mostly because of the time needed for such measures to take any considerable effect. Similarly, the situation is not much better in China: Chinese society has a vivid interest in Russia, but there are still few students learning the Russian language or Russian foreign policy, politics, and culture. A considerable part of the Chinese academic community has started to look at Russia through Western analytical lenses because they can read English but not Russian and have access to Western literature instead of Russian books or Russian sources.

⁶⁶ Larin, *Kitai i Dal'nii Vostok Rossii*.

⁶⁷ *Cankao Xiaoxi*, 24 October, 2003.

⁶⁸ Gel'bras, *Kitaiskaia real'nost' Rossii*, 141–195.

Most Russian analysts appear to believe that China's near-term foreign policy ambitions are directed toward Taiwan and the South China Sea, and that its interests in the stability of Central Asia parallel those of Russia. Russian-made equipment may indeed enable Beijing to obtain a regional advantage in force projection capability in a future Taiwan crisis and may someday allow China to test the naval superiority of the United States in the East China Sea. China's growing capability and a doctrine that is oriented toward local and limited wars on or near its borders and that emphasizes mobility, lethality, and preemption may stimulate a new arms race in the region. Nevertheless, Russian military strategists appear to perceive no real danger to Russia in such circumstances. Analysts who argue that the sale of Russian arms risks upsetting the delicate military balance in Asia and even meddling in China's territorial disputes with Taiwan, Vietnam, Japan, and ultimately the US are in a clear minority, and their views do not represent the mainstream views of the Russian academic community.

Policy Implications and Conclusions

It is more or less clear, at the beginning to the twenty-first century, that China has created the conditions necessary to challenge the existing regional and to some extent the global structure of the international system in the future. This challenge is of a special sort because it is not directly related to the military capability of the PRC, comparable by any parameter to that of the former USSR. The PRC probably does not even aspire to have such capability. At the same time, in the very near future, the combined economic capabilities and the strategic interests of the PRC may be much more significant than those of the USSR, and its military capabilities will no doubt be increased to reinforce this new economic status. But the capabilities of China are dictated by the cumulative size of its economic, geographical, and demographic resources, but not by its per-capita GNP, a parameter that is still relatively low. Thus, "Soviet-type" leadership, which can be carried out in China, will hardly be recognized by the global community. But China in every possible way tries to evade this type of leadership role, and this benign intention must not be rejected by the international community. At the same time, an expanding China, because of its size (geographic, demographic, and economic) and related

problems that are of regional and even global significance, represents itself as a kind of global challenge. But the problem of China's global challenge is not identical to the possibility of China conducting regional and global leadership or of China becoming a contender to the US position; thus, if properly identified by the international community and by the Chinese leadership itself, it will not necessarily result in the containment of China. A rising China can also be balanced by the strengthening of the Russo-Japanese, Russo-Korean, and Russo-American economic partnerships, multilateral regional economic agreements, as well as by a new level of economic cooperation between Russia and ASEAN countries and also between Russia and the Western world generally.

The current unprecedented changes in the world are possibly related to the crisis of global regulation connected to the transition of the world to a different global entity that is seen differently by different important international and regional actors. This crisis is only partly related to the geopolitical crisis in that smaller part of the world consisting of the post-Soviet territories, and to the problem of the unilateralist, or as some call it, "incompetent and selfish" leadership of the US. However, the crisis of world regulation and incompetent leadership, which was exposed to doubts and discussions with no consensus in the international community, may result in a situation where an important anti-leader with the support or the benign negligence of other major regional leaders will proceed to the category of regional counter-leader, and having become the unconditional regional counter-leader, may move further to become a possible counter-dominant, or may simply be perceived as such. At present, only China has come close to this position, and has officially or unofficially pretended or even showed intentions to play this kind of game. Most, including people from the Chinese analytical community, understand that having an enormous amount of internal problems, China should try to solve these internal problems first. However, it is also understood that the transition to the new status can automatically help resolve some of these internal problems. It is certain that the Chinese leadership understands this.

After the 9/11 attacks on the US, there were major changes in the orientation of American foreign policy. President George W. Bush declared a "war on terrorism." Russian president Vladimir Putin was among the first foreign leaders to sign up to the coalition against terrorism.

China also declared some enlistment in the cause.⁶⁹

In Russia's case, Putin offered to share intelligence on Afghanistan and al Qaeda, and he raised no objection to overflights by American forces or their use of bases in former Soviet states of Central Asia in the military campaign against the Taliban. China also unequivocally condemned terrorist activities.

However, some Russian foreign policy analysts warned that if Russia abandoned the balancing strategy that had characterized its foreign policy in recent years, Russia risked abandoning its allies.⁷⁰ China refrained from attempts to block US military responses to the terrorist attacks in Central Asia although it obviously felt very intimidated by the American military presence in its underbelly. Russia and China have also heightened the issue of antiterrorism, as well as, most recently, economic activity in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.⁷¹

However, during recent years, the relationship of the US with both Russia and China has deteriorated. Although the rate of economic interdependence between the US and the PRC is very high, their political relations have not improved. The strategic partnership between Russia and the US has eroded and, at present, neither country has an agenda for negotiation, especially on issues of strategic importance that are broadly understood. Some Russian experts have successfully argued that the only goal of the US is to further weaken Russia in order to revert current international trends that are not to favorable to the US.⁷² In the case of further negative international developments, a weak Russo-Chinese alliance can be easily transformed into a stronger one. If the US and the EU dash Russia's expectations of being part of the Western coalition and deny the anticipated benefits of bandwagoning, Russia still could return to a balancing of threat strategy. So, if Washington chooses to turn aside Russia's and China's interests to negotiate less threatening arrangements for itself in a unilinear world security system, the threat that Russia and

⁶⁹ Robert M. Hathaway and Wilson Lee, eds., *George W. Bush and East Asia: A First Term Assessment* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2003); *Asia-Pacific Responses to U.S. Security Policies*.

⁷⁰ Some of these arguments are developed in Voskressenski, *Rossiia, Kitai i novyi miroporiadok XXI veka*.

⁷¹ For more details, see Voskressenski, *Severo-Vostochnaia i Tsentral'naia Azia*.

⁷² Valentin Falin and Gennadii Evstaf'ev, "O veroiatnom stsenarii deistvii SSHA v otnoshenii Rossii v 2006–2008 godakh," *Moscow News*, no. 36, September 22–28, 2006.

China perceive in the posture of the United States may become ominous enough to strengthen the Russo-Chinese alliance. The mutual determination of Russia and China to counter this American threat may replace arms sales and the need for internal modernization as the foundations of their relationship. However, to what extent this affects development in Eastern Asia is still unclear. China sees the reinforcement of the US-Japan and the US-ROK security arrangements as a threat to its national interests, mostly on the Taiwan issue but also regionally. Russia at present does not see the reinforcement of the US-Japan and the US-ROK security arrangements as a threat to its interests, but the situation may change if Russia feels marginalized both in Europe and in the new East Asian economic and political arrangements. The inability of Russia and Japan to enter a post-Cold War economic partnership and the stalemate of multilateral economic development in Northeast Asia where Russia and Japan could enter mutually beneficial arrangements indirectly curbs unhealthy trends as the subregional dialogue sticks to hard security measures and mutual differences.

Another possibility exists. The rise of China economically and also as a state that plays a crucial role in international and regional security could give further rationale for the American political elite to consider the US-Japan and the US-ROK security arrangements as purely regional ones, which are inferior to the possible stronger global security arrangements with China. The same logic was applied to Europe during the Cold War between the US and the USSR. China's possible future predominance in the region could relegate Japan to secondary status as a political as well as a military power. This possibility could bring the national interests of Russia and Japan closer and also sharpen Sino-Japanese competition over the Russian Far East, which could lead to new multilateral and bilateral security and economic arrangements in Northeast Asia. The uncertainty regarding the multitude of choices imposes strain on Japan's traditional foreign policy strategy, once sarcastically described by Irie Akira as always leaning towards the stronger side.

From the point of view of a major part of the Russian political elite and interest groups, the Russo-Chinese strategic partnership and a treaty signed in 2001 between Russia and China is a warranty of the benign relationship of Russia with its most important land-border neighbor. The political elite of at least two other major regional players, Russia and France, and maybe also even of Germany, obviously look rather

benevolently on China as a prospective East Asian regional leader, thus heightening the prospects of an ASEM with Russian participation. However, the final decision was to postpone (or even to reject) Russian membership in the ASEM as well as Russia's membership into the WTO. For some time now, China has been trying to raise the level of its relationship with the EU as it did with Russia, thus showing that it may be possible to geopolitically counterbalance the US-Japan financial/economic/military knot and the US-ROK economic/security arrangements with an EU-China and a Greater China-ASEAN financial/economic knot and a China-Russia security/military/energy knot as a basis for its new regional status. But the success of China on a more global level will be dependent at least on the desire or the negligence of the EU, the US, Japan, and Russia as well as China's own aspirations. The complexity of the new situation in this equation indirectly raises the rationale for improvement of Russia-Japan relations as well as Russian-European and Russian-American relations as a guarantee against the malign regional balance of a power game that would be detrimental to the region. This complexity also points to the fact that the divergence of American and Russian strategic interests in Asia has reached a level where it could endanger regional development. Improvement of Russo-Japanese relations may help Japan to overcome its recession, and may help Russia find a means towards the sustainable development of the Far East and a way to enter East Asian markets, and may help China to rise peacefully without fear of being encircled, but instead is balanced by a benign multilateral as well as Russian-Japanese bilateral economic cooperation and not by traditional "hard" security considerations that have become detrimental to the economic development of the Northeastern region.

Putin, Jiang Zemin and, later, Hu Jintao mentioned several times that their countries' strategic cooperation is not aimed at any third country. China and Russia are not working and are not planning to work in concert against any third country. This strategic cooperation vis-à-vis the outside world is aimed at present only at deterring any outside policy that might possibly hurt the national interests of the two countries. The Sino-Russian strategic cooperation agreement is based on the common interests of the two nations. Any unilateral action by Russia or China that injures the two countries' strategic cooperation may damage the national interests of the country initiating such action. Sino-Russian strategic cooperation cannot cover all fields of their foreign policy and cannot be the most important

tool to realize their foreign policy goals because the focus of the two countries' strategic interests is not completely congruent due to their different geographical locations and national situations. This means that China and Russia cannot depend only on their bilateral strategic cooperation to realize their respective strategic goals. However, their bilateral cooperation may quickly become an important leverage to realize their strategic goals.

The Russian government has stopped talking about the creation of a multipolar world and opposition to unilateralism, the former theoretical base of Sino-Russian strategic cooperation. However, Russia has not accepted the principle of a unipolar world, and nor did China, although China has recently also dropped its open anti-hegemonist rhetoric.

Sino-Russia cooperation shifted to purely bilateral cooperation as it was in the eighties and early nineties. In 2006, China became the number-one economic partner of Russia. After the September 11 attacks, the focus of Sino-Russian strategic cooperation has shifted from global- and regional-level cooperation to bilateral cooperation. Russia has pressed on with planning its Eastern gas pipeline project. Russia wants to develop the economy of its Far Eastern regions. The pipeline project will help energy-deficient countries in the region such as China, Japan, the ROK, etc., maintain sustainable economic development and energy security.⁷³ The Russian government has decided to support the Taishet-Perevoznaia pipeline route with a subdivision line to Daqing as the only route that can open these regions to multilateral capital-intensive arrangements with the diversified buyers of Russian oil (e.g., China, Japan, the US, India, and Southeast Asia). Russia and China will also have many other energy cooperation projects in Russia as well as in Central Asia in the future. This cooperation is a part of the two countries' national development strategy.

At the same time, the mechanisms and the huge potential for strategic multilateral cooperation on global issues and regional security in East Asia exist and will certainly help to create further multilateral and bilateral possibilities other than the Russo-Chinese cooperation arrangement, depending on the destination and pace of future international and regional development. Thus, the Sino-Russian strategic cooperation, based on common needs and interests, was primarily developed as a defense against power politics and unilateralism. This cooperation may also fully develop

⁷³ Voskressenski, "*Bol'shaia Vostochnaia Aziia.*"

into a form of cooperation that could strengthen each side's international strategic and economic competitiveness. The full effectiveness of this strategic cooperation in the future will depend not only on common needs and interests, but also on the cooperative diplomatic capacity of the states as well as on the reactions and propositions of other important regional players.

* The views expressed in the chapter belong solely to the author and do not represent the official position of any organizations to which the author is permanently or was temporarily affiliated.

How the Sino-Russian Boundary Conflict Was Finally Settled: From Nerchinsk 1689 to Vladivostok 2005 via Zhenbao Island 1969

Neville MAXWELL

In Vladivostok in 2005, the exchange of ratification instruments of a historic but little-noticed agreement between Russia and China signed in Beijing in October of 2004 brought to an end more than three and half centuries of their struggle over territory and for dominance. This agreement, the last in a series that began with the 1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk, covered only relatively tiny tracts of small river islands. But the dispute over these islands had been intractable for decades, long blocking wider agreement, and to resolve it, both sides had to compromise what they had until then regarded as an important principle. That they did thus compromise appeared to express the shared sense that no potential grounds for divisive quarrel should remain at a time in which they faced a common potential threat—from the US.

The history of the territorial contest initially between two great land empires and then between their residual modern incarnations is a saga of expansion and retreat, follies and misunderstandings, trickery, atrocities, battles and near-wars, and see-sawing rises and falls of state power, and that it has had its recent happy ending must make it a tempting subject for a new historian's full treatment: here, what is attempted is a synoptic account with sharpened focus on the twentieth-century phase and

especially the turning point that can now be seen to have been passed in the all-out battle on the ice of the Ussuri River between the armed forces of the USSR and those of the PRC on March 15, 1969.

Understanding of the development, crisis, and denouement of the Sino-Soviet conflict in the second half of the twentieth century of course requires reference to the wider political background. But the argument here is that the boundary issue was central to the dispute and that Beijing's policy towards settling it was consistent, even unwavering, so the focus of this article remains close, limited to the boundary issue itself, and within this area, mostly to the fluvial eastern sectors.

Beginnings

In the very beginning, there could be no conflict because there was no contact; indeed, in the little medieval Muscovite state, there was no awareness that far beyond the threshold of the Urals lay a great empire, another civilization. At the time of first contact in 1567, when two Cossacks reached Peking and unsuccessfully sought an audience with the emperor, China had been flourishing for centuries. But by the middle of the next century, the Russians' great thrust of expansion across the Urals and along the Siberian rivers had brought them to the Pacific seaboard and they had turned south. They penetrated the Amur Basin and worked down the river to its estuary; they founded a fortified township named Nerchinsk on the headwaters of the Amur, and built forts and set up trading posts for furs on the rivers. By the middle of the century, the new Manchu rulers had realized that the incursions into what they regarded as their domain were not the raids of freebooters, but represented an imperial challenge. In the 1670s and 1680s, there ensued a war of the marches, with Russian outposts and garrisons challenged and besieged. In 1685, the Russians proposed negotiations to delimit a boundary, and the two sides met in August 1689 outside Nerchinsk.

Each side, it appears, approached the conference confident of the rectitude of its position and expectant that it would have its way. The Russians' aim was a boundary that would at least legalize their settlements along the Amur and permit access to the river: the Chinese were there, however, under their emperor's orders to make sure of banishing intruders—"scoundrels who cross the frontier to hunt, plunder,

and kill,” as the preamble in the Chinese text described them.¹ The Chinese delegation (which included two Jesuit translators without whom communication was impossible) had brought an escort and retinue numbering several thousands, with cannon-armed junks on the river in support, heavily outnumbering the Russian side. The opening sessions showed the incompatibility of the two approaches, and deadlock brought a Chinese threat to destroy Nerchinsk, under which menace the Russians returned to the table and, at length, acquiesced to most of the Chinese claims.²

The Treaty of Nerchinsk laid down a frontier rather than a boundary, that is, a separation of sovereignties that was zonal rather than linear, using for delineation major geographical features such as mountain ranges rather than the precisely defined lines on maps and on the ground that modern states require. It ran from the Saiany Mountains, west of Lake Baikal, to the Sea of Okhotsk along the watershed of the Stanovoi Mountains. The Chinese had at first demanded a frontier further north, along the Lena River, and by settling for the more southern alignment, they can be said to have relinquished the claim to a tract of some 90,000 square miles: the chief Russian negotiator would certainly have emphasized this concession as his achievement—indeed, on his return to Moscow, he was ennobled. For their part, the Chinese, too, would have been well satisfied. The treaty provided for the destruction of the Russian forts and settlements in the Amur Basin, and its overall effect was to preserve imperial China’s territory from Russian encroachment for a century and a half.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Chinese Empire was well advanced into its time of troubles, weakened by defeat in the Opium Wars and spent internally by the Taiping Rebellion, while the Russians had renewed their colonization of the Amur Basin and established settlements on what the Treaty of Nerchinsk had preserved as the Chinese coast of the Sea of Okhotsk. By the 1850s, repeated expeditions down the Amur to the sea had in effect restored and extended Russian control of the river, the

¹ Alexis Krausse, *Russia in Asia: A Record and a Study, 1558–1899* (London: Curzon Press, 1973), 40.

² These circumstances lend support to Soviet historians’ description of the treaty as “unequal.”

absence of Chinese resistance encouraging the Russians to enlarge their demands on a China now prostrate.

The Treaty of Nerchinsk having in effect been torn up, the Russians demanded a new boundary settlement. The outcome turned the tables. By the Treaties of Aigun (1858) and Peking (1860), China was cut off from the sea north of Korea, and from the entire Amur River below its confluence with the Ussuri. A new Sino-Russian boundary aligned on the Amur and Ussuri annexed to Russia huge tracts of what the Treaty of Nerchinsk had recognized as Chinese imperial territory. Furthermore, the Russians—or perhaps an individual Russian acting on his own initiative—not satisfied with this new deal that gave them so much, tucked another ace up their sleeve, so to speak. In 1861, Petr Kazakevich, chief Russian boundary commissioner, persuaded or coerced his Chinese opposite to accept and sign a small-scale map (less than 1:1,000,000) that he presented as giving expression to the terms of the Treaty of Peking: it did no such thing. Where that treaty had left the Amur and Ussuri as boundary rivers and therefore as shared international waterways, Kazakevich's map made them exclusively Russian by marking the international boundary along the Chinese banks. He went even further.

The text of the Treaty of Peking explicitly runs the boundary through the Amur/Ussuri confluence, but the line on Kazakevich's map takes a different route at that point. The rivers draw together at an oblique angle, creating a delta of land between them; but some thirty miles short of the point where their main currents merge, a minor channel connects the rivers, cartographically making an island of the land between the rivers. Kazakevich drew his boundary along this channel, thus making inland waterways of the river stretches between the mouths of the channel and the confluence Russian, and making the inter-connecting channel itself a boundary feature. Kazakevich's grateful government named the channel after him (the Chinese call it the Fuyuan Channel). The notional island thus created what the Russians call Great Ussuri, the Chinese Heixiazi, the word signifying a bear, so henceforth, "Bear Island." In due course, the Russians began depicting Kazakevich's version of the boundary on their maps, and over the years, authoritative European cartographers came to follow suit. From the early 1920s, Bear Island was occupied by Soviet citizens, coming with time to be regarded as an offshore development of Khabarovsk.

Feebly, the Chinese attempted to delay and deny ratification of the treaties, but the Russians treated the issue as closed: townships-to-be-cities replaced settlements, Blagoveshchensk on the Amur, Khabarovsk at the confluence, Vladivostok on the sea—the “Ruler of the East,” indeed. “The Soviet Union, by recreating the Russian Empire in the 1920s, also reproduced the same tensions with China that had existed under the Tsars.”³ In the Russian perception, there was still a manifest destiny to be fulfilled, however. The Outer Mongolian territory of China appeared as an anomaly, as did even Manchuria: both would, in the view from Moscow, naturally become Russian, and political geographers in Europe tended towards the same expectations. Japan’s irruption onto the Asian mainland in the 1930s, taking Manchuria for itself, blocked this ambition. The Amur and Ussuri became Russo-Japanese boundaries, already marked by constant friction breaking out in some sectors into major battles. China, though having achieved its own regime change from empire to republic in 1912, had in effect ceased to have a boundary with Russia in its northeast.

For China, there was a false dawn soon after the Russian Revolution. In 1919, the commissar for foreign affairs, Lev Karakhan, announced the Soviet government’s unilateral and unconditional renunciation of all the Tsars’ territorial seizures in China, and Lenin himself added color and emphasis to this sacrificial pronouncement. Moscow’s proclaimed magnanimity aroused intense gratitude and goodwill in nationalist circles in China, enthusing many who were throwing in their lot with the Communist Party, among them Mao and other leaders-to-be. But at the time of the Karakhan declaration, it so happened that much of the area that the new-born USSR promised to relinquish was out of its control, held by the counterrevolutionary White forces. As soon as this temporary adversity was corrected, Moscow tacitly revoked the Karakhan declaration and set about consolidating the tsarist empire, reincarnated as the USSR. The gratitude political Chinese had felt turned to rancor and resolve that when their country at last threw off its oppressors, it would regain, if necessary by force, the lost lands that the Russians themselves had momentarily admitted to be the Tsars’ booty. “For the Chinese, the boundary became the physical incarnation of China’s failure to fend off the predations of European civilization, while for the Russians, their

³ Sarah C. M. Paine, *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia and Their Disputed Frontier* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 11.

expanded boundary enshrined their country's great power status. Thus, the border became a potent but antipodal symbol for both countries—for one, it represented failure, for the other, success.”⁴

By 1949 when, in the words of Mao Zedong, China “stood up” as the People's Republic, the epilogue of World War II had finally fulfilled Moscow's long-held aspiration: the Russians' swift defeat of the Japanese in “Manchukuo” had given them at last full control of Manchuria, Russia regaining the railway that crossed it and Port Arthur and developing extensive interests in Xinjiang, while Outer Mongolia had previously seceded to become a Soviet puppet state, the Mongolian People's Republic. On the border rivers, the USSR exercised control and claimed ownership up to the Chinese banks. But for the new government of the PRC, facing enormous difficulties in establishing control of a vast country war torn for decades while the old regime fought on and monopolized much of the state machinery, the overriding priority was to nourish and strengthen alliance with the USSR, the only potential source of the economic assistance and political alliance that China desperately needed.

Collision Course

That live territorial and boundary disputes with several neighboring states were part of the PRC's inheritance was immediately demonstrated by the raiding back from Burma, across a long-disputed boundary, of Guomindang forces revived and rearmed by agencies of the US. That neighbors' encroachments into Chinese territory were even now not at an end was forcefully shown in February 1951 when India, although acting as a friend and supporter of the PRC diplomatically, nevertheless deployed armed force to annex the Tibetan monastery center of Tawang and a significant swathe of territory around it. China, by then engaged in the Korean War, ignored the provocation.⁵ But beyond these immediate challenges lay a problem that affected all boundary sectors. Even where

⁴ Paine, *Imperial Rivals*, 9.

⁵ It is sometimes suggested that Beijing did not notice this annexation—its control of Tibet was at that time far from complete. But the Lhasa authorities were immediately informed of the Indian action and hotly protested to New Delhi; there was a faction within the Potala well disposed towards the Chinese, and it is unlikely that the latter were not informed of these important events. Furthermore, the PRC embassy in New Delhi would have reported to the Indian press accounts of the seizure of Tawang.

they had been delimited, the treaties or the surveys upon which they were based were deficient by contemporary standards. And with several neighbors, no formal boundary had ever been created.

The Central Committee of the CCP took up the task of establishing policy guidelines to be followed as China sought to consolidate and formalize its boundaries, and from a statement of Zhou Enlai at the 1955 Afro-Asian conference in Bandung as well as from Beijing's actions over the following half century, it is possible to infer its decisions.

With neighbors with whom there had been no boundary delimitation, China would carefully observe the status quo and, when both parties were ready, open negotiations to seek a mutually satisfactory territorial dispensation, based on the traditional and customary line or zone of separation. Burma was the outstanding instance: others were India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Mongolia. The boundary with Afghanistan was a special case: it had been delimited, but by Russia and Britain without China's participation.

Where there had been formal delimitation, China would observe the boundary thus legitimized, without regard to the historical circumstances in which diplomatic settlement had been achieved or imposed. This fundamental decision expressed recognition that the bequeathed irredentist commitment to regain "lost lands" would, if pursued, embroil the PRC in intractable dispute and likely conflict with many of its neighbors, the USSR first among them, while putting the new China at odds with the international community. "Under modern international law, the validity of treaties signed prior to the Covenant of the League of Nations is not affected by whether or not they were negotiated under duress."⁶ Thus, the PRC determined to observe its treaty obligations, however "unequal" in origin they might be.

When differences arose over treaty interpretation or implementation, again China would urge careful joint observance of the status quo pending negotiation to reconcile the differences. If there was a danger of patrol clashes that would envenom public attitudes, the parties should agree on mutual withdrawal of armed forces for an agreed reciprocal distance: such withdrawals would not involve civil administration nor have any bearing on the two sides' claims. Here, however, there was a crucial caveat. The

⁶ Louis Henkin et al., *International Law Cases and Materials*, 640, cited by Paine, *Imperial Rivals*, 99, note 19.

negotiation, taking as its basis the relevant treaty, could not be piecemeal but must be comprehensive, covering the entire stretch of the boundary concerned; it should also issue a new treaty, not a revision of the old one.

At Bandung, Zhou Enlai concluded his summary of his government's approach to boundary settlement with a pledge and a warning: "We shall use only peaceful means and we shall not permit any other kind of method." But the policy he had declared was primarily conflict averse and conservative. It was as if the new Chinese leadership had followed the advice of the nineteenth-century English statesman who enjoined officers on the Indian frontier to "bear in mind that it is not a strip of more or less barren or even productive territory that we want, but a clear and well-defined boundary."

An American scholar's illuminating categorization of the strategies governments may adopt for dealing with territorial disputes gives three:

- A delaying strategy involves doing nothing except maintaining a state's claims through official maps and public declarations.
- An escalation strategy involves the threat or use of force over disputed territory.
- A cooperation strategy excludes the threat or use of force and involves instead an offer to compromise by dividing control of the contested land or dropping outstanding claims.⁷

China's practice and record over half a century indicates that, at the beginning, out of a rational assessment of national self-interest, Beijing chose to follow the "cooperation strategy" and thereafter applied it consistently, lapsing into the "escalation strategy" only in the case of the dispute with Vietnam.⁸ Its two largest neighbors, however, for their own reasons, adopted the "escalation strategy" to resolve their territorial disputes with China, both thus imposing conflict on the PRC, India in the early 1960s and on the USSR in the latter 1960s. In both cases, China was victorious militarily but a loser in the contest for international understanding.

⁷ M. Taylor Fravel, "Regime Insecurity and International Cooperation," *International Security* 30, no. 2 (fall 2005): 52.

⁸ In this instance, territory was not the real issue: China attacked to assert hegemony over Vietnam.

Until the late 1950s, both Beijing and Moscow let the boundary issue lie. In the honeymoon period after the establishment of the People's Republic, Moscow appears to have made no attempt to enforce a claim to possession of the full breadth of the border rivers; indeed, there is an indication that the Soviets may at one stage have been minded to waive it.⁹

Moscow had recently been seized with this issue of the precise boundary alignment within a boundary river. An Anglo-Russian treaty of 1873 had made the Oxus River/Amu Darya a boundary between Russian imperial territory and Afghanistan: the text did not stipulate the boundary's exact alignment within the river, and thus implied that it would follow the center of the main stream, but over succeeding decades, first the Russians and then the Soviets succeeded in imposing their possession and rule over the entirety of the river, denying Afghans access to and use of its waters unless permission was sought and granted. Afghan protests over this situation were ignored or rebuffed until a renewed appeal from Kabul soon after the Second World War: renegotiation of the original treaty in 1946 made Afghanistan's equal rights on the river explicit. Moscow did not at that time, however, choose to apply this precedent to the river borders with China.

Soon after the formalizing of the navigation agreement, still in the early 1950s, Beijing requested and received from Moscow a set of maps covering the northeast border areas, and these maps marked the international boundary along the Chinese bank—and along the Kazakevichevo/Fuyuan Channel (henceforward K/F). This then was the first occasion on which Moscow played the Kazakevich card to the PRC, and it may have been the first intimation of the claim that the new Chinese leadership received. It seems unlikely that the exact alignment of what was then a *de facto* Sino-Japanese boundary would have caught the attention of the Chinese Communist leadership during their peripatetic years battling through insurgency to victory in civil war. Whether when the Chinese received Moscow's maps they were even aware of

⁹ A Sino-Soviet agreement on river navigation signed in January 1951 took it as given that the boundary line lay within the main stream. The agreement specified that citizens of each country were to enjoy rights of navigation and fishing on the boundary rivers "within [their country's] waters up to the state border line." If the boundary were taken to run where the water lapped the Chinese bank, then Chinese citizens would have no "waters" at all for navigation or fishing, nor access to any river island. The wording of the agreement therefore implies a boundary line within the main stream.

Kazakevich's cartographic amendment to the Treaty of Peking also seems uncertain. It was decades since Peking/Peiping had been the capital, and the GMT government had taken with it on its retreats all the archival material it could handle. Therefore, that the newly established leadership of China could have readily found the vexed map relating to the Treaty of Peking in the remaining imperial archives must, again, be uncertain, even unlikely.

Since the request for the Soviet maps had gone from the PRC's bureau of survey and mapping to the equivalent department in Moscow, the central Chinese government could feign unawareness of the ominous territorial implications the maps conveyed, and did so. Wholly dependent still on Soviet goodwill, with the Korean War exacerbating all their problems, the last thing the Chinese leadership could risk was a dispute with Moscow over a matter as invidious as territory, so Beijing did not challenge the boundary alignment depicted on the Soviet maps. The PRC's own maps, when it began to issue them, showed the boundary as running through the rivers' confluence, however,¹⁰ and an early verbal statement of China's opposing view of the boundary alignment on the rivers was made indirectly in the text of the 1961 Sino-Burmese boundary treaty: here, it is stated that wherever a boundary is aligned on a navigable river, it will follow the central line of the midstream. If the Soviet ambassador in Rangoon had been alert, he would have signaled Moscow that its boundary claim on the rivers was likely to be disputed.

Meanwhile, the rational efficacy of the cautious "cooperation strategy" for dealing with boundary problems that the Central Committee had decided on and Beijing's commitment to pursuing it were demonstrated in a series of mutually satisfactory settlements beginning with Burma in 1961 and following on in the next three years with Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Mongolia.¹¹ But that Beijing had by no means

¹⁰ Beijing dropped a claim that the GMT's maps had always shown, however, to an area known as the "Sixty-four Villages Tract" on the Russian side of the Amur. The Treaty of Aigun had left that to China, but during the Boxer Rebellion, the local Russian authorities had "ethnically cleansed" it by driving most of the Chinese inhabitants into the river. At that time, Beijing did not publish any maps of a scale that would show just where on the rivers the boundary lay. In July 2005, however, it released on the Internet about four hundred detailed maps depicting the "politically correct" alignments of China's boundaries, lands, and waters.

¹¹ These settlements were followed by others, with North Korea, Vietnam (though in this

found a panacea for its border problems was sharply shown in the case of India: here, the Indians refused to negotiate, and China had to fight a short, fierce border war in 1962 to preserve the status quo against India's attempt to change it in its own favor by force of arms.¹²

Through the 1950s, the Sino-Soviet borders, thinly populated and little guarded, were for the most part peaceful, even tranquil. But the ideological divergence that began with Khrushchev's obituary repudiation of Stalin in 1956 quickly grew into a schism and played back with toxic effect into state-to-state relations, the most drastic early consequence being Khrushchev's treaty-breaking termination of development aid to China, with abrupt withdrawal of Soviet experts in 1960. As the 1960s began, the minor, even trivial disturbances that in the 1950s had irregularly occurred along the border rivers multiplied and changed in nature. Misunderstandings or disputes among local inhabitants over fishing or agricultural use of islands that had previously been pacified, as a rule, by local authorities, now began to number in the annual thousands and became matters for central government attention and reciprocal accusation and blame. Opting for what is defined above as an "escalation strategy" based on the threat or use of force, Moscow began physically to

case, only after a trivial dispute had been used by Beijing as an excuse for aggression), and Laos, the three ex-Soviet central Asian states. Thus, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, the PRC had settled all its boundaries except those with India and the latter's client state, Bhutan.

¹² The writer analyzed this dispute at length in Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, (London: Cape, 1970) and has updated the analysis often elsewhere since then, so here follows only a bald summary. The Indian government decided that it should define the boundary with China unilaterally on an alignment chosen in New Delhi, declaring that the boundary of its choice had been settled by historical process and was indisputable and consequently nonnegotiable. For over three years, it refused Beijing's calls for negotiation. From 1960, the Indians began describing Chinese occupation of Indian-claimed territory as aggression, thus convincing its political public that military action was needed to "repel the aggressors." First, New Delhi attempted a "forward policy" of military infiltration and encirclement to force the stronger and tactically advantaged Chinese positions out of Indian-claimed territory. When this failed, it mustered forces to mount a frontal assault: Prime Minister Nehru publicly proclaimed the intention to drive Chinese forces out of Indian-claimed territory, thus legitimizing an attack in anticipatory self-defense by China. Swift and overwhelming victory in this punitive foray was clinched by China's preplanned ceasefire and withdrawal. And although New Delhi's refusal to negotiate a settlement was—and remains—adamant, the de facto Sino-Indian border has remained more or less undisturbed since the border war.

assert what it perceived as its legal right to a China-bank boundary, and consequently to treat any Chinese use of the rivers as incursions unless permission had been sought and granted. And while up to that time, Beijing had been urging restraint on its border inhabitants who wished to assert traditional navigational and economic usages, it now appears that it gave them a green light in this regard. So from Moscow's point of view, what had been occasional civilian border infringements had now become a coordinated state challenge to its boundary on the rivers.

In 1967, Soviet gunboats intercepted the first Chinese vessel heading down the Amur after the spring thaw to pass through the confluence into the Ussuri, boarded it and turned it back. From then on, this Soviet blockade left Chinese vessels with the K/F Channel as the only connection between the rivers, a passage too narrow at the best of times for the biggest river boats and at times of low water, non-navigable.

The profound dispute over the lie of the boundary within the rivers, latent for generations, had now become open, critical, and explosive.

Moscow's claim to a China-bank boundary and consequent "exclusive right of possession and sovereign jurisdiction" over the entirety of the border rivers rested solely on Kazakevich's cartographic amendment to the Treaty of Peking. On its side, Beijing dismissed this map as having no legitimacy, suggesting that it had been drawn up by Russia prior to the signing of the Treaty of Peking and foisted onto the Chinese imperial boundary commissioners by trickery.¹³ The Chinese rested their legal case on the wording of the Treaty of Peking and argued from the long-established principle of international law that they had articulated in the treaty with Burma: that, in the absence of any alternative specification in the treaty, when a navigable river comprises an international boundary, the division of sovereignty will lie on the *thalweg*, an imaginary line along the deepest part of the main channel. Under the *thalweg* principle, the two parties become in effect co-owners of the rivers, enjoying equal rights to their use and sovereign authority over the waters and islands lying on their own side of the *thalweg*. That the text of the treaty placed the boundary through the rivers' confluence meant that the K/F Channel and Bear Island lay wholly within Chinese territory, and in

¹³ The Chinese would have felt they had met with this kind of thing before. The independent Indian government's northeast boundary claim rested on a map drawn by an English Kazakevich, so to speak, Sir Henry McMahon. See Maxwell, *India's China War*.

Beijing's reading, created the "inalienable right for Chinese boats to navigate the main channel through the confluence," which is to say on the waters offshore of Khabarovsk.

By this stage, the opposed policies adopted by the USSR and the PRC had already locked them onto a collision course. Moscow was bent on imposing on China its own reading of the boundary treaties and refused to enter into the comprehensive negotiations that Beijing sought. Beijing was determined to exercise what it considered to be its existing legal rights along and on the rivers. If these policies were not modified by one side or the other, they would ineluctably lead to armed conflict on the borders.¹⁴ While Moscow remained determined to deny that China had a legitimate right to river access and use and was prepared to exert force to prevent China's exercise of its claimed rights, Beijing would have to choose between acquiescence, in fact surrender, and resistance—which would ultimately have to be by force of arms. Since China had "stood up," there could be no course for the Chinese leadership other than resistance.

Collision

Sino-Soviet diplomatic exchanges about developments on the border rivers in the early 1960s revealed that their differences over the meaning of the Treaty of Peking were going to be compounded and exacerbated by differences over how understanding might be reached. The Chinese, by now with experience in successful boundary negotiations, argued that if the two sides sought agreement in a spirit of "mutual understanding and mutual accommodation," differences that appeared intractable could be negotiated to mutual satisfaction. But they insisted that negotiations must take the Treaty of Peking as the starting point and basis—and here, from Moscow's point of view, was the rub. To accept Beijing's suggestion of negotiation on the basis of the Chinese reading of the Treaty text would be to relinquish the China-bank claim in advance. Moscow argued that the boundary line was already clearly established as running along the Chinese bank and through the K/F Channel by the Treaty of Peking when

¹⁴ Moscow's maps and China's diverged much more markedly in the western sector of their borders, creating very large disputed areas over which, unless differences were peacefully negotiated, there would again inevitably be conflict. This article will leave that area of dispute aside, concentrating on the border rivers.

read with its “related documents” (i.e., Kazakevich’s map), and that there was therefore no need for further negotiation. The Sino-Soviet boundary was already settled, and “in reality, there is no territorial question between the Soviet Union and China.”¹⁵ Moscow would consent only to discussions aimed at ironing out differences that might remain on particular sections of the borders—and it would specify just which sections would be open to discussion. Thus, China’s offer to negotiate the boundary as a whole was refused, Moscow in effect arrogating to itself the right to unilaterally define China’s boundaries, just as New Delhi had done a few years before.

By this time, Cold War developments, feeding into the Sino-Soviet confrontation, had introduced a new element into the border dispute—one that was extraneous in essence and largely rhetorical but that nevertheless complicated it. Beijing accused Khrushchev of “adventurism” and “capitulationism” in the 1962 Cuba missile crisis: Khrushchev retorted by accusing China of craven acquiescence in Britain’s retention of Hong Kong. In Beijing’s perception, it was behaving regarding Hong Kong as should any responsible member of the international community; rather than simply taking over Hong Kong, as it could easily have done in 1950, it had scrupulously observed its treaty obligations and allowed the imperialists to stay on.¹⁶ So Beijing snapped back at Moscow in words to this effect: “You taunt us that we should have broken a treaty and used force to seize back Hong Kong, but how would you like us to break the Treaty of Peking and seize back the lands the Tsars stole?” Moscow took—or pretended to take—this rhetorical rejoinder as revealing that a serious threat of irredentist aggression lay beneath Beijing’s description of the Treaty of Peking as “unequal.” So while in fact the Chinese position and approach were unaltered, its consistency became obscured by the hotly debated side issue of “unequal treaties.”

In Beijing’s account, China began urging negotiations in 1960, and in 1963, put forward a detailed proposal for freezing the situation on the borders and separating armed forces so that local conflicts could be avoided, pending a negotiated settlement. But the first parley on the

¹⁵ Soviet statement of June 13, 1969. See, *Pravda*, June 14, 1969.

¹⁶ In this case, patience was certain to be rewarded because the treaty in question was a lease, the termination of which would necessarily result in Britain’s retroceding the island colony—as it did in 1997.

growing conflict over the rivers, when it opened in Beijing in 1964, was schizophrenic in nature, the Chinese regarding the occasion as the opening of boundary negotiations and the Russians insisting that they had come only for “consultation” over some local problems on the rivers. By then, furthermore, real enmity had developed between the once fraternal allies, and the meeting achieved nothing and was not followed up. A faint gleam of light can now be seen to have shone, however, in the intimation by the Soviet side that Moscow might show magnanimity by allowing the *thalweg* principle to be applied to the rivers—but only downstream as far as the K/F Channel. Whether the Chinese appreciated it at the time or not, this showed that what fundamentally mattered to Moscow, the ultimately nonnegotiable nub of the dispute, was its permanently continued possession of Bear Island, the island formed at the confluence, offshore of the now great city of Khabarovsk. To the Chinese in 1964, however, the hint that decades later was to develop into the great compromise that finally closed the whole dispute, passed unnoticed, or was anyway ignored. As Beijing saw it, the Soviet side could not “concede” what by law already existed, a *thalweg* boundary, so its offer was meaningless.

The fruitless 1964 meeting left the border rivers as the stage for a continuing struggle, unequal at first. All along the rivers, Chinese civilians, their numbers much increased since the early 1950s and their morale enlivened to audacity by the Cultural Revolution, sought to exercise rights of access to and use of the islands and waters on their side of the main stream, and they were no doubt now encouraged to do so by their government. And all along the rivers, Soviet border guards, military units under ultimate KGB control, moved to thwart them. Fishing nets and boats were seized, wooden craft were rammed by Soviet gunboats, high-pressure hoses were played on their crews. On the winter ice, troops in armored personnel carriers harried Chinese civilians on the islands, sometimes running them down, sometimes abducting them.

This one-sided struggle, passive civilian resistance to nonlethal military force, was regularly filmed by official Chinese cameramen, to be printed in a propaganda booklet, “Down with the New Tsars” and shown in a film of the same name. But, it often appeared to the confusion and anger of the victims of Soviet strong-arm methods that the Chinese state stood by, making no effort to intervene to protect its citizens. By the late 1960s, the Soviet border guards had largely carried out their orders to keep what Moscow held to be their national territory inviolate against

incursions by Chinese civilians. While there could always be an occasional furtive but successful foray to fish or forage for hay, where guards were absent or looking the other way, by and large, Chinese civilian access to the rivers had been cut off. The cost of the dispute to the Soviet Union had, however, already become very high, and promised to continue indefinitely. Moscow apparently had by now come to believe that Beijing's approach, its insistence on negotiation, was cover for an ulterior irredentist intention, and had therefore greatly increased its concentration of military forces in the Soviet Far East and Mongolia. Clearly, it was becoming urgently necessary for Moscow to bring the issue to a showdown, which is to say to demonstrate that China's attempt to gainsay the Soviet reading of the legal situation was useless. Only when Beijing acceded could the onerous burden of the Soviet Army's far-eastern deployment be eased.

By the winter of 1968/9, the crux of the dispute had shifted. Chinese civilian use of the rivers having been effectively terminated, what continued as a provocation to Moscow was the persistence of the Chinese frontier guards in maintaining regular patrols as if the river surfaces and islands up to midstream belonged to China. While this continued, the matter could not be considered closed, the dispute frozen, enabling troop concentrations to be thinned out. So the methods of coercive but nonlethal deterrence the Soviet frontier guards had successfully used against Chinese civilians were now turned against their opposite numbers on the Chinese side. And although the Chinese frontier guards (PLA, though not of the main force) were no match in their equipment for the Soviet border force, they were armed as light infantry, trained, and of high morale.

The orders given to the two sides must have mirrored each other: Moscow to its border guard units, "Use all necessary force short of gunfire to keep the PLA off the rivers"; Beijing to its force, "Avoid confrontation, but at all costs maintain your patrolling; fire only if fired upon." In this contradiction, the issue came to its climax—irresistible force meeting immovable object, each side perceiving its policy as defensive of an inalienable national interest. The winter months of 1968/9 saw the troops on the two sides doing their best to carry out their mutually exclusive orders. The Soviet force would use its far greater mobility through helicopters, trucks, and armored personnel carriers on the ice to confront PLA patrols with superior forces: if the Chinese did not respond to orders and threats to get back to their bank, they would be physically

driven back. When Chinese patrols were cornered, they would be beaten up to discourage return. So it went on, with the contest of wills showing no sign of ending. The Chinese border guards persisted in patrolling, and Beijing began military preparations for a conflict it recognized as unavoidable.

So on March 2, 1969, near a little island that hugs the Chinese bank of the Ussuri known to the Russians as Damanskii and to the Chinese as Zhenbao, the inevitable clash between the border guards of the two sides duly occurred. Confronting each other at close quarters on the ice, both sides opened fire, each inflicting fatal casualties on the other.

As would be expected, the two sides' accounts of how the skirmish began contradict each other. The question of who fired first has minimal historical significance: if the clash had not occurred on that day and at that place and in that precise manner it would certainly have occurred somewhere else on the rivers, somehow, before the winter ended. Nevertheless, academic argument about it has continued to the present. Here, it is necessary only to summarize the two opposing accounts.

The Soviet version tells of their small force, armed of course but not expecting combat, intercepting an intruding Chinese patrol on the ice near Zhenbao/Damanskii to exhort or force them to return to their own territory. When the Soviet troops were close to the Chinese, the latter opened fire without warning, instantly killing several of the Soviet troops. The Soviets began to shoot back but found themselves enfiladed by a previously unseen secondary PLA force lying under cover on the island itself. Taken by surprise and outnumbered, suffering more casualties, the Soviet troops nevertheless successfully fought back, receiving some reinforcements by armored troop carriers. The fighting ended with their having driven their enemy back and taken control of Zhenbao Island [since it is now formally recognized as Chinese, this name will henceforth be used here].

In the PLA participants' account,¹⁷ the troops in one of their patrols had been given a brutal beating a few weeks before when outnumbering Soviet troops who had cornered them on Zhenbao Island, and had been warned that if they tried to return, they would be fired upon. To safeguard his men, the local commander began covering the patrols on the ice by preplacing a force on the island. True to their previous threats, when the

¹⁷ Given at length to the writer by participants, at the site of the battle, in 1973 and reported in *China Quarterly*, no. 56 (October/December 1973).

Soviet troops disembarked from their vehicles on the day of the clash, they came with weapons loaded and at the ready and wearing steel helmets—and quickly opened fire on the PLA patrol on the ice, killing several. The immediate intervention of the covering troops on the island meant that the Soviet force was outnumbered, and at the end of the skirmish, the PLA was left in control of the island.

Two observations may be made:

First: That the Soviet government, its patience exhausted, had changed its orders to its border forces so as to free them to use lethal fire if nothing else would end Chinese provocations is by no means improbable; indeed, exactly such an “escalation” was inherent, even mandatory, in Moscow’s approach to the dispute.¹⁸ Beijing later claimed to have received intelligence confirming that Moscow had thus changed the rules of engagement set for its border guards.

Second: Since the PRC leadership was determined not to acquiesce to Soviet use of force, it would have accepted that ultimately, pressure would have to be resisted by force of arms. Thus, for the Chinese, it was crucial that when the inevitable conflict broke out, it was on grounds and in circumstances favorable to a decisive Chinese victory. The terrain around Zhenbao Island exactly suited this essential requirement, and since it can hardly have been coincidence that the fighting broke out there, it is most likely that it happened through Chinese planning and maneuver. The firefight may have begun either when the Soviet troops, having fallen into a trap, sprung it by opening fire, or when the Chinese side, having lured the Soviets into the trap, sprung it themselves by opening fire. So the question of “who fired first?” must remain open, but it is of little importance.

The essence of the matter is that for several years, the USSR had been on the strategic offensive, using overwhelming local superiority in the attempt to force upon the PRC a boundary claim profoundly inimical to China’s interests, and one that had weak, even spurious, legal justification. At Zhenbao, the Chinese stood their ground and fought an

¹⁸ How an “escalation strategy” can entrap governments that adopt it is illustrated by the Indian experience. The original Indian intention was to use force peacefully, as it were, aiming to extrude the Chinese from Indian-claimed territory without driving them out with gunfire. But the logic of this approach meant that when it failed, India had no other resort but to prepare an all-out frontal assault.

action that in their view was wholly analogous to the “counterattack in self-defense” that they had launched against India in October 1962. Accounts reflecting later interviews with high-ranking PLA officers contradict parts of what the writer was told by low-ranking participants in 1973. General Chen Xilian, area commander in 1969, told an interviewer that the PLA had been preparing for a decisive clash for months, and as the Soviets increased their pressure in the Zhenbao area, had deployed crack, combat-tested troops to confront them there. Direct communications were set up to Beijing from what would become the battlefield so as to give the national leadership ultimate control. “When the Soviet troops attempted their provocation on March 2,” General Chen recalled, “they actually were hopelessly outnumbered by us. We won a clear victory on the battlefield”—a victory that was to be confirmed on March 15.¹⁹ This outcome taught Moscow the lesson Beijing intended: that if China was to be forced into bowing to Soviet territorial claims, it could only be through all-out war—a prospect at which, the Chinese believed (rightly as it turned out), Moscow would ultimately balk.

The Chinese claim that they won that first skirmish, never losing control of the island, is apparently confirmed in the Soviet reaction. If the Soviet troops had beaten the Chinese back off the river and the island, as Moscow claimed, then they might have decided that their opponents had been taught the necessary lesson and been content to continue their watch for another intrusion. But in the event, the Soviet side immediately began a rapid and heavy build-up of forces, reaching far beyond the usual light armament of the border units. It included strong infantry units of the regular army in at least brigade strength, a detachment of T62 tanks, recoilless rifles, and artillery, including multiple rocket launchers: the purpose of this concentration could not have been other than to launch a punitive and decisive attack that, by regaining Zhenbao, would teach the Chinese that winning a skirmish by surprise attack was one thing but facing the resolute might of the Soviet Army in prepared battle, quite another.

It was impossible to hide this military concentration from the Chinese—their eyes and ears were sufficient to keep them informed and anticipatory of what was to come. They concentrated local border guard

¹⁹ YANG Kuisong, “The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969: from Zhenbao Island to Sino-American Rapprochement,” *Cold War History* 1, no. 1 (August 2000).

units but also called up regular PLA units with artillery and especially recoilless rifles and other anti-tank weapons, and could await the day of attack with confidence. This was because, for the original confrontation, the local PLA commander had well remembered the fundamental military injunctions of Mao Zedong: “Choose the battlefield”; “Fight only when you are sure of victory.” The topographical situation of Zhenbao is unusual, perhaps unique on the Ussuri at least, in that the ground on the Chinese bank beside the island rises immediately and steeply into a long, low ridge. Troops and light artillery emplaced on that ridge can dominate the island, which is only about a hundred meters from the Chinese bank, as well as the approaches to it from the Russian bank four hundred meters distant, and from up- and downstream. Military cadets presented with such a tactical problem at a sand table exercise would instantly grasp the answer: for a force attacking from the Russian bank to seize the island, it is necessary first to occupy the high ground beyond it.

But the unfortunate local Soviet commander and his troops had to ignore this tactical imperative and fight at a decisive disadvantage. Moscow’s very insistence on a China-bank boundary tied the hands of their military in this local action. It meant that to land troops on the Chinese bank admittedly entailed invading China—an act of war the consequences of which, Beijing had warned, would be all-out conflict on every front. Since the USSR was not then ready to go to war with China, the outcome of the battle on March 15, 1969 was a foregone conclusion: for the Soviet forces, it was unwinnable.

The telling tactical advantage enjoyed by the Chinese seems to have been compounded by ineptitude of the local Soviet commander. Rather than being concentrated for the assault, the strong Soviet forces were dissipated in three successive attacks, each stronger than the previous one. In the final attack, the commander of the Soviet troops lost control of the battle—and his life—by joining the crew of a tank. The long day’s fighting ended with the situation just as it had been since the night of March 2: Zhenbao Island remained under PLA occupation and control.

In its historical context, this Chinese victory was momentous, marking the closure of the era begun in the mid-nineteenth century during which Russia could exert military superiority to expand its borders over China’s resistance.

For Moscow to admit that it had accepted defeat in the second Zhenbao battle was unthinkable. “The events on Damanskii had the effect

of an electric shock in Moscow. The Politburo was terrified that the Chinese might make a large-scale intrusion into Soviet territory . . .”²⁰ The intensity of the shock caused to the Soviet public by news of the outbreak of fighting against China can be gauged by a reading of Evtushenko’s elegiac call to battle against the barbarian Asiatic hordes, “On the Red Ussuri Snow.”²¹ So every effort was made to convince the Soviet people—and the international community as well—that the battle ended in a crushing Soviet victory, won over “human wave” attacks that cost the Chinese thousands of casualties. (There are fifty-one graves in China’s memorial cemetery for those killed in the two days of fighting.) These efforts were largely successful, and their delusory effect lingers to this day, expressed in histories and sustained in academic papers in the West as well as in Russia. For its part, Beijing did not rub in its victory by boasting of it, this restraint being taken of course as admission of defeat.

There was an international predisposition to accept the Soviet version of events. As a contemporary observer put it, “so solidly built into our consciousness is the concept that China is conducting a rapacious and belligerent foreign policy that whenever a dispute arises in which China is involved, she is instantly assumed to have provoked it.”²² This conditioned response had served the Indian government well at the beginning of the 1960s, enabling it to spread the belief that it was Beijing rather than India that was refusing to negotiate a settlement, and even to present China’s final punitive response to India’s sustained military pressure as “unprovoked aggression.” Thus, in the general international perception in 1969 and long afterwards, the Chinese had tried out on the Russians in the first Zhenbao clash the bullying methods they had used

²⁰ Arkady N. Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 164 quoted by Christian Ostermann, “New Evidence on the Sino-Soviet Border Dispute, 1969–71,” *Bulletin: Cold War International History Project* 6/7 (Winter 1995/1996).

²¹ The text in translation is on 211–213 in *Studies in Comparative Communism: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 2 no. 3/4, (July/October 1969). There is a full and most valuable collection of documents concerning the diplomatic and political repercussions of the Zhenbao clashes in this double issue.

²² Felix Greene, *A Curtain of Ignorance* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1965), 223. No one reading American publications on China even now would confidently conclude that Greene’s observation is no longer true. Even on the Zhenbao incidents, there is a steady trickle of American academic papers that, by removing the issue from the context of the boundary dispute, which alone makes it comprehensible, try to prove that the PRC was guilty of an aggressive and unprovoked deed of violence at Zhenbao.

against India, and the “defeat” they suffered in the Soviet counterattack was well deserved.

The battles on the Ussuri ice enflamed the whole length of the Sino-Soviet borders, with artillery fire and counter-fire in several sectors but no further infantry battles. In the western sector, Moscow took its revenge with annihilation attacks on isolated Chinese border force patrols, lethal little actions with no military or political significance: around Zhenbao itself, Soviet batteries continued fire for weeks, barrages extending deep into Chinese territory and only gradually becoming desultory. But the Chinese leadership, having in their view successfully taught Moscow a “bitter lesson,” was content to let that sink in, and saw no necessity to take further military action.

Settlement

Moscow immediately began to seek talks. Prime Minister Andrei Kosygin put through a telephone call to Beijing on March 21 asking to speak to either Mao Zedong or Zhou Enlai. Beijing declined to engage in “hotline” exchanges, advising the Soviets to “calm down” and communicate through normal diplomatic channels.

It was only after six months that Beijing agreed to Soviet calls for a summit meeting, and Kosygin went to meet Zhou Enlai at Beijing Airport, a journey to Canossa if ever there was one. While Beijing saw this September meeting as itself marking a “great victory” for China, its sole achievement seems to have been a joint “no war” understanding, which, however, Moscow did not confirm. Zhou took the opportunity to restate the consistent Chinese approach in border disputes, quickly confirming his oral persuasions in a letter to Kosygin: strictly maintain the status quo; avoid further armed conflict by withdrawing armed forces for an agreed, reciprocal distance (this was understood to be without implication for sovereignty); and resume negotiations to resolve all disputes.²³ There is evidence of a “hawks v. doves” division within the Soviet leadership at this time. For example, the Chinese noted that Kosygin was given a demonstratively low-grade airport reception on his arrival back in Moscow from his visit to Beijing. At all events, the Zhou/Kosygin

²³ Felix Greene, *A Curtain of Ignorance*, 223.

meeting by no means produced the breakthrough that, his letter suggests, Zhou hoped had been achieved. Moscow did not accept the proposals Zhou had put to Kosygin, and although negotiations were resumed in Beijing in October, no progress was made. The borders, the dispute unresolved, only gradually relaxed into an uneasy and protracted stalemate. A turning point in a slow and wary return towards normality may be seen in the lifting of the Soviet blockade at Bear Island in 1976.²⁴ During this period, however, Moscow greatly increased its military concentrations along the borders and in Mongolia, and encouraged the belief that it was ready to launch war with China that could begin with a nuclear strike.

A breakthrough did come at long last, however, in 1986 when Moscow gave up the aggressive “escalation strategy” and opted instead for cooperation. It accepted the basic Chinese argument: that negotiations must be based on the Treaty of Peking, with its implied provision that the *thalweg* principle be applied to the border rivers, and should be comprehensive, covering all boundary sectors. The new Kremlin leadership under Mikhail Gorbachev, seeking to ease the exhausting burden of the huge military concentrations in the Far East as well as the war in Afghanistan, appears to have accepted that the claim to “exclusive right of possession and sovereign jurisdiction” over the border rivers was unsustainable, if not unreasonable (Perhaps the 1946 renegotiation of the Oxus boundary was recalled). Furthermore, it may have been appreciated in the Kremlin that the China-bank boundary claim was not the essence of the issue from Moscow’s point of view: as far as the river sector was concerned, it was retention of Bear Island that was critical, indeed nonnegotiable.²⁵ While there were thus pressing considerations in favor of a radical reconsideration of policy on the boundary issue, Moscow, perhaps Gorbachev personally, should be given full credit for a notable act of statesmanship—such a reversal of policy, with its implied admission of previous error, is historically rare.²⁶

²⁴ See the writer’s article “Why the Russians Lifted the Blockade at Bear Island” *Foreign Affairs* 57, no. 1 (fall 1978).

²⁵ Why this has throughout been an absolute sticking point for Moscow seems explicable only by Russians’ historical experience with “threats from the east.” When a river serves as an international boundary, it is natural that river-side cities will have a neighbor—and potential enemy—on the opposite bank. Blagoveshchensk is such an example.

²⁶ India still awaits its “Gorbachev,” a politician with the wisdom and courage to repudiate

Gorbachev announced Moscow's reversal in a much-heralded speech delivered in Vladivostok in July 1986. First expressing Soviet "understanding and respect" for the "great Chinese people" in their drive for modernization, he went on to declare that the Amur frontier should not be a barrier but "a means of uniting the Chinese and Soviet people." And then came the crucial sentence: "The official border could pass along the main stream." Small keys can unlock massive doors.

Beijing responded promptly and positively, and boundary negotiations proper began in a few months. Now that both sides sought agreement, from the common ground of the *thalweg* principle and the text of the treaty, progress could be made—but it was never easy. Settlement meant that Moscow was waiving its claim to all the hundreds of river islands (except Bear Island) that lay on China's side of the main current, an act of territorial relinquishment that naturally aroused angry resentment in local populations and governments. That the new approach meant giving up the claim to Zhenbao was especially bitter, rendering the sacrifice of Soviet troops' lives there futile. Boundaries have been called the cell walls of national identity, and their successful negotiation demands patience, cool heads, and consistent observance of the principle of "mutual understanding and mutual accommodation": it appears that both sides in these protracted negotiations observed this principle.

Although this was not made publicly explicit, it appears that Beijing at this stage introduced a critical modification to its basic rubric for boundary settlement where, when an intractable issue about a particular area arose and all attempts to resolve it failed, it should be put aside, not allowed to halt or sour the negotiations on other sectors. "A wiser generation" might in the future find a solution at present unthinkable. Just such an intractable issue lay in ownership of Bear Island: that, the Soviet side made clear, was still nonnegotiable.²⁷ The Chinese position was that the division of territory must be in accordance with the text of the treaty, and by stipulating that the boundary ran through the confluence, the wording indisputably assigned Bear Island to China. Therefore, Beijing

Nehru's folly and agree to negotiate a boundary settlement with China. New Delhi still refuses to adopt the "cooperative strategy," holding to the "delaying strategy"—and retaining the option to return to the "escalation strategy."

²⁷ There was one other such sticking point, concerning an island in the Argun River: the scale of this article allows it to be "set aside" for treatment by a more inclusive writer.

maintained that the Soviet Union must return it to China—“in principle.” This expansive phrase of course allowed for circumstances in which China’s “understanding” of its neighbor’s position and wish to “accommodate” it would in due course lead to a different outcome.

The delimitation and demarcation processes proceeded more or less simultaneously, with a series of agreements being announced through the 1990s.²⁸ By the time of the Soviet Union’s collapse, the river sections had been finalized bar the intractable “set-aside” issues. The governments of the three Central Asian Socialist Soviet Republics bordering China (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) had from the beginning participated in the Sino-Soviet discussions of the western boundary sector (which was far more complex and difficult than the river sectors), and they agreed to continue jointly when they became sovereign states, at first in a tri-national commission under a Russian chairman (seed of the future Shanghai Cooperation Organization). In due course, these negotiations separated, and by the beginning of the next century, the western boundary had been agreed and legitimized in three treaties, while the entirety of the Sino-Russian boundaries²⁹ was also covered by treaty. Detailed protocols protected the two sides’ interests in the set-aside areas, Bear Island and another island on the Argun River, with China’s right of navigation past Khabarovsk guaranteed. Moscow and Beijing joined in mutually congratulatory celebrations of the peaceful resolution of a centuries-old and deeply conflicted dispute—and that seemed to be the end of the matter for the present.

Then, to the astonishment of those who had followed these developments in detail, in 2004, Moscow and Beijing jointly proclaimed that continued negotiations, previously unannounced, had produced solutions to the last two “set-aside” problems. The parties had found it unnecessary to wait for that future, “wiser generation” but had made the necessary compromises to reach agreement in this one.

²⁸ This laborious, vexed procedure is described, in much vivid detail, in IWASHITA Akihiro’s account of *A 4,000 Kilometer Journey Along the Sino-Russian Border*; *Slavic Eurasian Studies* 3, (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2004).

²⁹ The eastern sector plus a fifty-mile remainder sector in the west. The negotiations between Beijing and the three new Central Asian states were protracted and vexed, several times being on the point of breakdown. The cases of Kyrgyz-China and Tajikistan-China were especially difficult, with intense engagement of political parties challenging provisional agreements reached without their agreement.

The compromises made by the two sides to reach the deal formalized in a supplementary agreement on the eastern section of the Sino-Russian boundary line in Beijing in 2004 can be inferred (their details have not been made public). On June 2, 2005, Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov signed the certificate for the exchange of the instruments of ratification for the supplementary agreement on behalf of their respective governments in Vladivostok and exchanged the instruments of ratification and the certificate. The “main contradiction” for each side was different, and they were separable. For Moscow, retention of the portion of Bear Island offshore of Khabarovsk, long regarded by the inhabitants as part of the city, continued to be nonnegotiable. Unwilling as Russia has historically been to cede territory, to relinquish the upstream end of Bear Island was small change for a final settlement. For Beijing, what mattered most was to acquire the upstream portion of Bear Island, thus restoring the Fuyuan Channel (forgetting Kazakevich) to its treaty-defined status as an inland waterway of China, both its banks Chinese sovereign territory. As long as China’s right of navigation through the confluence was guaranteed, there was no need for Beijing to insist on repossession of the end of the island that abutted Khabarovsk; it could be ceded to Russia. By this stage, the two teams of boundary negotiators could work together with a common purpose: to fine-tune a boundary so as to balance the interests of their principals and of local populations and regional authorities so that the proposed alignment would be broadly welcomed and Moscow and Beijing could jointly proclaim achievement of a “win-win” solution, as they duly did.

So the needs and demands of both parties, which had long appeared to be irresolvably contradictory, could now be met by the straightforward process of partition. Thus, short, indeed tiny, new stretches of Sino-Russian land boundaries were created on Bear Island and the other put-aside problem island in the Argun River. And with their demarcation, the entire length of the Sino-Russian boundary thus became agreed, defined, and legitimated, marking the opening of a period of unprecedented Sino-Russian amity.

Origins and Consequences of the Soviet-Chinese Border Conflict of 1969

Dmitri RYABUSHKIN

Prelude to the Military Clash

A change for the worse in Soviet-Chinese relations at the end of the 1950s was caused, mainly, by ideological discords between the party leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Communist Party of China (CPC). The main points of contention, where the parties had contrary points of view, were the appraisal of Stalin's legacy, the possibility of peaceful coexistence of the states with different social systems, the problems of war and peace, the economic experiments in China, etc.

While Joseph Stalin, with his absolute authority, was alive, even Mao Zedong did not try to play a more important political role than he already had. Besides this, the Chinese people felt gratitude for Stalin's help in their struggle against the Japanese army and Chiang Kaishek's troops.

But after the death of the Soviet leader and simultaneously with the consolidation of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Mao Zedong began to demonstrate China's independence in internal and foreign affairs more than before. Probably, the Chinese leader proceeded from the idea that his country's heavily populated and ancient culture must not play a supporting role to the Soviet Union in any matter. Thus, the Chinese leadership intended to occupy the leading position in the world communist movement, especially in the so-called third-world countries. It is natural

that such a turn was not pleasant to Moscow who wished to remain the sole and supreme authority for all supporters of Marxism-Leninism (socialism).

Concerning the relation to capitalist countries, there was an absolute misunderstanding, too. Mao Zedong considered a third world war as a good phenomenon because he had no doubts about the defeat of imperialism. The death of hundreds of millions of people was considered by the Chinese leader as an inevitable payment for the achievement of a great aim—the victory and affirmation of communism worldwide. Mao Zedong frankly asserted as much in November 1957 when he took part in a ceremonial meeting in connection with the fortieth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The Soviet leaders had another point of view because many of them had taken part in the Second World War and therefore imagined quite well the range of different disasters if something similar were to be repeated. Thus, the Kremlin was inclined to peaceful coexistence with capitalist encirclement, but Mao Zedong considered such a position as a demonstration of weakness and unscrupulousness. There was a time when Mao even tried to set the Soviet leadership against the US—obviously in hopes of taking a neutral position in case of a serious conflict. But Moscow understood this play and refused to clash with the US.

In 1959, China provoked a conflict with India,¹ but the Soviet leadership took a neutral position. This ignited Mao's anger because the USSR actually demonstrated its unwillingness to help a communist country in a struggle against a capitalist foe and, moreover, even gave India moral support.

A definite role in the break of relations was played by a subjective factor: the impulsive Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, allowed himself not to validate statements to the address of Mao Zedong who painfully perceived any possible criticism. The vain Chinese leader tried to imitate Stalin in many respects, and similar to Stalin, wished to take a position of infallible authority—all-knowing, understanding, and whose every decision is accepted without discussion.

¹ In that year Chinese troops stifled a rebellion of buddhists in Tibet but India declared their support of the Dalai Lama and even accepted him after he fled China. In September he appealed to the UN to interfere in the conflict. In July 1959 some Indian police officers were captured by the Chinese. Chinese troops began to invade India.

In 1964, a “change of the guard” took place in Moscow’s Kremlin: the removal of Khrushchev was followed by the ascent of a new leader, Leonid Brezhnev. However, this did not lead to the normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations. The main reason seems to have been Mao's unchanged intentions of instigating a confrontation with the USSR. The inertia of this sharp polemic that had developed from the end of the 1950s to the beginning of the 1960s affected Soviet-Chinese relations.

In particular, Soviet-Chinese border relations became essentially strained.

In accordance with the Treaty of Peking of 1860 (or, more exactly, in accordance with a map of the Russian-Chinese border that was a component of the treaty), the border between Russia (later the USSR) and China was drawn along the Chinese bank of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers and the Kazakevichevo Channel as well. Thus, these rivers and all islands on them belonged to Russia/USSR. It is necessary to note that both the Soviet and Chinese mass media repeatedly reported the existence of a map with a border line (the so-called red line) drawn on it; however, this map was never made public.

In the 1950s, during Soviet-Chinese cooperation and friendship, none of the Chinese leaders expressed opinions about the doubtful tracing (demarcation) of the border line. But after the beginning of the Soviet-Chinese polemic, Beijing recollected the disadvantageous border demarcation and demanded a fair resolution to the problem. The result was an escalation of tension along the border between the USSR and the PRC. In the beginning, there were disputes between Soviet border guards and Chinese citizens, who were inhabitants and so-called *hongweibing* (or “red guards”) sent by Chinese authorities to the river islands to demonstrate their belonging to China. Gradually, the civilians were substituted for military men of the People’s Liberation Army of China (PLA), and verbal skirmishes developed into hand-to-hand fights using sticks, knives, spades, etc. Thus, already at that time, it had become clear that the official authority of China had deliberately aimed to aggravate its relations with the USSR. The numerous intrusions of Chinese citizens onto the Soviet islands at the border rivers resulted in conflicts only. Many former Soviet participants of the events told the author how before the armed clashes, they tried to communicate with these local Chinese inhabitants who demonstratively violated the border and illegally entered Soviet territory. According to their memoirs, the Chinese fishermen and

peasants were not glad to take part in the provocations. They were driven to the river islands by PLA officers, employees of the special services and local CPC functionaries.

Many researchers consider the border dispute between the USSR and China as the main reason for the bloodshed. They see the sources of this conflict in the imperfection of the border agreements, which were signed in different historical periods by officials of Russia and China. However, it is sufficient only to cast a glance at a map to understand the inconsistency of the given statement. Practically, none of the islands on the Amur and Ussuri Rivers had any important economic or military value, and, therefore, they could not serve as the reason for such serious confrontation. But discussions around the islands suited perfectly the situation where both parties of the conflict spoke about one thing but thought about absolutely another. Moreover, if the disputed islands had not existed at all, Mao Zedong and his colleagues in the Chinese leadership would have found other places for confrontation: to this, they were pushed by these realities that had developed by 1969 in and around China.

Who Provoked the Border Conflict in 1969 and Why

Numerous researchers and authors of the West and the Soviet/Russia argue that conflicts along the Soviet-Chinese border were not a result of any tragic accident as is often presented in modern China. In fact, all bloody battles of 1969 were planned by the top leadership of the PRC, and carefully prepared for by the military command of the PLA. And it is natural to ask—with what purpose?

Of course, the exact answer to this question was known to only one person—Mao Zedong—but there is no possibility of asking him. Nevertheless, it is possible to conjecture about the logic of his reasoning and acts, knowing what occurred after the completion of the fights at the border.

One of the major reasons that Mao made up his mind for open confrontation with the USSR could have been his desire to adjust China's relations with the US. The fact is that by 1969, Soviet-Chinese connections were almost completely destroyed. The USSR did not give China any economic or scientific help, did not send specialists to Chinese

factories, did not supply China with new weapons, etc. But at that time, the Chinese economy could not develop without help from the outside world and risked lagging behind the rest of the world for a long time to come. Thus, China sharply needed a new sponsor to replace the USSR. At that time and under those circumstances, only the US could play such a role, and Mao therefore decided on a rapprochement with America.

Certainly, squabbles between the Soviet and Chinese leaders were an insufficient basis to decide on such an important problem because American politicians might consider the Soviet-Chinese ideological dispute as a temporary quarrel within the communist “family,” and no more than that. Therefore, Mao Zedong needed a more convincing argument to persuade the US of the serious character of the split between the USSR and the PRC. In such a situation, there was nothing better than bloodshed at the border—with numerous victims, but without the risk of it escalating into a large-scale war.

Another possible reason that might give Mao a shove towards conflict at the Soviet-Chinese border was a situation inside China because 1969 was a peak year in the “Cultural Revolution.” The crash of the economy, the degradation of education and culture, catastrophe in the social sphere, full disorder and lawlessness in the country—these and other consequences of Mao’s politics generated doubts concerning the correctness of the chosen way. Having organized the battles at the border, Mao could cast blame for the events in China onto their powerful northern neighbor: how can affairs be well if the country is exposed to external aggression?

It is quite possible that Mao Zedong chose the way of confrontation with the USSR because the ninth Congress of the Communist Party of China, planned for April 1969, could present the chairman of the PRC with unplanned surprises. Among the delegates of the congress, there were different people—veterans of the Communist Party belonging to various inner-party groups, promoted workers of the Cultural Revolution, and a large number of military personnel. There were supporters of the deposed Liu Shaoqi, too, the struggle against whom Mao possibly counted as the main task of the Cultural Revolution. The attitude of Liu Shaoqi and his colleagues to the Soviet Union was absolutely different from Mao Zedong’s. Liu believed that China and the USSR had many common points in their economies, ideologies, and politics and that it was therefore necessary to pay paramount attention to that which consolidated the

Chinese and Soviet peoples instead of that which separated them. Supporters of Liu Shaoqi excluded even the possibility of armed confrontation between the PRC and the USSR, and these moods could somehow be felt at the congress. What had happened at the border silenced all those delegates who counted Mao's policy on confrontation with the Soviet Union and all disagreements with the CPSU and the USSR as erroneous.

To consolidate the necessary impression, Mao made sure that one of the main participants of the clash at the border, Commander Sun Yuguo, had the right to speak at the congress. Sun Yuguo burst out with a faithful speech and after that, rushed, with loud shouts to shake the hands of the Chinese leadership—Mao Zedong, Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, Jiang Qing, and others. During this procedure, all delegates of the congress welcomed the “hero” with an ovation.² As for Mao, he sat in his place and ominously grinned—as if he had assessed the show at its true value.

Mao Zedong always felt he was a positive force in conditions of struggle (against Japanese troops, Chiang Kaishek, “Soviet revisionists,” Liu Shaoqi, etc.), but constantly failed to improve the daily economic conditions of the Chinese people. Unlike Stalin, who was both a revolutionary and an economist, Mao Zedong was a revolutionary only. Therefore, the creation of any conflicts or collisions was the know-how without which Mao felt himself to be unnecessary and superfluous in life.

Events in Czechoslovakia (CSSR) in August 1968 might be one more reason. As is known, the invasion of Warsaw Pact armies of this country was argued for by the necessity to defend the achievements of socialism. In reality, the main question that all events developed around was most likely another; it was a question about the results of the Second World War because one of the last was an agreement regarding Soviet domination in Czechoslovakia. There was a moment when leaders of the

² Today, Sun Yuguo lives in Shenyang City. All attempts of the author to contact him and ask some questions failed: former commander Sun refuses even to remember the events of March 1969 and his role in them. Moreover, he does not wish to discuss the subject with journalists of the Chinese mass media. The last circumstance will be understood by those investigators who studied the events at the border in detail: Sun Yuguo was indeed the Chinese military commander who ordered the sudden shooting of a group of Soviet border guards patrolling a part of the border. For this “heroic” act, Sun Yuguo received the title, “Hero of the PLA,” was elected at the ninth Congress of CPC, and made use of different privileges all his life.

USSR lost trust in their comrades in Prague and took all affairs into their own hands. It is important to notice that the sudden military invasion of the CSSR happened only after a wide propaganda campaign during which Soviet newspapers and TV channels inspired the idea that the problems in Czechoslovakia endangered socialism. Approximately the same expressions were being used by the Soviet mass media in their information about the situation in China. In such a case, Mao Zedong might find definite analogies and come to the conclusion that the same scenario might occur in China. If so, Mao simply anticipated such a turn of events and demonstrated to the Kremlin the readiness of the Chinese to fight until the last soldier. Of course, anyone can ask whether Mao saw the principal difference between the CSSR and China, and whether he understood that the military invasion of the PRC did not make any sense—above all, for territorial and demographic reasons. Besides this, there was the possibility that a restricted border conflict would develop into a full-scale war, threatening world catastrophe because both the USSR and China possessed nuclear weapons.³

The personal qualities of the Chinese leader quite possibly played a definite role.⁴ Everybody who was closely acquainted with Mao Zedong noticed his deep knowledge of Chinese history and literature, his adherence and love to everything Chinese. Possibly, centuries of humiliation and oppression of the Chinese people constantly aroused in Mao a keen feeling of vengeance, and this feeling appeared in a very unusual way. The negative qualities of Mao—love of power, vanity, and scornful relations with others—developed in the same way.

As for the Soviet leaders, none of them was interested in aggravating relations with China—anyway, no documents or personal memoirs of former Soviet high-ranking officials that testify to the contrary have been found. Moscow did not assume that there was any possibility of armed conflict at the border, even theoretically. Political departments of the

³ Not long ago, it became known that the Soviet minister of defense marshal, Andrei Grechko, offered to Soviet leaders at the top level to destroy Chinese nuclear facilities. According to his opinion, it would result in the cessation of Chinese provocations at the border. The probability of such development of events was not unthinkable, but Beijing stopped hostile activity at the Soviet-Chinese border and the worst did not happen.

⁴ A former chief of the Soviet special service (KGB), Vladimir Kriuchkov, mentioned it in his memoirs. See Vladimir Kriuchkov, *Lichnoe Delo* (Moscow: Eksmo; Algoritm-Kniga, 2003, 480).

Soviet border troops explained that consideration of relations with China demanded the class point of view and use of the principle of proletarian internationalism. It was said, too, that the USSR disagreed with the politics of the Chinese leaders but that the Chinese People's Republic was a socialist country with a socialist method of production. And though the Chinese comrades made serious political mistakes, sooner or later the right line would win. Such was the logic of historical development and the determining tendency.

The Soviet ideologists believed that in the modern world, the socialist countries would fight only against hostile imperialistic encirclement. It was considered as an obvious fact that socialist countries would never attack first but would be only forced to beat off the aggression of imperialists. As to the possibility of war or military conflict inside the socialist camp, such ideas were not discussed because of their absolute impossibility and even absurdity.

At closed party meetings and conferences, the personal activity of Mao Zedong was being analyzed and valued. The CPSU members said that Mao had digressed from the principles of Marxism-Leninism but, nevertheless, was a communist. One of the main reasons for Mao's politics was the personal character of the Chinese leader and even his age (as they said, Mao had simply become senile).

Some Soviet citizens in confidential conversations with each other expressed the opinion that "our leaders are 'good,' too," and the squabble between Moscow and Beijing was the result of mutual ambitions. With definite humor, the subject of the dispute was determined: Soviet and Chinese "comrades" could not discover who among them had a better understanding of Marx's and Lenin's works.

Some Russian researchers have begun to discuss the subject of the possible interest of the Soviet generals and directors of military industry in a conflict at the border. But all known facts demand that similar "innovative" hypotheses be recognized as idle conjectures because there are no data that confirm them. It is just such a case when some unscrupulous researchers try to attract attention to themselves, even at the loss of their own reputation. Unfortunately, there are such persons in current Russian political and literary society who are very free and irresponsible with reference to facts. For example, the well-known writer Aleksandr Prokhanov taking part in a show at Russian TV International in January 2006 asserted, when asked about the culprits of the armed conflict

at Damanskii (Zhenbao) Island, that “both parties attacked each other.” After this, Prokhanov said that a confrontation with China was in the interests of Soviet leadership because the situation demanded it. (Unfortunately, Prokhanov did not explain what he meant by his comment that the situation demanded armed conflict against the Chinese.) The first statement sounds strange because it is very difficult to imagine how both parties of the conflict might attack each other—simultaneously? The second phrase (about Soviet leadership’s “interests”) is a typical example of conjecture, without any consideration of fact and great pretensions to the sensational. It is very difficult to understand Prokhanov’s position in any given case because he was the first Soviet journalist to visit the battlefield and should therefore know who the initiator and provocateur of the bloodshed was.

The Soviet economy was always on a war footing and was therefore never in need of money for its own existence and development. Moreover, in this period, the war in Vietnam reached its apogee, and this factor was a sufficient stimulus for strengthening of Soviet defensive capabilities. Thus, the Soviet directors of military industry had no reasons to request additional budgetary injections.

Of course, the events at the border could have been used by the leadership of the CPSU and the USSR to put things in the socialist camp in order. But that was absolutely another subject and had nothing to do with revealing the originators of the Soviet-Chinese border tragedy in 1969.

How the River Islands became Chinese

A detailed discussion about the circumstances of the battles between Soviet and Chinese troops is beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, the author advises readers who are interested in the subject to read such works where military aspects are investigated with special care. There, one can find important official documents, too.⁵ The main events that

⁵ Dmitri Ryabushkin, *Mify Damanskogo* (Moscow: AST, 2004), 396; Vitalii Bubenin, *Krovavyy sneg Damanskogo: sobytiia 1966–1969 gg.* (Moscow: Granitsa; Kuchkovo Pole, 2004), 192; Andrei Musalov, *Damanskii and Zhalanashkol’: sovetsko-kitaiskii vooruzhennyi konflikt 1969 goda*, Eksprint: Fond voennogo iskusstva (Moscow: Eksprint, 2005), 40.

defined the character of the Soviet-Chinese conflict at the border are the focus.

The first and the bloodiest clash took place on Damanskii (Zhenbao) Island on the Ussuri River. There, on the nights of March 1–2, 1969, a specially trained squad of PLA (about three hundred soldiers and officers) organized an ambush. On the morning of March 2, 1969, a group of thirty Chinese military units, headed by the already-mentioned Sun Yuguo, demonstratively violated the border and after that, lured a group of Soviet border guards into a trap for a sudden ambush. The Chinese attack was exceptionally cruel, and the battle was very fierce. Although Chinese troops had full superiority in their quantity of soldiers and weapons, the Soviet border guards succeeded in not only inflicting serious casualties but also beating back the Chinese provocateurs out of Soviet territory.

The Chinese command did not reconcile itself to the defeat and made a new attempt to capture Damanskii Island on March 15, 1969. At that time, the Chinese sent a regiment into the battle. Attacks by Chinese infantry were supported by artillery fire.

The battle proceeded, with variable success, all day and ended only when the Soviet generals made up their mind to use massed artillery fire on the massed formations of Chinese reserves. The Chinese troops lost a huge number of soldiers and guns and halted their attempts to capture Damanskii. In the following days and nights, there were some fights of reconnaissance groups on the island. These fights resulted in victims for both parties; however, large-scale battles did not resume.

In the summer of 1969, the Chinese made an attempt to occupy Kirkinskii (Qiliqin) Island, which is located three kilometers north of Damanskii. With this purpose, the military men of PLA carried out different work on the equipment of gun positions and command points in the spring and summer of 1969. The Soviet officials limited themselves by protests but the Chinese ignored them. The Chinese command sent two companies to occupy the prepared positions on the island on July 20, 1969. However, violators of the border failed; intensive fire from Soviet machine guns and mortars forced them to flee.

Local skirmishes took place at other sections of the Soviet-Chinese border. An important detail is that in all conflicts, only the Chinese were the provocateurs and violators of the border. As to the Soviet border troops, they only defended their own territory from invasion and

occupation.⁶ And every time, the Chinese were defeated. But ultimately, the fate of the islands on the Amur and Ussuri Rivers was resolved by politicians, not by soldiers. How did it happen? It seems the events surrounding Damanskii and Kirkinskii are the most instructive in this respect.

As a result of the March fights, the Chinese troops were defeated and driven out of Soviet territory. On the Soviet bank of the Ussuri River, units of the 135th Motorized Rifle Division arranged positions to stop possible provocations initiated by Chinese troops. But at that time, the Soviet border guards did not patrol Damanskii Island because the ice on the river had begun to melt and carrying detachments to the island was complicated. The Soviet command decided to organize a fire covering of the island. It meant that groups of snipers and machine gunners would open fire as soon as any Chinese tried to land on Damanskii.⁷ The participants in these events recollect nowadays that shooting frequently took place at night, lighted by powerful projectors. The Chinese officials repeatedly protested because, as they said, the bullets flew toward Chinese territory, but these protests had no practical consequences. At the same time, Soviet diplomats tried to adjust the dialogue between Moscow and Beijing.

Soviet prime minister Aleksei Kosygin already tried to communicate by telephone with Mao Zedong or Zhou Enlai on March 21, 1969. But an operator of the special communication service in Beijing refused to connect him with the Chinese leadership and said that leaders of the PRC had no subjects to discuss with “Soviet revisionists.”⁸ All attempts by the Soviet leadership to arrange diplomatic contacts with Beijing failed.

⁶ Some foreign investigators of the events cannot agree with this fact because they think that in any conflict, both parties are guilty. But this point of view reflects only the political prejudice of its bearers because the experience of all conflicts demonstrates the presence of both an aggressor and a defender. In all clashes at the Soviet-Chinese border, the Soviet border guards were just defenders of the territory of the USSR. As for the responsibility for aggravation of Soviet-Chinese relations, both Soviet and Chinese leaders no doubt bore it.

⁷ The Soviets shot those Chinese soldiers who tried to pull out a Soviet tank T-62, too. The tank (board number 545) was blown up on a Chinese mine during the battle on March 15, 1969 and, after unsuccessful attempts of the Soviet military to tow it to the Soviet bank of the river or to destroy it, it fell through the Ussuri ice.

⁸ Many historians mention this episode, but none of them pays attention to an obvious circumstance: an ordinary operator could not independently decide such an important

Later on, Moscow repeatedly did its utmost to resume dialogue with Beijing. However, the Chinese were unwilling to negotiate. At the same time, Moscow warned the leaders of the PRC about its responsibility in case provocations at the border continued. It became clear soon enough what these warnings meant.

In the region of Zhalanashkol Lake (Kazakh SSR), one more clash between Soviet border guards and a special squad of PLA occurred on August 13, 1969. The Chinese tried to occupy positions in Soviet territory but were discovered and attacked by the local Soviet border guards. During this short fight, the Chinese were surrounded and then utterly defeated. This clash and its results made a serious impression on the leadership in Beijing: after the battle, the Chinese stopped any provocations at the Soviet-Chinese border.

A Soviet delegation, headed by Kosygin, arrived at the capital of Vietnam, Hanoi, for participation in mourning activities in connection with the death of the Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh on September 6, 1969. Since there was a Chinese delegation headed by Li Xiannian at the same place, the Soviet prime minister decided to use this opportunity to make contact with Beijing. Vietnamese diplomats played the role of mediators in this cause.

Li Xiannian received information about Kosygin's desire to make a stop at Beijing at the end of the mourning activities and discuss the situation with the Chinese leadership. Immediately, Li Xiannian sent a message with this news to Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai.

Having considered the Soviet offer, Mao agreed. However, he put forward a condition: the meeting should be of an informal character and take place outside the Chinese capital. Beijing Airport was chosen as the best place.

After this, an annoying blunder complicated the agreement; the Chinese embassy in Hanoi received an answer from Beijing on the morning of September 10, but Kosygin had already departed for Moscow through India.

Feeling their own responsibility for the possible failure of negotiations for a silly technical reason, the Chinese leadership displayed persistence. Firstly, the Soviet ambassador in Vietnam was informed

question. It is clear that he only fulfilled a direct order of somebody within the Chinese leadership.

about its consent to negotiate (again through the Vietnamese diplomats). Secondly, the Chinese leadership informed the chargé d'affaires of the USSR in China, Aleksei Elizavetin, about Zhou Enlai's consent to meet at Beijing Airport.

Being guided by the interests of the affair, Kosygin immediately took off from Tashkent for Beijing.

The negotiations at Beijing Airport, with Kosygin and Zhou Enlai, took place on September 11, 1969. From the Soviet side, there were the secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Konstantin Katushev, and the vice president of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Mikhail Iasnov. The Chinese party was represented by assistants of Prime Minister Li Xiannian and Xie Fuzhi. The meeting proceeded for three and a half hours.

During the conversation, Kosygin emphasized the necessity of a prompt settlement of all disagreements that had accumulated between the two countries. Zhou Enlai did not object; however, he laid stress on a decision on the border question. Zhou Enlai declared that "China has no territorial claims concerning the Soviet Union" and recognizes the existing border. At the same time, he raised the question of, as he expressed it, the "disputed lots," i.e., those territories that formerly belonged to China but were now under Soviet control in accordance with the so-called unequal agreements. However, the members of the Soviet delegation evaded any discussion of the question in such wording, otherwise an impression could have been created that Kosygin and his colleagues recognized the deficiency of all agreements concerning the border. (It might create a basis for further discussion of the problem that would be advantageous to the Chinese.) Therefore, Kosygin limited the discussion with a remark that experts should work in this area.

The main result of the discussion was the arrangement regarding the cessation of any hostile actions at the Soviet-Chinese border and keeping the Soviet and Chinese troops in the positions they were in at the moment of the negotiations.

The wording that "the troops will stay where they have stayed until now" was offered by Zhou Enlai, and Kosygin immediately agreed with it. And at that moment, Damanskii and Kirkinskii became de facto Chinese islands.

Such an unexpected conclusion may be explained by the fact that on September 10, 1969, the Soviet border guards received an order to stop

shooting at those Chinese who tried to penetrate the river islands. After this, the Chinese landed on Damanskii and Kirkinskii.⁹

Thus, on the day of the negotiations in Beijing, only the Chinese were at Damanskii and Kirkinskii. This meant that Kosygin's consent to the wording that "the troops will stay where they have stayed until now" assumed surrender of the islands to China.

In connection with these events, there are, at a minimum, two questions:

1. Did the Soviet leader know about the Chinese presence on the islands on the day of the negotiations?
2. If so, why did he agree to Zhou Enlai's offer?

The answer to the first question is: he knew. And the order to cease fire was given to create a favorable background for the beginning of negotiations. The Soviet leadership knew that the Chinese would land on Damanskii and deliberately agreed with it.

The answer to the second question is: they decided, in the Kremlin, that sooner or later the new border line would be drawn along the main waterways of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers. It meant that Damanskii and Kirkinskii would become Chinese islands. And if this was going to happen, there was no necessity to fight, all the more so because these islands had no economic or military value.

A governmental delegation of the USSR headed by the first assistant of Minister of Foreign Affairs Vasilii Kuznetsov arrived in Beijing on October 19, 1969. The aim of the visit was the renewal of negotiations on the border question.

Unfortunately, tensions in Soviet-Chinese relations did not weaken. The fact is that the most powerful groups in the Beijing leadership were those that considered any steps taken by Moscow as an act of perfidy. They followed such logic analyzing the behavior of Kosygin during discussions at Beijing Airport. As for Mao Zedong, he considered all peaceful initiatives of Moscow as a screen for preparing a sudden military blow against China. From his point of view, the fact that no top-level

⁹ The quickness that was demonstrated by the Chinese during this action might testify to the possible contact between Soviet and Chinese diplomats (or other officials) and informing the latter about the decision to stop shooting.

Soviet official met Kosygin at Moscow Airport after returning from Beijing demonstrated the Kremlin's attitude to the results of the negotiations.

At the same time, a new rise in military psychosis in China did not promote a détente in its relations with the USSR. Nevertheless, Chinese provocations at the border stopped. Chinese leaders possibly came to the conclusion that all tasks were fulfilled already and new clashes at the border might have dangerous and unpredictable consequences.¹⁰

After this, boundary negotiations began. They took place alternately in Moscow and Beijing. Top-level Soviet officials actually presented Damanskii and Kirkinskii to China, but the presence of the Chinese military on the islands caused protests. Such protests and demands to leave the islands were declared from time to time, for example, on November 3, 1969, December 30, 1969, February 12–13, 1970, and on April 1, 1970. It is difficult to tell what aim was pursued by Moscow, but each Soviet demarche caused only a flash of emotions. The Soviet participants of the negotiations accused the Chinese of infringing on the agreements, of landing on the islands at night, etc. The Chinese participants were indignant at the similar treatment of the events because the Chinese border guards had landed on Damanskii and Kirkinskii openly, at the moment when the Soviets had stopped shooting.

The next twenty years did not bring any essential shifts in the negotiating process although discussions on the border question proceeded. Finally, these negotiations became a formal and even ritual procedure because neither the Soviet nor the Chinese diplomats made concessions and, at the same time, did not interrupt their own participation in the discussions. The first results appeared only at the end of the 1980s.

In Moscow, an "Agreement between the USSR and the PRC on the Soviet-Chinese State border at its Eastern Part" was signed on May 16, 1991. In accordance with this document, the border on the rivers was drawn along the main waterway or the middle line (it depended on whether the river is navigable or non-navigable). There was also an

¹⁰ Some Chinese sources state that Chinese minister of defence Lin Biao visited that place opposite Damanskii Island where infantry of the PLA was hit by Soviet artillery during the battle on March 15, 1969. Lin Biao studied the results of that blow and, it is claimed, said: "It was enough to test Russian patience."

arrangement about the creation of a demarcation commission in the text of the agreement.

On February 13, 1992, after the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Supreme Soviet ratified the agreement, and the head of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Ruslan Khasbulatov, signed this decision. The Chinese did the same in Beijing on February 25, 1992. In Beijing, an exchange of ratification instruments took place on March 16, 1992. Thus, the agreement came into force, and the actual belonging of Damanskii and Kirkinskii to China became a legally faultless fact on March 16. Demarcation of the border that followed only confirmed it.

Consequences of the Soviet-Chinese Border Conflict of 1969

Strengthening of military power by both the USSR and the PRC became a direct result of the conflicts along the Soviet-Chinese border. First of all, it was expressed in the movement of additional military units and formations along the border zone as well as the formation of new divisions and armies at the place of the events. According to some sources, in the Soviet Far East, in Mongolia and Central Asia, about 25 percent of all armed forces of the USSR was concentrated for several years after the battle. Besides this, along the border, the mass construction of powerful protective structures was begun (so-called fortified areas). Obviously, after clashes at the border, the Soviet leadership seriously assimilated an outlook of large-scale war with China. As for China, it is not even necessary to mention the military psychosis that reigned there at that time.

Any economic and cultural cooperation between the PRC and the USSR practically came to a complete stop, and trade relations were reduced to a minimum. Those former Soviet citizens who remember the end of the 1960s and the beginning of 1970s can confirm the fact of the disappearance of traditional Chinese exports that were very popular in the Soviet Union (clothes and fabrics, porcelain and fountain pens, lanterns and thermoses, etc.).

The most important political consequence of the fights at the border was the change of the position that the PRC had secured in the world arena. Before March 1969, only two players dominated in world politics—the US and the USSR. Now, after demonstrating readiness for open military conflict against the mighty Soviet Union, China

unexpectedly broke into the sphere of the direct interests of the superpowers. And they had already been forced to recognize the presence of the PRC while considering the most important political questions.

A visit by US president Richard Nixon to Beijing in February 1972 demonstrated how exactly and correctly Mao Zedong had foreseen all consequences of the border confrontation. In any case, the clashes along the border made just the impression on the US administration that Mao had hoped for.

At the same time, Mao Zedong and his follower Deng Xiaoping were unable to create a united anti-Soviet front together with Western countries and Japan. That fact can be explained by the pragmatism that traditionally dominated the politics of the US, Japan, and the countries of Western Europe. Leaders of these countries realized that the motives of Mao Zedong were guided by the intention to worsen Soviet-Chinese relations. To push off the Soviet Union and the West, and to sit out somewhere far from the battle—this was the idea the Chinese leader thought about, smiling to Nixon and other foreign visitors. Of course, Western leaders were not admirers of Communist ideology, but this fact did not prevent them from understanding a simple truth: it is better to have normal relations with the USSR and, simultaneously, to counteract the expansion of the Soviet influence in the world, than to be at enmity with the Soviet Union. Thus, Mao Zedong was unable to become like the wise monkey from the old Chinese parable who observed a fight between two tigers from the top of the mountain. Contrary to intentions, Mao took on the role of one of the tigers, having given the US an opportunity to observe the fight from a safe distance.

The Chinese leaders also failed in their attempts to split the socialist commonwealth; only Albania, earlier completely making common cause with Beijing, completely supported China. The other socialist countries either supported Moscow or took a neutral position.

It is necessary to mention one more important circumstance that has received almost no attention, which is the question of the attitude of present Russian and Chinese officials to the events of 1969. Basically, the positions of Moscow and Beijing are rather similar: to try to break off events that have occurred, and if this is not possible, to reduce any discussion on the border conflict to a set of banalities. Of course, there are definite distinctions. In Russia, nobody forbids journalists, cinematographers, or historians from engaging in given problems. For

example, popular Russian TV channels repeatedly aired the film “Damanskii Island, 1969” that had been created by “Galakon” Film Studio (Moscow) in 2004. It is significant that the first airing of the film took place on February 23, 2004, on the so-called Defender of the Fatherland Day. In 2005 and 2006, some Russian and Ukrainian channels aired the film again (At the same time, the main historical journal of the Russian Ministry of Defense, the *Military-Historical Journal*, refused to publish any articles about the Soviet-Chinese border conflict of 1969 because its editorial board considered this subject too taboo).

Every year, Soviet veterans of the Damanskii Island conflict take part in memorial ceremonies in the Far East region, Siberia, and Moscow. Every year, Russian newspapers and TV news outlets report it widely.

As for China, the theme of the Soviet-Chinese border conflict is practically closed. The Chinese mass media only thoughtlessly repeat everything that comes down “from the top,” which, as a matter of fact, does not differ from the propaganda clichés of the Cultural Revolution. Similarly, Chinese newspapers in 1969 said, and modern Chinese propaganda obstinately repeats, that the Soviet border guards attacked the Chinese first, and the Chinese only acted defensively. Meanwhile, the fact of the beforehand planned Chinese attack is confirmed by not only the Soviet/Russian materials, but also by the works of Western researchers who have little sympathy for the USSR. Moreover, some Chinese historians are already agreeing that bloodshed on Damanskii was prepared and carried out by the Chinese.¹¹ Therefore, the current Chinese position on the subject looks especially false and cynical.

Here is a typical detail: it is almost impossible to find any Chinese participants of the events. And those who are found categorically refuse to answer any questions about their participation in the fights along the border. Chinese historians refuse to cooperate on the given theme, too—even in such cases when very interesting and exclusive documents are offered for joint investigation (the author of this article has a very rich experience in such contacts with Chinese historians). The reason for this is clear: the Chinese—especially the participants of the clash—know that they organized and carried out the bloodshed along the border. Some Chinese participants of the battle may fear that detailed consideration of

¹¹ Lyle J. Goldstein, “Research Report Returns to Zhenbao Island: Who Started Shooting and Why it Matters,” *China Quarterly*, no. 168 (December 2001): 985–997.

their personal actions during the conflict would result in accusations of war crimes.

The majority of the documents on the conflict of 1969 remain hidden in secret archives in Russia and China. However, the people who wrote all these papers are still alive. They and their memoirs are a “delayed-action bomb” which at careless handling could do much harm to Russian-Chinese relations.¹² It sounds important for the leaders of Russia and China to treat the events of 1969 prudently and to calm down this painful question. Such settlement must not be reduced by mutual expressions of regret and the same mutual nonadmissions in the future. The bloodshed of 1969 was prepared and carried out by the authorities of China.

Sincere Soviet-Chinese friendship perished thirty-seven years ago on the little Damanskii Island on the Ussuri River. From that old history, different lessons were learnt, and many people had a chance for reflection—politicians and militants, diplomats and weapon designers, scientists and writers. But if to speak only about interstate borders, the following lasting lesson has to be acquired: a party in a more advantageous position, thanks to historical circumstances, ought to aspire to fair boundary settlement. To understand neighbors and simultaneously maintain national interests—this is the real test for the politicians engaged in the question of boundary delimitation.

* This work reflects only the personal point of view of the author and does not reflect the position of any state or public organization.

¹² Perhaps, a purely emotional aspect of the secret materials of the Soviet medical commission that inspected the bodies of perished Soviet border guards is the most dangerous. It follows from the document that nineteen wounded border guards in a helpless condition were brutally finished off by the Chinese. The text of that paper is so awful that its publication in the Russian mass media may result in an irrational hatred of all citizens of China.

Questions Regarding Past and Present Sino-Russian Cultural Exchange

Su Fenglin

Cultural relations remain an important and integral part of international relations. To a certain extent, they influence and form changes in the development of economic and political relations. It is of great importance to look back at the ages-long Sino-Russian cultural exchange and summarize its experience, discover some of the deep causes of many important events in the history of Sino-Russian relations, and most importantly, further strengthen and develop the historical tradition of good neighborly coexistence. Unfortunately, this topic has not attracted due attention for a long time.

The Beginning of Sino-Russian Cultural Exchange

Recent archaeological findings show that cultural links between Russia and China formed much earlier than political and economic relations. Indirect cultural links between them existed from the previous millennium. Already in the tenth century, Central Asian merchants were exporting Chinese silk to Russia.¹ After the thirteenth century, there were more ways for Chinese goods to reach the West. By this time, however, China had had contact with Russia for a long time. But when exactly did the

¹ Mikhail Sladkovskii, *Istoriia torgovo-ekonomicheskikh otnoshenii narodov Rossii s Kitaem do 1917 g.* (Moscow: Izd-vo "Nauka," Glav. red. vostochnoi lit-ry, 1974), 43.

cultural exchange between the two countries start? Even today, there is no single view on this matter.

It is impossible to agree with those scholars who claim that “cultural exchanges between Russia and China began with the opening of the Silk Road during the Khan and Tang Dynasties.”² In fact, Russia never did belong to the Hun, and during the late Khan period (first to third centuries), a single Russian culture did not yet exist. The earliest state of what would become the Russian Empire was Kiev Rus’, which was created only in the tenth century. Moreover, the Eastern Slav ethnos was formed no earlier than the fourth century.

According to currently available historical evidence, the earliest contact between the two cultures, Russian and Chinese, began in the period of the Golden Horde. In the first half of the thirteenth century, Genghis Khan’s grandson, Batyi Khan, campaigned in the West and created the Golden Horde, which included several principalities of Rus’ and the Lower Volga region with its capital in Old Sarai. The creation of the Golden Horde opened the way for economic and cultural exchange between the East and the West and, therefore, it created possibilities for contact between the Chinese and Russian cultures. In 1279, the Yuan Dynasty was established in China. Post stations were created on the way from Beijing to Old Sarai, and the ancestors of the two great nations, China and Russia, from that time on, maintained constant relations.

The earliest mention of the Russian people in Chinese chronicles can be found in a book entitled *History of the Yuan Dynasty*. The book contains records of princes giving Russian guards, *jinweijun* (禁卫军) to the emperor.³ These Russian soldiers were possibly captured by the Mongolians during their invasion of Russia and were later presented as slaves to the emperor by the khan of the Golden Horde. The expression “*jinweijun*” was usually used for the guards of the Yuan Dynasty. Brave warriors of northwestern nationality were often selected to join the palace guards or the emperor’s personal guard as protection from the unsubdued Chinese Han people. These records show that, at the time, there was some contact between the Beijing and Russian service people.

² JIANG Wenqi and LIAO Hongjun, “Zhongguo Wenhua yu Eguo” [Chinese Culture and Russia], in Geng Longming, ed., *Zhongguo wenhua yu shijie* [Chinese Culture and the World] (Shanghai: Shanghai waiyu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1992), 102–103.

³ *Yuanshi* [The History of Yuan Dynasty], Juan 3, 27, 34, 35, 36, 120.

In 1368, the Ming Dynasty came to power in China. During the same period, Russia was fighting for its liberation from the Mongolian yoke. After the battle of Kulikov in 1380, the Golden Horde was able to maintain control over Russia in only one way. After the collapse of the Mongolian Empire, serious obstacles to Sino-Russian cultural exchange began to appear. Despite this, cultural exchange never ceased to exist.

Most historians have little doubt about the authenticity of the letters sent by the Ming emperors to the rulers of Russia. The first volume of *Russo-Chinese Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Documents and Materials* (edited by Sergei Tikhvinskii), which was published in the 1960s, contains official translations of two of these letters sent by the Chinese emperors to the Russian kings. Obviously, the question of the authenticity of these two documents is of high importance, as this can prove the existence of cordial contact between Russia and China during the Ming Dynasty.

Yet a number of questions remain unanswered. Firstly, the imperial letters of the Ming Dynasty addressed to the rulers of other countries started, as a rule, with three words “Great Ming Letter (大明书).” Further, the beginning of the text indicated the ruler of the country to whom the letter was addressed. At the end of a letter, there always was an indication of the year under the motto of the dynasty, month, and day. However, neither of the mentioned letters conform to the rules of such documents common during the Ming Dynasty. Secondly, in analyzing the style of these documents, one can see that it lacks the perception of the Chinese monarch being the sole sovereign and rulers of other countries being his subjects, which existed at that time. On the contrary, even some self-abasement can be found in the text. Not only do the letters not refer to the other side as subjects of Ming rule, there is also no demand for payment of levies. Instead, they invite the other side to come to China for trade, contradicting the trade containment policy of feudal China. Thirdly, the letters contain these words: “You brought me two elk horns and I gave you seven hundred damask rolls for them . . . And to the Great King, thirty-two cups made of jade stone were sent.”⁷⁴ Such exchanges do not conform to the rules of Ming ritual in international relations. Elk horns are considered valuable for medicinal purposes in Mongolia, but not so in

⁴ *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v XVII veke: materialy i dokumenty*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 1969), 118.

China. The Chinese emperor would hardly give seven hundred pieces of silk and satin in return for two horns. Besides, according to the records of the exchange of gifts during the Ming Dynasty, there is no mention of jade cups. Therefore, an analysis of the two letters puts their authenticity in doubt.

In fact, the Russian ambassador Nikolai Spafarii, who had copies of the documents when he left China, answered the question of the letters' origin and authenticity in his report during an embassy trip to China. He brought two documents in Chinese and two documents in Manchurian to China. The officials of the Foreign Bureau (理藩院) of the Qing Dynasty easily recognized the text in Manchurian. However, the officials could not understand the other two documents, as they were written in Chinese characters. Later, he found an old official of Han nationality and asked him to translate the documents into Manchurian. At the same time, Nan Huairen (南怀仁), a missionary of the Jesuit order in Beijing, was asked to translate the original into Latin. One Qing official told Spafarii that the documents had been written two hundred and sixty years ago and were addressed not to the Russian king but were orders published by the Ming emperor Chengzu (成祖) during the Yongle (永乐) period and referred to the appointment of high officials in the border regions.⁵ If the view of the capital officials is right, then this question probably arose in 1675 when Spafarii in Tobolsk asked someone to translate a section of the document from Chinese. One can surmise that the "Chinese translator" simply made up the two letters by the Ming emperors. However, the fact that personal exchange between China and Russia existed in the Ming period is undeniable.

So who was in the first Russian embassy to China in the Ming period? This is an interesting and complicated question in the history of Sino-Russian cultural relations. In 1821, the famous Russian historian Nikolai Karamzin in his *History of the Russian State* wrote that Ivan IV wanted to learn more about China and offered a reward to those who would open a trade route to China. Then, in 1567, two Cossack atamans Ivan Petrov and Burnash Ialychev were ordered to cross Siberia and reach

⁵ Nikolai Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Diplomaticheskoe sobranie del" mezhdru Rossiiskim" i Kitaiskim" gosudarstvami s" 1619 po 1792-i god"* (Kazan: Tipografiia Imperatorskago Universiteta, 1882), 8; *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v XVII veke*, vol. 1, 401, 403, 410, 415.

China. They successfully reached the capital of China and left a record of their journey. Karamzin's discovery found support among many but was unable to convince everyone. Already in 1882, Russian scholar H. Trusevich expressed his doubts about the authenticity of Ivan Petrov's mission. After the 1930s, Russian historian F. I. Pokrovsky announced that Petrov's mission never took place and that his records were actually written by another person. In the 1950s and 1960s, well-known sinologists Vladimir Miasnikov and Natalia Demidova discovered in the State Central Archive of Ancient Documents two new documents. One of them was a petition by Ivan Petlin to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting a reward for his trip to China in 1619. The other document was an extract from the report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that proved Petlin's account. This important discovery proved that Petrov's memoirs were in fact Petlin's records, as both of the documents mention Petlin's account of the journey. Therefore, the story of Petrov's mission to China somewhat lost its reliability.

Does this mean then that I. Petlin was in the first embassy mission to China? There is no evidence left in the Chinese archives that proves that his visit took place in 1619. This is why some Chinese scholars argue that "Petlin never even reached Inner Mongolia, and needless to say, he never was in Beijing."⁶ Their argument is based on historical documents of the Ming Dynasty that say that there was no exchange of diplomatic missions between the two countries at the time. Petlin's memoirs do mention "San Niangzi" (三娘子, or Princess Manchi-Khatun), which does not correspond to the historical facts, as she was dead by the time of Petlin's departure to Inner Mongolia.

Yet the Russian archives can provide strong proof of the fact that Petlin and his companions did reach China. In 1619, Altyn Khan wrote a letter about Petlin's journey to the Russian king: "The sovereign's ambassadors from Siberia, Ivan and Ondrey, did come to me and asked to be led to China. And for you, the great sovereign, I sent those two to China and ordered for them to be guided well and likewise back."⁷ Altyn Khan's ambassadors who guided Petlin during his return trip delivered

⁶ HAO Zhenhua, "Liangfeng Zhongguo mingchao huangdi zhi eguo shahuang guoshu zhenwei bian" [A Study of the Authenticity of Two Official Documents Sent to the Russian Tsar by the Ming Emperor], *Shijie lishi*, 1986, no. 1: 29.

⁷ *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v XVII veke* 1: 78.

this letter personally. The original was written in Mongolian, and the translation was certified. The lands controlled by Altyn Khan stretched up to the upper Enisei and Ubsu-Nur Lakes and maintained long-term economic and cultural relations with the inner regions of China. Altyn Khan and his people knew the way to China very well. We should believe that Petlin with Altyn Khan's help did reach China. However, it is difficult to assume that he made it all the way to Beijing.

Regardless of whether Petlin really visited Beijing or not, the record of his journey can be considered the first Russian historical report related to China. Petlin's journey caused quite a sensation in Russia and played a significant role in piquing their interest in China, and was the start of the history of direct Sino-Russian cultural exchange.

The Role of Cultural Exchange in Sino-Russian Relations as a Whole

From the middle of the seventeenth century, China and Russia were the biggest neighboring countries. Although in 1850–1880 there were military collisions on the Heilongjiang River (Amur River) and at the beginning of the twentieth century there were occasional conflicts, it could generally be said that the goal of establishing peaceful and developing contacts has remained the primary direction of Sino-Russian relations.

The Nerchinsk Treaty (1689) became the first important milestone in the development of Sino-Russian relations. Not only did it settle the political and economic relations between the countries at the time, it also deeply influenced cultural exchange between them. Since then, Sino-Russian relations have developed steadily and rapidly.

The whole history of Sino-Russian relations can be roughly divided into three distinct periods: the first being the period of Tsarist Russia, the second, the period of the USSR, and the third, the post-Soviet period.

The first period came to an abrupt end in 1917. Many very important historical events happened at that time. Bilateral relations between the two countries at one point were extremely tense, but serious confrontation was avoided. The reason was that the economic and trade ties and the cultural exchanges positively influenced the development of political relations. The factors that contributed were first of all the rise of trade and cultural exchange in Kiakhtha-Maimaicheng, the establishment of a Russian church

mission in Beijing, the development of Russian sinology, a visit by a Chinese mission to Russia, the development of Sino-Russian relations in the fields of medicine, art, and literature, the exchange of books between the governments, and so on.

During the second period (which ended in 1991) bilateral relations went through different stages. There was a “honeymoon” period that was followed by more difficult times. In the first half of this period, China was the recipient, as it was attracted to Russo-Soviet culture and the ideology of the revolution. According to incomplete data, for the first forty-nine years of the twentieth century, up to the creation of the PRC, there were over five hundred and thirty works on Marxism-Leninism translated into Chinese.⁸ After the creation of the People’s Republic of China, many young people as well as technical specialists went to the USSR to study. From the 1950s onwards, there were certain difficulties, although cultural exchange never stopped. Despite the worsening of bilateral relations, schools of Chinese russology produced new specialists. In 1964, the Chinese Social Science Academy’s Institute of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was formed. In the same year, the Institute of Siberia was founded in Heilongjiang, which specialized in eastern Soviet Union studies (today, it is called the Heilongjiang Province Academy of Social Science Institute of Russia).

In the third period, Sino-Russian relations entered a path of rapid development. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, in no small part thanks to very successful political relations, cultural exchange between Russia and China, as well as cooperation in the areas of science and technology, has been constantly developing. In recent years, there have been many positive results in political, trade and economic, and cultural areas: the Good Neighborly Relations Treaty between the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation was signed, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was created, border issues were completely resolved, joint military training was conducted, both countries had “national years,” there was a breakthrough in trade and economic

⁸ DONG Xiaoyang, “Jiaqiang Zhong E liangguo diqu hezuo de wenhua jichu” [Strengthening the Cultural Base of Regional Cooperation between China and Russia], in *Sbornik sochinenii IV-ogo mezhdunarodnogo foruma po regional'nomu sotrudnichestvu i razvitiuu mezhdru Kitaem i Rossiei/ Di si jie Zhong E quyu hezuo yu fazhan guoji luntan lunwenji* (Harbin, 2006), 142.

cooperation between the countries, there was more cooperation at the international level, etc.

The history of Sino-Russian relations proves that cultural exchange is the inevitable result of social development and that it is necessary for the survival and continuation of civilization. Although there are factors in both cultures that the other side cannot accept, there remains a common ground. A sort of rational selection happens in the process of interaction between different cultures, which allows for the preservation of national culture and the absorption of useful and advanced ideas from the foreign culture. This process brings a culture to a higher level of development and provides for harmonious development in the future. In addition to the development of good neighborly relations and overall development, Sino-Russian cultural relations are favorable for social development and the progress of civilization of both countries. The development of cultural relations is important to the fundamental interests of both countries.

The Chinese nation has created a brilliant and vivid culture. During the long process of its formation, the Han culture constantly mixed with cultures of other nationalities populating China. Traditional Chinese culture, of which the Han culture is the core, also had multiple contacts with the traditional cultures of nationalities outside China. The exchange with the Russian culture was one of the most important parts of China's exchange with foreign cultures.

Although the Russian culture was formed relatively late, the Russian people also created a brilliant and vivid culture. Russia began in Europe, which gave it an opportunity to absorb the achievements of many of the Christian European countries. At the same time, thanks to the influence of certain geographical, national, and historical factors, Russia also absorbed some of the achievements of the East. This is why Russian culture is the only one that have features of both Asian and European cultures. Or, in other words, Russia is a civilization created by the combining of cultural elements from the East and the West.

This is possibly the reason that, when compared to other European states, Russia has always held an advantageous position in cultural exchange with China—a fact that is clearly attested by history. For instance, in the eighteenth century, when the position of Western missions in China was constantly worsening, Russia was allowed to keep its missionaries in Beijing, which remained functional for some two centuries. Until the mid-nineteenth century, Russia was the only Western country to

which China sent embassies (a Chinese mission being sent twice to congratulate Russian emperors on their coronation). In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Qing Dynasty followed its containment policy in foreign trade, and all Western missionaries and merchants were denied access to China. However, trade and cultural exchanges between China successfully existed on the route through Kiakhta, with only a few interruptions.⁹ Even when the first Opium War started and aggravated China's relationship with the West, in 1845, China and Russia exchanged publications that made cultural cooperation stronger.

On the other hand, Chinese culture also influenced Russia. One Russian scholar mentions that many Russian cultural figures before the revolution showed interest in China. The most notable example is Leo Tolstoy, who found in the moral principle of "Dao De Jing" (道德经) thoughts that he considered close to his understanding of ideals.¹⁰ Dmitry Mendeleev also viewed Chinese culture with great interest.¹¹ Such interest could usually be interpreted as a general fondness for Oriental culture and Chinese culture in particular. Sometimes, this fondness, with a background of ideology and moral crisis, turned into ugly forms of fashion for oriental mysticism, Buddhist irrationalism, and fortune telling. However, the fashion, which caused a better flow of information, gave more independent individuals an opportunity to access the real achievements of Chinese culture.¹² Historically, Sino-Russian cultural exchange was based on friendly relations, mutually favorable contacts, the wish for good neighborly relations, and the need to broaden cultural activities. The development of cultural relations resulted in the broadening of economic ties and peaceful political relations.

⁹ SU Fenglin, *Zaoqi Zhong E guanxi shi yanjiu* [A Study on the Early History of Sino-Russian Relations] (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1999), 146–182.

¹⁰ See, Lev Tolstoy, *Krug chteniia* (Moscow: Slovo, 1923), vols. 1–2.

¹¹ See, Dmitrii Mendeleev, *Zavetnye mysli* (Moscow: Mysl', 1995), 205–206.

¹² Aleksandr Lukin, "Evoliutsiia obraza Kitaia v Rossii i rossiisko-kitaiskie otnosheniia," *Neprikosnovennyi zapas: debaty o politike i kul'ture* 29, no. 3 (2003), <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2003/29>.

Pros and Cons of Modern Sino-Russian Relations from a Cultural Exchange Point of View

For China and Russia, the year 2006 carries special historical significance. 2006 year was the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the strategic partnership, the fifth anniversary of the Good Neighborly Relations, Friendship and Cooperation Treaty, and the fifth anniversary of the creation of the SCO.

In April 1996, during Russian president Boris Yeltsin's visit to China, the leaders of both countries announced in a signed communiqué that both sides would endeavor to establish relations based on equality, mutual trust, and a strategic partnership in the twenty-first century. Since then, all these features have been the main principles of Sino-Russian relations.

The main areas of bilateral cooperation are reflected in the Good Neighborly Relations, Friendship and Cooperation Treaty between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, which was signed by Russian president Vladimir Putin and the chairman of the PRC Jiang Zemin on July 16, 2001 (which came into force on February 28, 2002). In all fields of cooperation, there are, at present, agreements at the government level as well as at the ministry and regional levels. Ever since the border issues were resolved, agreements on trust and disarmament along the border regions have been signed, and also thanks to the similarity in the positions regarding international problems, there are no significant problems left that could seriously complicate bilateral relations.

Russia's representative to the UN, Andrei Denisov, observed that it would not be an exaggeration to say that Sino-Russian relations at present are at their best throughout their centuries-long history. The ten years that followed the announcement of the strategic partnership and the five years since the signing of the Good Neighborly Relations and Friendship Treaty have been characterized by stable and developing Sino-Russian cooperation. Their ties are based on the principles of true equality, mutual benefit, and common interests in most various fields, and they are free from ideology and are dynamically developing in all directions: political, economic, energy, etc.¹³

¹³ Andrei Denisov, "Rossiisko-kitaiskoe sotrudnichestvo kak faktor mezhdunarodnoi

In particular, the signing of an additional agreement on the eastern part of the Sino-Russian border on October 14, 2004, put an end to border talks that had lasted for almost forty years. Both countries announced that they had no unresolved territorial issues. For the first time in their mutual history, the border between the two was completely demarcated. All these factors allowed both states to reach an even higher level of mutual trust.

Russia's establishment of friendly and stable relations with China is very important. The Russian government considers that, no matter what changes take place in their relations with the West, maintaining a constructive partnership with China is in Russia's interest. The stronger Russia's position in the East becomes, the more confidence it will have vis-à-vis the West.¹⁴ For China, the maintenance of long-term stable friendly relations has very high priority. This could guarantee stability on its northern borders, which stretch for over 7,300 kilometers and could therefore allow China to pay more attention to modernization and to be ready to respond to any challenges from the east or the south.

Besides, Russia and China are planning to stand up against the hegemony and policy of bloc creation and constantly fight against separatist movements, which are supported by international terrorist organizations or third countries. They have common views on many regional and international problems. An important feature of modern Sino-Russian relations is their broad mutual support in the key questions of state sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity, strengthening of multi-level cooperation for development, establishment of a new multipolar world, and the construction of a new, rational political and economic world order.

However, Sino-Russian strategic partnership relations face not only positive opportunities but some challenges as well. In analyzing the state of modern Sino-Russian relations, one notices not just the positive tendencies but also some of the hidden dangers that could worsen in the future. The most serious and difficult challenges lie in the area of cultural ties. In other words, broad contact for mutual study between the two

stabil'nosti," speech at the symposium "A Dialogue on Russia and China Today," Lehman College, City University of New York, New York, March 25, 2006.

¹⁴ Li Jingjie, "Zhong E guanxi yu meiguo yinsu" [Sino-Russian Relations and the US Factor], *Jinri Yazhou yu Feizhou*, 2002, no. 3.

nations does not exist, especially among the young people of both countries.

Many Chinese, especially the older generation, still have some fond feelings toward Russian culture and literature. They understand the diversity of Russian culture, its customs, and traditions. *Evening Near Moscow*, *Moscow-Beijing*, *How the Steel was Tempered*, and *The Dawns Here are Quiet* are products of the Russian culture that they knew in their youth. However, among the young population of China, the situation is different. The younger generation in general is interested in Russia, but few of them know much about it. As Russian president Vladimir Putin said, “at the moment, our perception of each other largely relies on past experience. This is why it is important to let more people of both countries learn more about life in the new Russia and the new China, about those huge achievements that we’ve made in recent years.”¹⁵

Researching the present state of cultural exchange between China and Russia, the deputy director of the Institute of Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia of the China Academy of Social Sciences Dong Xiaoyang wrote that the volume and scale of translation of literature in both countries are still inadequate. The Chinese public hardly ever watches modern Russian films, and know next to nothing about modern Russian music. After 1991, no events like Russian film festivals have been held in China. This situation influences mutual understanding and effective communication between the youth of both countries in a negative way.¹⁶

Likewise, the knowledge of Chinese films by Russian viewers is limited to the kung-fu genre. For many young Russians, China means only Bruce Lee or Jackie Chan; they have little real knowledge about the daily lives of their counterparts in China. There are almost no modern Chinese dramas on Russian TV. Russian scholar Aleksandr Lukin noted that for Russian intellectuals who do not specialize in sinology, China is a kingdom of mysterious oriental philosophy and wisdom that shows to the lost West the way to spiritual renaissance. Chinese *wushu* (武术), *gigong* (气功), and *I Jing* (易经) fortune telling all became very popular and at first were taught secretly in various circles by suspicious individuals who had allegedly discovered the mysteries of the Orient. Most of these people

¹⁵ “Pis’mennoe interv’iu prezidenta RF Agentstvu *Xinhua*,” March 20, 2006, <http://www.china.org.cn/russian/226871.htm>.

¹⁶ DONG, “Jiaqiang Zhong E liangguo diqu hezuo de wenhua jichu,” 145.

were frauds and knew very little about the real China. Books on Chinese philosophy included those fake mysterious ones that have sold thousands of copies. Many wanted to visit the dreamland, see the mysterious *Shaolin* (少林) Monastery or become a Buddhist monk.¹⁷

More serious questions concern ideology. The fear of the “Chinese peril” to a certain extent exists in Russia. Some believe that the rapid development of China may cause a misbalance in geopolitics and shift the balance of power in Asia to the detriment of Russia. They fear that Russia will become a junior partner of China and will end up as its resource base. Some are worried that the Chinese will flood the Far East, outnumber its population, and eventually “occupy Russian territory.”¹⁸

It is difficult to deny that Sino-Russian relations are based on two wheels—politics and the economy. Now that the political wheel is running well, the economic wheel is still weak.¹⁹ Nonetheless, cultural exchange remains a crucial factor in the development of bilateral relations. The poor condition of Sino-Russian cultural exchange is slowing down the development of Sino-Russian strategic partnership relations. A poor understanding of the other is one of the main causes of many conflicts and even wars in the long history of Sino-Russian relations.

Fortunately, both in China and in Russia, far-seeing politicians have already noticed these issues. In recent years, cultural exchange has received more attention by the governments of both countries. The volume and mechanism of cultural cooperation is being improved. In the humanitarian field, various big-scale projects are being jointly developed such as annual culture festivals, forums for journalists, the creation of a joint university, teaching of traditional Chinese medicine in Russia, opening of cultural centers, support of Russian language learning in China and Chinese language learning in Russia, broadening of student exchanges, and a more active promotion of tourism and sport. China and Russia will from now on cooperate more in various fields. The Sino-Russian strategic partnership faces many hard tasks, but the future seems bright.

¹⁷ Lukin, “Evolutsiia obraza Kitaia v Rossii.”

¹⁸ Li Jingjie, “Xin shiji de Zhong E guanxi” [The Sino-Russian Relations in a New Century], in *Sbornik sochinenii IV-ogo mezhdunarodnogo foruma / Di si jie Zhong E quyu hezuo yu fazhan*, 9.

¹⁹ Li, “Xin shiji de Zhong E guanxi.”

Significance of “Partner Country National Year” Events in China and Russia

The year 2006 was the Year of Russia in China, and 2007 is the Year of China in Russia. This can be called the most significant event in the history of cultural exchange between Russia and China. The holding of these “partner country national year” events can be a good conclusion to the ten years of development of bilateral partnership. It was a political decision by Chairman Hu Jintao and President Vladimir Putin. It was one of the first steps of the realization of the principles of the Good Neighborly Relations and Friendship Treaty. In fact, the agreement of the two leaders on having national years is “unprecedented in the history of the Sino-Russian bilateral relations.”²⁰

Russia has created an organizing committee, headed by the first deputy prime minister Dmitrii Medvedev, to host the national year. A similar committee was created in China, and is headed by the deputy chairman of China’s State Council Wu Yi. Cultural events are the most significant part of the national years. The Russian ambassador to China Sergei Razov has noted that the Year of China in Russia and the Year of Russia in China have their own peculiarities. The projects are designed by Russia to involve the areas of politics, economics, culture, trade and industry, scientific research, and other areas of social life. Most of the projects are public-oriented, which is why a great number of participants is anticipated.²¹

On January 1, 2006, the Year of Russia in China officially started. The events program outline shows an emphasis on cultural exchange. The plan provides for more than two hundred and fifty projects, with twenty in the first month alone. The opening ceremony of the Year of Russia was held in March 2006 and was attended by President Putin and Chairman Hu Jintao. During the year, there will be many major events such as the Festival of Russian Culture, a Russian Federation exposition, investments week, a gala concert, scientific symposiums, exhibitions of Russian designers and artists, cultural, technical, and social book fairs, various

²⁰ *Renmin ribao* (Russian Edition), August 31, 2006.

²¹ “Chtoby narody Rossii i Kitaia bol’she i luchshe znali drug druga: interv’iu posla RF v KNR Sergeia Razova korrespondentu gazety,” *Renmin ribao* (Russian Edition), February 14, 2006.

sporting events, education exhibitions, show tours, and many other events. There have never been any events of this scale in the history of bilateral relations.

There is no need to say that the meaning of national years in China and Russia is enormous. National years contribute to the broadening of contact between the people and strengthen the social basis of Sino-Russian relations.

The decision to have “national years” aims to deepen mutual understanding between the people of both countries, encourage active cooperation in political, economic, scientific, and humanitarian fields as well as the promotion of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership. As Medvedev said, thanks to the joint effort, Russia and China have managed to set up direct contact between the general public of both countries. All cultural events—expositions, artistic tours, etc.—are made very affordable and accessible to the public.²² The leaders of both countries announced the holding of each other’s national years mainly to broaden contact between the people of China and Russia. These events will without doubt facilitate these tasks. As President Putin said, the national years will be truly memorable. Their main purpose is to bring the people closer, enrich the “palate” of Sino-Russian constructive cooperation with new ideas and projects, and eventually set the standard of the strategic partnership to a higher level.²³ Obviously, the broadening of cooperation in the areas of politics, economics, culture, and contact among people is in the interests of both states.

Secondly, the holding of national years should help in the development of broad cultural exchange and in the elimination of the irrational fear of a “Chinese peril.”

As China and Russia learn more about each other, the level of mutual trust will rise and the “Chinese peril” will eventually disappear. Until then, however, today’s task is to find a way to alleviate that view and prevent it from aggravating bilateral relations. As Chinese scholar Lu Nanquan pointed out, the development of China does not influence the development of other countries; China maintains a policy of good neighborly relations while bringing stability and prosperity to other countries.²⁴ The peaceful

²² *Renmin ribao* (Russian Edition), August 31, 2006.

²³ “Pis’mennoe interv’iu prezidenta RF Agentstvu *Xinhua*,” March 20, 2006.

²⁴ LU Nanquan, “Zhong E jinmao hezuo xianzhuang fenxi” [An Analysis of the

development of China relies on its own power, wide domestic market, full labor resources, powerful financial resources, and innovative mechanisms developed by reformers. China has an ancient culture, and its core is peace (和) not conflict. In fact, Chinese proverbs, especially from the teachings of Ru (儒) and Tao (道), saying that “peace is the greatest value” (和为贵) and that “a close neighbor is better than a far relative” (远亲不如近邻) are well-known throughout the world. Meanwhile, they are some of the most popular cultural notions in China itself.

Thirdly, the “national years” help shorten the distance between the young people of China and Russia and stabilize the long-term development of bilateral relations.

At the opening ceremony of the Year of Russia on March 21, 2006, President Putin pointed out that the mutual holding of national years in Russia and China would not just celebrate the achievements of both countries but would help the two countries reach a new level of Sino-Russian partnership.²⁵ Today, the strengthening of this partnership is not only in the interests of the two countries but also facilitates stability, peace, and prosperity in the region. However, the long-term development and stability of the bilateral relations depend on the youth. This is why it is important to hold all kinds of events aimed primarily at the youth, university students in particular, to support and encourage mutual understanding and communication. Igor Rogachev, a former ambassador to China and a well-known sinologist, has on many occasions pointed out that strengthening of contact between the young people of China and Russia will be a crucial factor in the development of Sino-Russian relations in the future.²⁶ National years are held exactly for this purpose: to help the people of both countries, especially the young, to understand the realities of modern Russian and Chinese societies.

Environment for Sino-Russian Trade and Economic Cooperation], in *Sbornik sochinenii IV-ogo mezhdunarodnogo foruma / Di si jie Zhong E quyu hezuo yu fazhan*, 115.

²⁵ “Vystupleniia HU Jintao i Vladimir Putin na torzhestvennoi tseremonii otkrytiia Goda Rossii v Kitae,” March 21, 2006, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/rus/wjdt/zyjh/t241789.htm>.

²⁶ JIN Xuegeng and WANG Zuokui, “Za proshedshee desiatiletie kitaisko-rossiiskie partnerskie otnosheniia strategicheskogo vzaimodeistviia stali bolee sodержatel’nymi,” March 23, 2006.

It is good news that Russia's national year events have already succeeded in deepening friendship and cooperation between China and Russia. In April 2006, sociology students from the Far East State University International Relations Institute conducted a survey among Vladivostok students entitled "Youth Views of China." According to the organizer of this survey Liliia Larina, a research fellow of the Far East Academy of Science Institute of History, the general results of the survey show that three quarters of respondents view China positively and are in favor of common good neighborly coexistence. The students of Vladivostok view modern Sino-Russian relations as positive: 30 percent called them friendly, 27 percent, diplomatic, 25 percent, mutually profitable, and only eight percent said they were tense.²⁷ A joint survey conducted by the Central Committee of the Communist Union of Chinese Youth at Qinghua University showed that 64.5 percent of Chinese students pay close attention to Russia.²⁸ Larina is right when she points out that the future of Sino-Russian relations largely depends on the attitude of the students of each country. Our task is to make this attitude positive.²⁹

The history and present state of Sino-Russian relations indicates that the importance of cultural exchange cannot be ignored. Countries have no constant friend but do have constant interests. If China and Russia succeed in forming a relationship that is mutually profitable, this would be a great achievement, not just for them but for the whole world.

²⁷ Liliia Larina, "Studenty Vladivostoka – o Kitaem i Kitaitakh," in *Sbornik sochinenii IV-ogo mezhdunarodnogo foruma / Di si jie Zhong E quyu hezuo yu fazhan*, 258–259.

²⁸ JIN and WANG, "Za proshedshee desiatiletie."

²⁹ Larina, "Studenty Vladivostoka."

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: China's Experiment in Multilateral Leadership

JIA Qingguo

One of the most prominent features of China's foreign policy behavior in recent years is its increasing activism in multilateral diplomacy. From the UN to the WTO, from the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to the six-party talks, from the Boao Forum to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, one sees Chinese leaders and diplomats busy working with their counterparts from other countries on a variety of international issues. This presents a sharp contrast to its behavior in the past when China stayed away from international disputes and only became seriously involved when some narrowly defined Chinese national interests such as the Taiwan problem and international criticism of China were involved. With the rise of China, China's role in multilateral diplomacy is also likely to increase. What is the nature of China's new multilateral activism? How effective is China's new active approach to multilateral cooperation? What are the implications for China's future approach to multilateral cooperation and for multilateral cooperation as a whole? These are questions that have attracted increasing international attention.

This article is designed to deal with one fairly recent aspect of China's role in international multilateral cooperation through studying China's experience with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): China's leadership in multilateral cooperation. It will examine the way the Chinese government has taken up a leadership role in the SCO, evaluate its effectiveness and problems as well as its implications for China and the

international community. As the first international organization named after a Chinese city, China has played an important role in the establishment and development of the SCO. What a rising China has done with the SCO is of great significance for us in understanding China's emerging role in international multilateral cooperation.

Leadership: A Definition

Before discussing China's leadership role in the SCO, one needs to clarify the concept of leadership. Leadership is a process by which a person or an actor manages an organization or influences others to take action. Effective leadership requires vision, will, resources, and skills. Good leaders should be able to come up with a vision that appeals not only to themselves, but also to the people that are supposed to be led. They should have the will to pursue such a vision even when confronted with difficulties, especially when it comes with certain risks and sacrifices to themselves. They should have sufficient resources or the ability to come up with sufficient resources to back up such a pursuit. They should also have sufficient skills to persuade and make others follow if necessary.

Likewise, in international relations, leading states should be able to come up with a vision that appeals not only to themselves but also to the international community. They should have the political will to pursue such a vision in the face of serious difficulties and take risks or make certain sacrifices if necessary. They should also be economically capable of sustaining such efforts. Finally, they should have the diplomatic skills to mobilize and sustain support for such a vision from other countries.

The SCO: An Evolving Enterprise

The SCO was officially founded on the basis of the Shanghai Five, a security mechanism initially established to deal with the border problems between China and four states of the former Soviet Union, including Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, plus Uzbekistan since June 2001. Since its founding, the SCO has made much progress despite ups and downs in its development.

At the beginning, the SCO appeared somewhat redundant. After all, the border problems had already been largely dealt with within the

Shanghai Five framework. If the Shanghai Five could deal with most of the border problems, it was certainly sufficient to manage the remaining border problems. Beyond the border problems, these countries did not appear to have much substantive to work with. Surely, terrorism, separatism, and religious fundamentalism, the so-called three forces, posed a threat to all of its members, and fighting against them was a newly announced goal of the SCO. However, at the time, it was largely viewed as a domestic concern. In principle, SCO members vow to respect each other's sovereignty and to adhere to the principle of noninterference in each other's internal affairs. Under these circumstances, cooperation in this area can only be limited, and the Shanghai Five appeared to be adequate. In addition, SCO members except Russia did not have much experience with multilateral diplomacy. It would take them some time to learn how to tap the potential of the SCO. Finally, SCO members were by and large poor countries and lacked the resources to support more ambitious goals. Russia was struggling to get back on its feet. China's economy was doing well. However, as a developing country undergoing some fundamental transitions, China did not have much to spare to support multilateral endeavors. Other central Asian states were also in various degrees of economic difficulty. For these and other reasons, the SCO was generally perceived as something politically symbolic, not as an international organization with much substance, let alone one with great promise.

The toothless response of the SCO to the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the US appeared to have confirmed the previous impression. In the wake of 9/11, the SCO did not take any substantive actions other than issuing a statement condemning the terrorist attacks. In any case, it did not have an established institutional mechanism to respond to the new challenge. The fate of the SCO became even more precarious following the US-led war against Afghanistan. Instead of taking collective action together, the SCO members chose to cooperate with the US on an individual basis. China and Russia rushed to demonstrate their respective support for the US war against terrorism. Other members of the SCO chose to work with the US in their respective ways, some even allowing the latter to use their military facilities and moreover setting up military bases in their own territories. For a time, many observers thought that the SCO was dead.

However, the SCO survived and even grew stronger and more active over time. Gradually, it has managed to develop various forms of

cooperation among its member states. To begin with, SCO members have managed to hold an annual summit meeting of the heads of state. Meanwhile, they have set up regular meetings among heads of government, ministers of foreign affairs, as well as officials at various levels such as heads of ministries and departments.

In the second place, the SCO has stepped up cooperation to fight against the “three forces.” In addition to closer cooperation among the police and intelligence institutions of the member states, the SCO has also engaged in military cooperation. Among other things, member states have conducted several joint military exercises of increasingly larger scale and with the alleged aim of combatting terrorist activities more effectively.¹

In the third place, the SCO has made much progress in expanding economic relations among its members. As the following table shows, while the absolute volume of trade between China and other members of the SCO remain moderate, they have grown substantially since the SCO’s establishment.

Increasing economic relations are accompanied by enhanced efforts to build transportation links between China and other SCO members. (1) Railways: in 1990, the rail line between Urumuqi (China) and Aqtoghay (Kazakhstan) was opened. Another line has been under negotiation

Trade between China and Other Members of the SCO² (In US\$1,000)

Country	2001	2005	Growth
Russia	10,670,550	29,103,140	173 %
Kazakhstan	1,288,370	6,810,320	429 %
Kyrgyzstan	118,860	972,200	718 %
Tajikistan	10,760	157,940	1,368 %
Uzbekistan	58,300	680,560	1,067 %

¹ John W. Garver, “China’s Influence in Central and South Asia: Is It Increasing?” in David Shambaugh ed., *Power Shift: China and Asia’s New Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 213.

² Constructed according to the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce, http://3w.mofcom.gov.cn/table/jckkj_2001/zygb/zygb2001_12c.html; <http://zhs.mofcom.gov.cn/tongji.shtml>.

between China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. (2) Highways: In addition to the five hard-surfaced roads crossing between Xinjiang and Kazakhstan, several highways are either under construction or under improvement.³ According to a *Xinhua* news report, China plans to invest 2.3 billion yuan (\$294 million) in the next five years to upgrade highways linking border trading areas in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.⁴ On top of this, an agreement to build a highway linking nine Asian countries—South Korea, China, Japan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Azerbaijan—took effect on July 4, 2005.⁵ (3) Airlines: After years of growth, China already has thirty-eight regular passenger flights with member states of the CAREC (Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation).⁶ These plus efforts to build oil pipelines and telecommunication optical fiber cables are laying a firm, solid foundation for further rapid expansion of economic relations among SCO member states.

In the fourth place, the SCO has set up some institutional mechanisms to facilitate and sustain cooperation. As of now, the SCO has established two permanent institutional bodies in this regard: the Secretariat in Beijing and the Regional Antiterrorist Structure in Tashkent. It has also given its blessing to the creation of the SCO Business Council and Interbank Association.⁷ More recently, the SCO opened a forum in Moscow designed to involve experts and officials in discussing and developing policy for the organization.

Finally, as a result of these and other aspects of cooperation, SCO members identify more firmly with and are more committed to the organization than ever before. This is especially true in the past few years when the so-called “color revolutions” in the region led to instability in the member states of the SCO. “Color revolutions” are generally seen in these countries as a result of efforts on the part of the US to put their men in power. Fear of domestic instability drove the governments of the central Asian states to turn to the SCO for support.⁸

³ Garver, “China’s Influence in Central and South Asia,” 206–208; <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/6/18F4BC0C-94AA-4873-A4AB-61D9FF33DB93.html>.

⁴ <http://english.cri.cn/3130/2007/01/01/262@180471.htm>.

⁵ http://www.unescap.org/unis/eye_on_unescap/issue46_7july2005.doc.

⁶ http://www.unescap.org/unis/eye_on_unescap/issue46_7july2005.doc.

⁷ <http://www.coscos.org.cn/200607181.htm>.

⁸ http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=325&language_id=1.

Over time, the progress that the SCO made was significant enough to prompt some neighboring countries including Mongolia, India, Pakistan, and Iran to seek membership in the organization. As of now, these countries have already become observers of the organization. Even the US has applied for observer status as it does not want to be excluded from what it believes to be an increasingly significant regional organization.⁹

In part for the previous reasons, some people believe that the SCO is becoming a formidable international organization. As David Wall, an expert on the region at the University of Cambridge's East Asia Institute, put it, "An expanded SCO would control a large part of the world's oil and gas reserves and nuclear arsenal. . . . It would essentially be an OPEC with bombs."¹⁰

To be sure, the SCO is still a relatively weak institution if compared to such international organizations such as NATO. "The basic picture is that the SCO is not as important as people in Washington think," says Daniel Kimmage, an expert on Central Asia at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. He argues, "If you take NATO as your standard for organizational effectiveness, . . . the SCO is not even close yet."¹¹

People may have different views as to the influence of the SCO as an international institution in the days to come. Almost without exception, they all agree that the importance of the SCO has grown, and that it can no longer be ignored.

Crossing the River by Feeling for Stones along the Way: China's Role

As one of the initiators of the SCO, China has played a significant role in its founding and subsequent development. In retrospect, it appears that China did not, and still does not, have a grand strategy or sufficient influence to steer the SCO to its current position and beyond. Instead, China's expectation and capacity to influence the development of the organization evolves with changing circumstances over time. China's

⁹ <http://www.capmag.com/article.asp?ID=4699>.

¹⁰ http://www.cfr.org/publication/10883/rise_of_the_shanghai_cooperationorganization.html.

¹¹ http://www.cfr.org/publication/10883/rise_of_the_shanghai_cooperationorganization.html.

input reminds people of the Deng Xiaoping's erstwhile famous saying, "*mozhe shitou guohe*" [crossing the river by feeling for stones along the way].

At the beginning, China saw the SCO as a useful mechanism for a number of reasons. First, it expected it to help consolidate the achievements of the Shanghai Five on border settlement and security confidence-building measures along the borders between China and its neighbors in the SCO. Second, it expected that the SCO would facilitate the settlement of the remaining border problems such as the disputed islands in the Amur and Argun Rivers with Russia. Third, it hoped that the SCO would help alleviate the mounting security pressures on China from the Bush administration, especially following the Hainan air collision incident. Finally, China hoped that the organization could expand its mission into other areas of cooperation such as joint efforts against the "three forces," economic relations, and cultural exchanges. Its hope on the expansion of cooperation, upon reflection, was limited. For instance, it did not expect much progress in joint efforts against the "three forces," nor did it make much effort in this regard, just like other members of the SCO. The agreement on joint efforts against the "three forces" appeared to be signed more as a way to demonstrate political support to each other in their own respective fight against these forces than a significant step toward collective action under the SCO. Thus, while the SCO members agreed to fight against the "three forces" as early as June 2001, the SCO did not do much in this regard and found itself incapable of an immediate and meaningful response to the challenges of 9/11.

Over time, however, China's expectations of the SCO escalated. First, it attached more importance to cooperation in fighting against the "three forces" in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Then, it made greater efforts to promote trade and investment among SCO members. As economic relations expanded and the energy issue loomed larger, it began to make more efforts to promote cooperation in infrastructure building and energy cooperation among SCO members. More recently, as the international profile of the SCO increases, China has begun to use the organization as a platform for advocating a Chinese version of multilateral cooperation.

Along with the rise in expectations, the Chinese government's vision for the SCO has also changed. When the SCO was founded, it championed the "Shanghai Spirit," allegedly a new security concept, a new model of interstate relations and regional cooperation. It is based on

the principles of nonalignment, openness to the rest of the world, mutual trust and benefits, equality, consultation, respect for diversified civilizations, and mutual development.¹² And, as the organization's charter notes, the SCO is not aimed at any other country or international organization.¹³ In general, there is a code of conduct of interstate relations instead of value-based goals and objectives.

Five years later, China's expectations of the SCO have grown beyond this and are more substantive and more ambitious than ever. In his speech at the 2005 SCO summit, President Hu Jintao stated that China hopes that the SCO can better deal with challenges, advance regional development, maintain regional stability, and fulfill common prosperity through deepening and expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation of all forms among SCO member states.¹⁴ On top of this, more recently, China began to call for building a "harmonious region with sustainable development and common prosperity."¹⁵

Escalating expectations have been accompanied by increasing political commitment on the part of the Chinese government to the SCO. With the passage of time, the Chinese government has attached increasing importance to the organization. To the Chinese government, the SCO is not only a source of security in an uncertain and threatening world, but increasingly, an opportunity for an expanding its market, diversifying its energy supplies, demonstrating to the world the benign nature of China's rise, and advocating a new type of multilateral cooperation.¹⁶ Consequently, China has invested an increasing amount of time and resources to make the SCO a success. Among other things, China pledged nearly \$1 billion in loans to the SCO Central Asian members.¹⁷

¹² Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, <http://www.sectSCO.org/html/00088.html> (August 15, 2006).

¹³ Shanghai Cooperation Organization Charter, Article 2, <http://www.sectSCO.org/html/00096.html> (August 15, 2006).

¹⁴ "Hu Jintao Attends the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit and Delivers an Important Speech," July 5, 2005, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/hzxcfelseng/t202787.htm>.

¹⁵ "Chinese president anticipates successful SCO summit," *People's Daily*, May 31, 2006, http://english.people.com.cn/200605/31/eng20060531_269829.html.

¹⁶ One that attaches importance to equality, respect for each other, and consensus and that downplays differences.

¹⁷ "SCO provides big opportunities for business," *People's Daily*, June 14, 2006, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200606/14/eng20060614_273872.html (accessed August

As China's economy grows, the amount of resources China can tap to facilitate its desires and expectations for the SCO has also expanded. With a vast foreign currency reserve, a large and rapidly expanding market, and rapidly rising international political clout, China has the increasing capacity to help other members of the SCO. Thus, in addition to the \$1 billion in loans mentioned previously, China is also encouraging its companies to expand operations into the region.

China's diplomatic skills, especially knowledge and skills to manage multilateral cooperation, have improved. This has been especially obvious over the past few years, in which a new generation of Chinese diplomats with both a good command of foreign languages and ample knowledge of international affairs has emerged, and now plays a significant role in the running of China's diplomacy. In part as a result of their efforts, China's international image and influence has significantly improved.

China's Leadership in SCO: An Interim Assessment

Evaluating China's leadership role in the development of the SCO, one gets the following impressions: (1) China's leadership capability has been growing; (2) its leadership behavior has been maturing; (3) its leadership role remains limited; and (4) its leadership holds much promise.

China's leadership capability in the SCO has been growing both in terms of the resources China can come up with and in terms of the vision, political will, and diplomatic skills now it commands. First, China's economic capacity has expanded substantially over the first five years of the SCO. Because China's economy has been growing at a much faster pace than those of other member states of the SCO, China's share of the total GDP of the SCO member states has become much larger than before. This, coupled with growing interdependence among the SCO member states, has placed China in a better position to influence the development of the SCO than ever before.

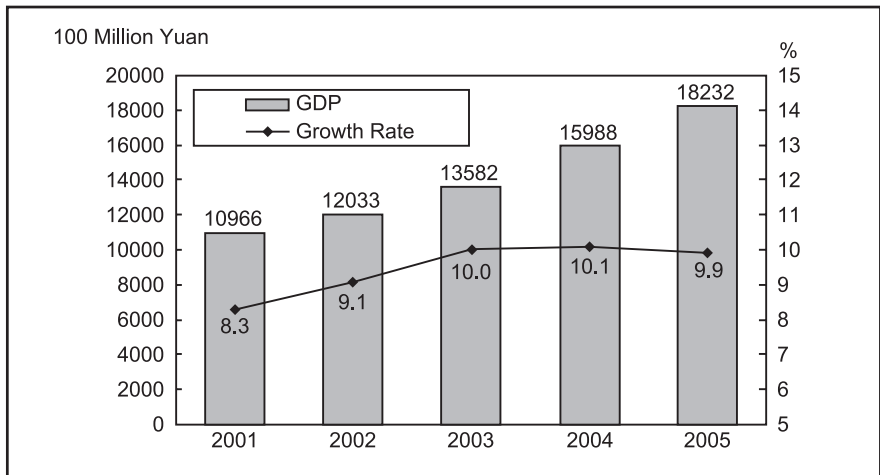
Second, China's diplomatic skills have improved over time. In recent years, Chinese diplomats have earned international respect for their fine performance in cultivating good relations with the outside world and in improving China's image abroad. This also applies to their performance in

the SCO. Finally, as discussed in the previous passages, China is attaching more importance to the SCO and is coming up with a new vision for the organization such as a “harmonious region with sustainable development and common prosperity.”

China’s leadership role in the SCO is maturing and becoming more sophisticated. Over time, China sees the SCO both as a means to promote regional security and as a vehicle to promote regional cooperation in many other areas. China no longer merely thinks of the SCO as a mechanism to enhance the individual interests of SCO member states, especially those of China. It also regards it an instrument to push for positive changes in the region. Although China does regard the SCO as a mechanism to balance the US presence in Central Asia, it does not try, nor wish, to make it an anti-US institution.

China’s leadership role in the SCO remains limited for a number of reasons. First, the vision China can come up with for the SCO at the moment remains abstract and inadequately defined due to its inability

China’s GDP and Its Growth (2001–2005)¹⁸ (in 100 million yuan)



¹⁸ http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjgb/ndtjgb/qgndtjgb/t20060227_402307796.htm.

to offer a well-articulated set of values that appeals both to the Chinese and other people of the SCO member states. Second, as a developing country in the midst of drastic and fundamental transformations, the resources China can come up with for promoting SCO cooperation are still quite limited. Finally, despite the drastic improvements, Chinese knowledge and skills in leading multilateral cooperation remain largely insufficient.

China's leadership role in the SCO is promising in part because the SCO has already had a good start and in part because China itself is likely to continue its current rise and become more mature in multilateral leadership.

Russia's Multilateral Diplomacy in the Process of Asia-Pacific Regional Integration: The Significance of ASEAN* for Russia

KATO Mihoko

Introduction

In recent years, Russia's multilateral diplomacy has been intensifying in the Asia-Pacific region. Russia became a full member of international nongovernmental organizations through the Russian National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (RNCPEC) and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) in 1992, and the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) in 1994. Regarding intergovernmental cooperation, Russia has participated in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since its inauguration in 1994 and was accepted as a full member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1998. Moreover, Russia was a founding member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001, and has taken part in the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear

* Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It was established in 1967 with five original countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) to promote regional reconciliation in the wake of Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia. Brunei Darussalam joined in 1984, Vietnam, in 1995, Laos and Myanmar, in 1997, and Cambodia, in 1999.

program since 2003. This tendency is one of the main aspects of post-Cold War Russian foreign policy toward the Asia-Pacific region.

Since the late 1980s, the Soviet Union and Russia have sought to integrate Siberia and the Far East into the process of Asia-Pacific regional economic cooperation with domestic economic reconstruction. In particular, Russia has shown great interest in APEC membership, an organization that aims to facilitate trade and investment liberalization within the major economies in Asia-Pacific. On the other hand, as Boris Yeltsin stated in South Korea in 1992, Russia's security priority was placed on Northeast Asia, where Russia faced unresolved territorial issues with China and Japan, and instability on the Korean Peninsula. Russia repeatedly proposed the building of a multilateral conflict regulation system in Northeast Asia.

However, Russia's participation in the regional cooperation framework was realized in its involvement with the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1994. Then, ASEAN members pursued the building of a new security mechanism to respond to new, emerging threats in the aftermath of the collapse of the Cold War structure, especially China's aggressive policy toward the territorial disputes in the South China Sea. ASEAN countries needed to establish a security cooperation system, including all major powers and former communist parties, to avoid the emergence of a dominant power in Southeast Asia. In this context, Russia was needed to build the new security framework. Until the late 1990s, Russia had been excluded from APEC due to poor economic linkage in this region, domestic socio-economic turmoil, and the stagnation of territorial negotiations with Japan. In this situation, a series of ASEAN conferences, such as the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC)¹ and ARF were the only places in which Russia could participate in confidence-building measures and make contact at the ministerial level in Asia-Pacific.

In November 1997, Russia's entry into APEC was decided by political judgment among major powers, regardless of the economic criteria; the United States agreed to Russia's entry into APEC as

¹ ASEAN-PMC is one of the most important of ASEAN's conferences with major economic partners that were called "dialogue partners." It has been held every year for two days since 1979. The general meeting, between the foreign ministries of ASEAN and the dialogue partners and representatives of EC (EU), and individual meetings, between the foreign ministries of ASEAN and a dialogue partner, are held during these conferences.

compensation for NATO enlargement. China and Russia had just finished the demarcation work of the Sino-Russian eastern border. The Japanese government then pursued the normalization of relations with Moscow. Russia was accepted in APEC under a “temporary” accord among the four major powers. The middle powers such as ASEAN and Australia were concerned that APEC would be dominated by Japan, China, the United States, and Russia.

After the Asian financial crisis, economic cooperation was strengthened based on the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) among ASEAN and China, South Korea, and Japan. Recently, these countries are seeking a way to create an East Asia community. Russia has expressed its willingness to become a member of the East Asia Summit (EAS). The most important criterion for Russia is “to have substantive relations with ASEAN.” This time, Russia cannot enter through the back door. President Vladimir Putin has been enhancing political relations with ASEAN since the latter part of his first term. In recent years, Russia upgraded relations with ASEAN by signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC, 2004) and by inaugurating the annual Russia-ASEAN Summit (2005). To become a full member of this region, Russia must expand its economic ties with not only Northeast Asian countries but also Southeast Asian countries.

What are the meanings of Russia’s approach to ASEAN? In post-Cold War Asia-Pacific, neither the multilateral security system nor the efforts of community building such as the East Asian Summit were led by major Northeast Asian countries, but by ASEAN. Focusing on Russia’s political relations with ASEAN as a whole and its entry into APEC,² this article describes the process through which Russia has been accepted by the participating countries of existing regional cooperation frameworks, and explains the regional and subregional factors that permit Russia to join the movement toward regional security and economic cooperation.

² APEC began as an informal ministerial-level dialogue group with 12 members (Japan, the Republics of Korea, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, US). China, Hong Kong, and Chinese Taipei entered in 1991, Papua New Guinea and Mexico, in 1993, Chile, in 1994, and Russia, Vietnam, and Peru, in 1998.

Russia and ASEAN in the Early 1990s

Debate over National Interests

The Soviet Union and Russia gave initial emphasis to relations with Western countries, paying less attention to the striking economic progress in the Asia-Pacific region. It has been demonstrated that the importance of Asia in Russian foreign policy was gradually underlined by Sergei Stankevich, a former presidential adviser, and academics connected with the old Soviet institutes and think tanks devoted to the study of Asian affairs as criticism against extreme pro-Western foreign policy increased.³

Russia was in political and economic turmoil shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union and was dependent on Western aid for the transformation from socialism to a market economy and democracy. Boris Yeltsin, the first president of the Russian Federation, made the transformation and the reconstruction of Russia's economy his first domestic priority. Although his first foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, assumed the task of clarifying the basic principles of Russian foreign policy, there was debate about national identity and the priorities of Russian foreign policy among the political elites.

Kozyrev, who had spent sixteen years in the Department of International Organization of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and put the "new thinking" policy into practice under Mikhail Gorbachev's administration, argued that post-Soviet Russia could best protect its state interests by closely aligning itself with the institutions and policies of industrialized democracies.⁴ Kozyrev and his advocates recognized Western democracies as their model and partner for Russia, and believed that Russia should abandon the illusion of playing a special role as a "bridge" between Europe and Asia. They also thought that Russia should avoid playing a leading role in economic integration or peacekeeping operations with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) because the reintegration of Russia's economy with members of CIS would decelerate economic reform and participation in European economic

³ Oles M. Smolansky, "Russia and the Asia-Pacific Region: Policies and Polemics," in Stephen J. Blank and Alvin Z. Rubinstein, eds., *Imperial Decline: Russia's Changing Role in Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 8–9.

⁴ Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 107–108.

institutions.⁵ Such a prominent Westernizing line impelled by Yeltsin and Kozyrev, however, was not welcomed by Western countries, and Russia was unable to draw economic assistance to the extent expected. Not surprisingly, such a servile foreign policy that begs for foreign aid did not gain internal support.

Criticism against Westernism (or Atlanticism) developed in disputes over the definition of post-Soviet Russia's national interests among officials in government and academic institutions from the spring to the summer of 1992. Most critics made much of the new boundaries and new geopolitical environment that resulted from the independence of the former Soviet republics. These "Eurasianists" thought that the priority of Russia's foreign policy was to defend the Russian population and Russian assets left in the states of the former Soviet Union. In particular, Stankevich advocated that Russia was indeed separate and distinct from the West and did have a special mission to serve as a bridge between Western and Eastern civilization. Stankevich's idea was not a rejection of the Western world, but meant to seek a more balanced foreign policy in its relations with the rest of the world. Accordingly, Stankevich argued, Russia would draw, at best, the position of junior partner in its relations with the United States, Japan, and Europe, but there would be many more chances among second-echelon countries in such regions as Latin America, Africa, South Europe, and Asia (India, China, and Southeast Asia).⁶ In this context, Russia could seek to play a unique role as a great power.

With this background, it became clear that international organizations such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) could not play a leading role in the resolution of conflicts that broke out in Predoniester, Abkhazia, Tajikistan, Armenia, and Azerbaijan from the spring of 1992. Given this situation, Kozyrev's Atlanticism was exposed to strong criticism and turned in a diplomatic direction toward advocating Russian rights and assets in the former Soviet Union (the near abroad) and improved relations with Eastern Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa, and the

⁵ Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, 2nd ed. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 125–126.

⁶ Sergei Stankevich, "Derzhava v poiskakh sebja: zametki o rossiiskoi vneshnei politike," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, March 28, 1992.

Middle East as well as Western countries.⁷ Under such circumstances, the direction of Russian foreign policy toward the Asia-Pacific region gradually became apparent from the middle of 1992. The first foreign policy concept approved by Yeltsin in April 1993 claimed Russia's rights and responsibilities in the near abroad, and the securing of Russia's great power status in the balance of power in the multilateral control system of the world economy and in international affairs.⁸ As for the Asia-Pacific region, Russia emphasized the necessity of ensuring its independent role in the regional political system. For this purpose, priority was given to establishing a more balanced and stable relationship with the United States, China, and Japan.⁹ In this context, cooperation with ASEAN was considered to be useful for its full participation in the economic and political process in Asia-Pacific.¹⁰ Although the role of Southeast Asia in Russian foreign policy was uncertain in the early 1990s, as the then vice minister of foreign affairs Aleksandr Panov asserted, a "middle power" like ASEAN began to be recognized as a vital player in the decision-making process regarding regional problems in Asia-Pacific in 1994.¹¹

Russia's Debut in Southeast Asia

The view that Russia has more attractive and important partners in the Asia-Pacific region than members of ASEAN has been shared by Russian officials and foreign policy experts. That is, Russia's security interests in China, Japan, and the Korean Peninsula are geographically close. Russian foreign policy experts acknowledged that ASEAN was becoming a considerable factor in economic and political relations in the Asia-Pacific region, especially noting that the total ASEAN GDP exceeded \$300 million in 1992 (\$208 million in 1981), and that the overall value of external trade accounted for \$140 million in 1990 (\$70.1 million in 1980). Nevertheless, they considered that Russia has attached and will

⁷ Andrei Kozyrev, "Rossiia: god minuvshii i god nastupivshii," *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, no. 1–2 (1993): 3–5.

⁸ "Kontseptsiiia vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1992 g.," in A. V. Torkunov, ed., *Vneshniaia politika i bezopasnost' sovremennoi Rossii, 1991–2002 v 4-x tomakh*, tom 4, *Dokumenty* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002), 23–27.

⁹ "Kontseptsiiia vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1992 g.," 38–39.

¹⁰ "Kontseptsiiia vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1992 g.," 40.

¹¹ Doklad "Aleksandr Panov," *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, no. 23–24 (1994): 34.

attach much less importance to ASEAN countries than China or Japan.¹² Contrary to such a prediction, Russia and ASEAN have been gradually evolving dialogue relations since Russia was elevated to a full dialogue partner of ASEAN in July 1996.

Russia was invited to the 25th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in 1992 as a guest of ASEAN together with China and Vietnam.¹³ Kozyrev articulated Russia's newly emerged perception on security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region in front of the countries of this region. The key points of his speech were:

- It is necessary to restrict the scale of naval exercises and refuse them in the international straits and sea areas where shipping and fishery are centered;
- It is necessary to start multilateral dialogue on building a crisis-control structure in order to prevent the rise of military tension;
- It is necessary to arrange the formation of an international naval force to ensure *mare liberum*;
- Russia will continue to be stationed in the Russian military base in Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam;
- Russia is willing to develop cooperation in the military and military-technological area with members of ASEAN with the aim of supporting their security.¹⁴

Although Kozyrev referred to the necessity of rapid expansion of economic cooperation with Asia-Pacific states in advance of AMM,¹⁵ his

¹² B. Nikolaev, "Psikhologicheskii bar'er preodolevaetsia," *Aziia i Afrika segodnia*, no. 7 (1993) : 47–51.

¹³ Malaysia suggested approving the Soviet Union and China as dialogue partners of ASEAN and inviting the foreign ministers of both countries to a Post-Ministerial Conference in July 1992. However, some members of ASEAN and the existing dialogue partners raised objections to the suggestion. So, the Soviet Union and China ended up attending only AMM as guests of the government of Malaysia. In 1992, the two countries were raised to the status of guests of ASEAN, See YAMAKAGE Susumu, *ASEAN Pawa: Aja Taiheiyō no chukaku he* [*Changing ASEAN: Self-transformation and Regime-formation*] (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1997), 296.

¹⁴ *Krasnaia zvezda*, July 25, 1992.

¹⁵ *Krasnaia zvezda*, July 25, 1992.

speech primarily dealt with security concerns. Russia's chief purpose in Southeast Asia was to strengthen mutual economic ties as Gorbachev declared in his July 1986 Vladivostok speech, but Russia had no trump cards for playing an active role in economic cooperation in this region.¹⁶ Thus, the Russian foreign ministry took the policy of ensuring its status as guarantor of security in Southeast Asia, taking advantage of the assets of the past—that is, its positions as a permanent member of the UN Security Council as well as a military power in Asia, allowing security relations to follow economic ties.¹⁷

Russian troops were virtually withdrawing from Cam Ranh Bay at that time. The strategic value of the Cam Ranh Bay naval base was significantly reduced after Gorbachev strove to improve relations with neighboring countries in Asia. He announced at the UN in December 1988 that the partial withdrawal from Cam Ranh Bay was part of a general reduction in Soviet forces in Asia and around the globe. Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Soviet foreign minister, said, “The day when there will be no Soviet military presence in Asia beyond the Soviet Union is near.”¹⁸ The Vietnamese foreign minister also predicted that all Soviet troops would leave the country by 1992.¹⁹

Several factors lay behind the policy change over the Cam Ranh naval base. First of all, some political elites insisted on keeping the former Soviet Union's military presence in the world for as long as possible. The first meeting to adjust the Security Council convened on May 20 1991, prior to the decree of the “Creation of the Security Council of the Russian Federation,” which was issued by President Yeltsin on June 3, 1991.²⁰ The program of Russia's national security that was prepared at the

¹⁶ Total Russia-ASEAN trade was \$638.1 million in 1993. It was only about 0.1 percent of total ASEAN trade in 1993 (\$429,948 million). See *ASEAN Statistical Yearbook*, 2005, 70–73. For a figure of ASEAN-Russia trade in 1993–1996, see Amado M. Mendoza Jr., “ASEAN's Role in Integrating Russia into the Asia Pacific Economy,” WATANABE Koji, ed., *Engaging Russia in Asia Pacific* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1999), 134.

¹⁷ *Krasnaia zvezda*, July 25, 1992.

¹⁸ “United States Lauds Soviet Military Reduction in Vietnam,” *The Associated Press*, January 19, 1990.

¹⁹ “Vietnam Faces Crisis in Loss of Soviet and East European Aid,” *The Associated Press*, July 9, 1990.

²⁰ *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, July 31, 1992.

meeting mentioned that it was necessary for Russia's national security interests to deploy troops in potential tinderboxes around the world. According to the program, Russia should appear as a counterbalance to the United States, which is currently seeking leadership on the global stage independently.²¹ Given the reduction in defense expenditure after the Soviet breakup and the serious damage to the Russian Pacific Fleet, it seems that the view as mentioned in the program is unrealistic. However, great power ambitions remained within the Yeltsin administration, and they supported the maintenance of the outlying military base.²² In addition, Moscow intended to link its military presence at Cam Ranh Bay to the issue of Hanoi's 10-billion-ruble debt to the Soviet Union that Russia inherited.²³

On the other hand, for Vietnam, China was regarded as the greatest threat at that time. Military aggression and oil exploration in the Spratly region of the South China Sea had been conducted since the beginning of 1992,²⁴ which provoked a sense of crisis from Vietnam as well as the ASEAN states. Under these circumstances, it was assumed that Vietnam would ask Russia to maintain its Cam Ranh base.²⁵ However, the Vietnamese government was actually faced with a dilemma. Russia's foreign policy priority was to join ASEAN and improve relations with the

²¹ *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, July 31, 1992.

²² Kozyrev said himself that Russia should abandon its status as a superpower and become a vigorous stimulus for the expansion of cooperation with the Asia-Pacific states developing dynamically. *Izvestiia*, July 22, 1992.

²³ Ian Storey and Carlyle A. Thayer, "Cam Ranh Bay: Past Imperfect, Future Conditional," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 23, no. 3 (2001): 458.

²⁴ The Spratly Islands include over 400 tiny islands, reefs, shoals, and sandbanks in the South China Sea. The Spratly Islands are a potential tinderbox due to their being a natural resource-rich region. China, Taiwan, and Vietnam lay claim to all of the islands, while the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei each claim various islands. In February 1992, the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress enacted a law on territorial waters, reasserting sovereignty over islands in the East China Sea and the South China Sea as well as the right to take all necessary measures to prevent and stop the so-called harmful passage of foreign vessels through its territorial waters. See Mickael Leifer, ed., *Dictionary of the Modern Politics of South-East Asia*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2001), 256–257. China occupied a reef in the Spratly region in February 1992, and signed an oil exploration agreement with a US corporation for 25,000 square kilometers at the edge of the Spratly group only some 150 kilometers southeast of the Vietnamese coastal islands in May. *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, July 23, 1992.

²⁵ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, July 23, 1992.

United States and China. Some Vietnamese political elites thought that the military presence of Russia might block their approach for the normalization of relations with the United States.²⁶ On the one hand, there was serious concern within the Vietnamese government about the modernization of the Chinese navy and its aggressive policy toward the South China Sea. In addition, the Vietnamese hoped to turn the Cam Ranh naval base into a commercial base like the Philippines' successful transformation of the former US naval base at Subic Bay.²⁷ Hanoi and Moscow established working-level talks on whether Russia should be able to use the bay in 1992. Russia continued to claim that it should inherit the Soviet-Vietnam agreement that required Vietnam to provide Soviet naval fleets with logistical supplies such as fuel and water free of charge until 2004,²⁸ but it was not until Putin's accession that the issue of Cam Ranh Bay was settled. Under such circumstances, Russia formed closer political and economic relations with the ASEAN states than with Vietnam in the 1990s.²⁹

Russia's Participation in Asia-Pacific Regionalism

From the beginning of 1996, Gorbachev began to pay particular attention to the Asia-Pacific region. While the Soviet's economic growth had started to decline in the 1970s, dynamic economic and political change was taking place in this region. Since the 1980s, multilateral economic cooperation organizations such as the Pacific Economic Cooperation

²⁶ Storey and Thayer, "Cam Ranh Bay," 458.

²⁷ "Vietnam looks to Subic as model for former Soviet base," Kyodo News Service, March 14, 1994. US forces returned the Subic naval base to the Philippines in November 1992.

²⁸ "Vietnam, Russia still at odds on Cam Ranh Bay," Kyodo News Service, March 29, 1993.

²⁹ Compared to the previous year, total Russia-Vietnam trade decreased by 58 percent in 1992. However, Singapore and Thailand each expanded foreign trade with Russia about 2.5 fold from the previous year, see *Roshia Too boeki chosa geppo* [Monthly bulletin on trade with Russia & East Europe] (August 1992), 1–4. Singapore was Russia's biggest trade partner in Southeast Asia until 1997. After the settlement of the Cam Ranh naval base issue in 2002, trade between the two countries doubled in 2002–2004, and Vietnam again became Russia's biggest trade partner in this region, see *Tamozhennaia statistika vneshnei torgovli Rossiiskoi Federatsii: sbornik*, (1998): 8; tom. 1 (2003): 7–10; tom. 1 (2005): 7–9).

Council (PECC) started to be formed. It aimed to deepen economic ties among industrialized capitalist countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, and the United States, and promote their economic assistance to developing countries in Southeast Asia. It contributed to the formulation of the Asia-Pacific economic zone whose total population accounted for over half of the world's total and whose share of the world's total GNP had increased over the previous 25 years. The Asia-Pacific economic zone is emerging as a center of global economy, replacing the European economic zone.

Gorbachev argued that the Soviet Union needed to make efficient use of its bountiful natural resources in Siberia and the Soviet Far East for the development of the Soviet economy. In addition, it was necessary for the Soviet Union to use the great economic and technological potential of the Asia-Pacific region and to strengthen economic, trade, and technological cooperation with it to accelerate the development of Siberia and the Soviet Far East.³⁰ In fact, Gorbachev set up the Soviet National Committee on Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (SNCAPEC) in 1988 in order to overcome the difficulties impeding Soviet's integration into the Asia-Pacific region by joining PECC and PBEC, which were predecessors of APEC. The first chairman of SNCAPEC was Evgenii Primakov who subsequently became Russia's foreign minister in January 1996. Primakov thought that if the goal of SNCAPEC was to be achieved, Russia's Far East and Eastern Siberia had to fit naturally into the global economic relations of the Asia-Pacific region, although certainly not at the expense of the country's territorial integrity.³¹

Russia and the ASEAN Regional Forum

The disputes over the objective, the priority of national interests, and the direction of their foreign and security policies converged on one that assimilated the rational aspects of both Westernizers and pragmatic nationalists by the end of 1992. In a speech at the National Assembly

³⁰ See the political report by Gorbachev at the 27th Party Congress. *Pravda*, February 26, 1986.

³¹ Evgenii Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, trans. Felix Rosenthal (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 39. The committee changed its name from SNCAPEC to the Russian National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (RNCPEC) in August 1992. For the history and the activities of RNCPEC, see <http://www.rncpec.fareast.ru/index.htm>.

during his visit to South Korea in November 1992, President Yeltsin stated, “Geopolitically, our country is an integral part of the Asia-Pacific region, but today’s situation is inadequate. We intend to become a full member of the dynamic regional economy and join the political and cultural rapprochement.” In particular, he stressed, “We are ready to participate in important multilateral interactions, such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.”³² Thus, President Yeltsin announced Russia’s intention to enter APEC officially. However, Russia’s first participation in regional cooperation was not achieved in the economic sphere, but in the security sphere.

Then, ASEAN sought a way to use established forums, particularly the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference, to promote external dialogue on enhancing security in the region as well as intra-ASEAN dialogue on ASEAN security cooperation.³³ ASEAN members recognized the need to respond to the profound international political changes that had occurred since the end of the Cold War. They were concerned about a new threat from China—the hard policy toward the territorial disputes in the South China Sea that followed the collapse of the Cold War structure in Southeast Asia,—that is, the reduction in US and Soviet military forces from the Philippines and Vietnam. ASEAN members were afraid that regional powers like China, Japan, and India would aspire to fill the power vacuum resulting from the two superpowers scaling down their presence in the region. Therefore, ASEAN’s heads of member governments needed the wider multilateral security system joined by external powers to ensure and balance regional stability.

At the 26th AMM in July 1993, ASEAN members gave up on using the ASEAN-PMC as a security cooperation framework, but did decide to hold a new forum, the ASEAN Regional Forum, in 1994.

At the meeting of ASEAN and ASEAN-PMC senior officials in May 1993, Singapore, with strong backing from Australia and the United States, went further and recommended expanding the existing ASEAN-PMC structure. There was some resistance from Indonesia, Thailand, and Japan, who were nervous about moving beyond the familiar context of the Western-aligned ASEAN-PMC. In the event, the meeting recommended the additional

³² *Diplomaticeskii vestnik*, no. 12 (1992): 39.

³³ *Singapore Declaration of 1992*, January 28, 1992, ASEAN, <http://www.aseansec.org/5120.htm>.

membership of China and Russia, with which ASEAN had begun to develop a consultative partner relationship in July 1991, and of Vietnam and Laos, which had been accorded observer status within ASEAN-together with Papua New Guinea, a long-time observer-on acceding to the Association's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in July 1992.³⁴

At the meeting, Russian foreign minister Kozyrev expressed interest in institutionalizing Russia-ASEAN relations and founding a Russia-ASEAN committee similar to the one between ASEAN and its dialogue partners.³⁵ Russia and China were invited to the first ASEAN Regional Forum as consultative partners.

By participating member of ARF, Russia was now in a position to be involved in the consultation of political and security issues. In 1993, ministers of APEC members agreed to defer consideration of additional members for three years with the objective of increasing APEC's effectiveness.³⁶ It meant that Russia was excluded from the process of deepening economic cooperation in APEC. Furthermore, US president Bill Clinton upgraded the importance of Asia in his first year in office, while proposing the creation of a "New Pacific Community" at the G7 Tokyo Summit in July 1993. Although his efforts to convene a summit with the leaders of the other 14 members of APEC failed, informal summits of APEC had become regularized since 1993. The informal summit's topics were largely economic, but the involvement of heads of governments added political implications to APEC. The subregional forums held by ASEAN provided Russia with a chance to commit to regional affairs and build confidence among the members at the ministerial level.

As Kozyrev expressed in his speech in the Russia-ASEAN meeting of AMM in 1994, Russia's primary objective of the Asia-Pacific policy was the stabilization of the eastern border, the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the inclusion of Siberia and the Russian

³⁴ Michael Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum: Extending ASEAN's Model of Regional Security* (London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996), 21–22.

³⁵ *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, no. 15–16 (1993): 20.

³⁶ APEC Ministerial Meeting, *Joint Statement*, November 17–19, 1993, http://www.apec.org/apec/ministerial_statements/annual_ministerial/1993_5th_apec_ministerial.html.

Far East into the economic system in this region.³⁷ Regarding the regional security vision, Russia sought to create multilateral security dialogue mechanisms both at the regional level and subregional level. Russia particularly expected to create a conflict regulation system, such as meetings of multilateral experts on the nuclear nonproliferation problem in Northeast Asia (especially on the Korean Peninsula), and an Asia-Pacific center for the study of strategic problems.³⁸ Behind the emphasis on multilateral cooperation was the recognition that Russia's isolation from both the near abroad and far abroad had become a national security threat to creating a favorable international climate for Russia's economic reconstruction.

Emerging Partnership between Russia and ASEAN

Under Evgenii Primakov, Russia's foreign minister from January 1996 to September 1998, Russia's relations with ASEAN as well as with China and Japan strengthened. Primakov declared that the Asia-Pacific direction for Russia had a clear objective. The first was the development of mutually beneficial relations and partnerships with all countries of the region. The second was the promotion of sound security on the Russian Far-Eastern borders. The third was the creation of favorable conditions for economic transformation in Russia, particularly for the economic development of its Far East.³⁹

Russia hosted an ARF track-two seminar on the principle of security and stability in Asia-Pacific in Moscow in April 1996. ASEAN valued Russia's commitment and contribution to the ARF process and welcomed Russia's readiness to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and its support for the 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea.⁴⁰ At the 29th AMM held from July 20–21 in Jakarta, ASEAN members also expressed interest in Russia's scientific-technological potential and considered Russia as an attractive

³⁷ *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, no. 15–16 (1994): 11.

³⁸ These were proposed in Yeltsin's speech at South Korea's National Assembly. *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, no. 12 (1992): 40.

³⁹ See Primakov's speech in the 18th ASEAN-PMC in 1996. *Statement by His Excellency Mr. Yevgeni Primakov Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*, ASEAN, <http://www.aseansec.org/4813.htm>.

⁴⁰ *Statement by H. E. Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam*, ASEAN, <http://www.aseansec.org/4793.htm>.

market with rich natural resources. With a view to creating fruitful dialogue relations, ASEAN elevated Russia to the status of a full dialogue partner. In his first speech at PMC, Russian foreign minister Primakov expressed dynamically developing associations as “one of the most important poles of our multipolar world.”⁴¹

In June 1997, the first meeting of the ASEAN-Russia Joint Cooperation Committee was held in Moscow. On the Russian side, representatives from various government agencies participated. The ASEAN delegation was composed of representatives from all member countries and an ASEAN secretariat. The two sides reaffirmed their desire and readiness to further strengthen their relationship. They discussed the dialogue mechanisms and agreed that the following institutions would form the structure of the Russia-ASEAN Dialogue;⁴² the ASEAN-Russia Joint Cooperation Committee (ARJCC); the ASEAN-Russia Joint Management Committee of the ASEAN-Russia Cooperation Fund;⁴³ the ASEAN-Russia Business Council; and the ASEAN Committee in Moscow.

ARJCC has formed working groups on science and technology, and trade and economy. Today, the ASEAN-Russia Joint Planning and Management Committee supports interaction among members and approves specific economic and science-technology projects. The ASEAN Committee in Moscow was established in October 1996, which comprised all ambassadors of ASEAN members in Moscow. The committee has contributed to regular contact between diplomats from both sides. Total Russia-ASEAN trade grew from \$638.1 million in 1993 to \$1.655 billion in 1997.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, no. 8 (1996): 38–39.

⁴² See *Joint Press Release the First ASEAN-Russia Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting*, June 5–6 1997, ASEAN-Russia Joint Cooperation Committee, <http://www.aseansec.org/2720.htm>.

⁴³ This fund aimed to facilitate private sector participation. Although Russia provided US \$0.5 million to set up the fund, it has not worked successfully. See Iurii Raikov, “Rossiia-ASEAN: Partnerstvo v interesakh bezopasnosti i razvitiia,” in Evgenii P. Bazhanov, ed., *Rossiia i ASEAN: Tematicheskii sbornik* (Moscow: Nauchnaia kniga, 2004), 16.

⁴⁴ For figures on ASEAN-Russia trade in 1993–1996, see Mendoza, “ASEAN’s Role in Integrating Russia into the Asia Pacific Economy,” 134. For total ASEAN-Russia trade in 1997, see *Tamozhennaia statistika vneshnei torgovli Rossiiskoi Federatsii: sbornik*, (1998): 8.

In this way, Russia has gradually shifted its assessment of ASEAN's role in Asia-Pacific regional cooperation since the mid-1990s. The ASEAN states successfully engaged Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar in ASEAN and put security dialogue involving major powers on track in the political sphere. Furthermore, in the economic sphere, ASEAN showed its assertiveness over the issue of the institutionalization of APEC. In 1993, opposition between the United States, who intended to lead the institutionalization of APEC and proposed the building of a "New Pacific Community,"⁴⁵ and the other members, who placed emphasis on consensus and voluntarism to pursue trade and investment liberalization in stages, became obvious. The leaders of the member economies agreed on a two-step approach to free and open trade and investment in the region by 2010 for developed economies and by 2020 for developing economies in Bogor in November 1994.⁴⁶ The Malaysian prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, however, issued a reservation purporting that his government would accept the schedule only if it were on a "best endeavors" basis and were conditional and nonbinding. In addition, APEC decisions should be based on consensus; this means unanimity rather than majority agreement.⁴⁷ At Osaka in November 1995, the Bogor Action Agenda was reaffirmed but also qualified by a provision for flexibility in the liberalization and facilitation process to take account of the different levels of economy. In fact, the claims of Southeast Asian countries that have fragile national markets were approved in APEC. Since then, the concepts of "open regionalism"⁴⁸ and "flexibility"⁴⁹ have been

⁴⁵ The proposal was announced in a speech at Waseda University by President Bill Clinton, *Asahi Shimbun*, July 7, 1993, evening edition.

⁴⁶ "APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration of Common Resolve," November 15, 1994, APEC, http://www.apec.org/apec/leaders_declarations/1994.html

⁴⁷ John Ravenhill, *APEC and the Construction of Pacific Rim Regionalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 117.

⁴⁸ The concept of "open regionalism" was defined as "nondiscrimination" in the Osaka Action Plan that was adopted by the leaders at a meeting in 1995. "APEC economies will apply or endeavor to apply the principle of nondiscrimination between and among them in the process of liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment. The outcome of trade and investment liberalization in the Asia-Pacific region will be the actual reduction in barriers not only among APEC economies but also between APEC economies and non-APEC economies." "APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration for Action," November 19, 1995, http://www.apec.org/apec/leaders_declarations/1995.html.

⁴⁹ See also the Osaka Action Plan. "Considering the different levels of economic

the basic, shared principles among the member economies. In this way, it showed that ASEAN became an influential player in APEC. Russia started to think that strengthening relations with ASEAN might enable her to join the process of regional integration.⁵⁰

Russia's Entry into APEC

The member countries of APEC approved the membership of Russia, Vietnam, and Peru at the Vancouver Summit in November 1997. APEC was established at the initiative of the Japanese and Australian governments in 1989. In 1991, China, Taiwan,⁵¹ and Hong Kong were admitted to APEC. Moscow noted that China, professing socialist values, became a full member of the capitalist economic institution and sits at the same table as Taiwan.⁵² It meant participating countries needed China as a regional power to discuss regional economic issues. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's new foreign policy has sought greater integration with the world economy, and as a part of this policy, it has sought to enter the existing frameworks of regional cooperation in Asia-Pacific.

Participation in APEC is limited to economies in the Asia-Pacific region that:

1. have strong economic linkages in the Asia-Pacific region
2. accept the objectives and principles of APEC as embodied in the Seoul APEC Declaration.⁵³

development among the APEC economies and the diverse circumstances of each economy, flexibility will be available in dealing with issues arising from such circumstances in the liberalization and facilitation process." "APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration for Action."

⁵⁰ Rafis Abazov, "Dialog Rossiia-ASEAN v kontekste XXI veka," *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*, no. 10 (1996): 67–69.

⁵¹ Taiwan realized its membership as "Chinese Taipei" with its acceptance as an economic entity.

⁵² *Izvestiia*, November 13, 1991.

⁵³ These conditions were stipulated in the Seoul APEC Declaration. See the APEC Ministerial Meeting, "Seoul APEC Declaration," November 12–14, 1991, APEC, http://www.apec.org/apec/ministerial_statements/annual_ministerial/1991_3th_apec_ministerial/annex_b__seoul_apec.html.

In 1997, intra-APEC trade recorded \$5.2 trillion, which accounted for 54 percent of the total world trade. On the other hand, the total trade between Russia and APEC members was \$22.3 billion, which accounted for only 0.4 percent of total APEC trade.⁵⁴ APEC members, conversely, amounted to 16.2 percent of the overall value of Russia's external trade. Despite this limited economic relation, why was Russia accepted in APEC?

The decision on Russia's membership was largely a political one, rather than a consensus of members. Normally, participation problems are dealt with at the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM). New acceding members have been announced in the leader's declarations or the ministerial statements. However, the documents released in 1997 made no reference to the membership of Russia, Vietnam, or Peru. It meant either that there were no plans to accept the additional members or that the existing members could not reach an agreement on the issue until the end.

In the 9th APEC Ministerial Meeting, while China, Japan, and the United States strongly supported Russia's membership, Australia, Singapore, the Philippines, Mexico, Chile, and New Zealand opposed it.⁵⁵ Australia and Singapore, in particular, pointed out the poor economic linkage between Russia and Asia-Pacific countries. Although Japanese foreign minister Obuchi Keizo noted Russia's role as a major power, Mexico and Chile reacted against making an exception for Russia.⁵⁶

Until then, Japan and the United States had blocked Russia from joining such economic cooperation forums as PECC and APEC.⁵⁷ Japan, in particular, always linked economic cooperation and territorial disputes with Moscow.⁵⁸ The United States advanced negotiations on NATO

⁵⁴ APEC Economic Committee, *1998 APEC Economic Outlook* (Singapore: APEC Secretariat, 1998), 5.

⁵⁵ *Izvestiia*, November 27, 1997.

⁵⁶ *Izvestiia*, November 27, 1997.

⁵⁷ Regarding the Soviet's participation in PECC, see Lawrence T. Woods, "Delicate Diplomatic Debuts: Chinese and Soviet Participation in the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference," *Pacific Affairs* 63, no. 2 (1990): 218–224.

⁵⁸ Japan's response to Russia's request to support its accession to APEC has largely rested upon the stalled negotiation process on territorial issues over the Northern Territories. In November 1994, Russian first deputy prime minister Oleg Soskovets visited Japan and held talks with Japanese foreign minister Kono Yohei. Both sides agreed to commence formal negotiations on fishing in waters around the four disputed islands (Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri, and Etorofu). However, Kono rejected Soskovets' call for bilateral

enlargement in Europe, while it excluded Russia from the US-led resolution process on the Korean Peninsula (KEDO) in Northeast Asia. In contrast, some Southeast Asian and Oceanian members took a permissive stance toward Russia's participation in PECC or APEC. For instance, the Philippine undersecretary of foreign affairs, Rodolfo Severino, said that the Philippines supported the entry of Vietnam, Peru, and Russia among the 11 candidates on the eve of the APEC ministerial meeting in 1996.⁵⁹

Japanese prime minister Hashimoto pushed "Eurasian diplomacy" and tried to improve relations with Russia by laying special emphasis on economic cooperation (although he never forgot the territorial disputes). Hashimoto thought that Japan might be able to improve its relations with Russia by inviting Russia, which then was completely isolated both from Europe and Asia, to APEC.⁶⁰ The United States thought that Russia's entry into APEC would be effective in easing Russia's opposition to NATO enlargement.⁶¹ On the other hand, Russia noted China's contribution to Russia's entry. Maxim Potapov, first secretary of the Russian foreign ministry, pointed that China shifted to a position of official political support of Russia's intention to become active in APEC when Russian-Chinese relations entered a progressive stage.⁶² Russia and China issued a joint statement on the finalization of the demarcation work of the eastern Sino-Russian border on November 6, only two weeks before

economic cooperation on the Kurile Islands because of the unsolved territorial issue. Kono also rejected support for Russia's entry into APEC on the grounds that APEC members decided to defer acceptance of new members for three years. In March 1995, Russian foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev visited Japan and asked Foreign Minister Kono for Japan's support in joining APEC again, but was rejected. Thus, the Japanese Foreign Ministry maintained the principle that expansion of economic cooperation with Russia and the progress of negotiations on the territorial issue were inseparable until the mid-1990s. See HASEGAWA Tsuyoshi, *Hoppo Ryodo mondai to nichiro kankei [The Northern Territories Dispute and Russo-Japanese Relations]* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 2000), 325–326.

⁵⁹ *The Straits Times*, November 21, 1996.

⁶⁰ Hashimoto also asked President Clinton and German chancellor Kohl to encourage President Yeltsin to take serious steps toward the normalization of relations with Japan. HASHIMOTO Ryutaro, "Nodo-teki gaiko o mezasi te" [Seeking an Active Diplomacy], Interview by IOKIBE Makoto, *Kokusai mondai [International Affairs]* 505 (2002): 88–93.

⁶¹ SAITO Motohide, *Roshia no gaiko seisaku [The Foreign Policy of Russia]* (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 2004), 199.

⁶² Maxim Potapov, "China's Experience as a Member of APEC: Lessons for Russia," *Far Eastern Affairs*, no. 1 (2001): 47.

an APEC meeting. There was, undoubtedly, an optimistic atmosphere between the two governments. Middle powers such as ASEAN and Australia were concerned that APEC was being dominated by Japan, China, the US, and Russia. Thus, Russia's entry into APEC was a political decision made by the major powers.

Putin's Policy toward Asia-Pacific Regional Cooperation

ASEAN in Putin's Asia-Pacific Policy

In the wake of the Asian financial crisis in 1997, Japan, China, South Korea, and ASEAN have been pursuing problem-solving mechanisms that are not led by the United States because neither the International Monetary Fund (IMF) nor APEC could implement effective support in the crisis. Today, the process of Asia-Pacific economic integration is developing based on the bilateral Free Trade Area or Economic Partnership Agreement among ASEAN, Japan, China, and South Korea. ASEAN has a degree of presence in the movement of enhancing East Asian regional cooperation such as ASEAN+3 and the East Asia Summit (EAS).

After Putin came to power, Russia started paying significant attention to what was happening not only in Europe and the United States but also in Asia-Pacific. He has attended informal summits of APEC since 1999 (except 2002), and has made efforts to deepen exchange with Asian leaders.⁶³ In the new version of the foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation, which was approved by Putin in June 2000, it was mentioned that for Russia, the significance of Asia is growing, because the need for economic progress and development in Siberia and the Far East has become more pronounced. In this context, it was recognized that Russia needs to participate in APEC as a key economic integration system in Asia-Pacific, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the process of the foundation of the "Shanghai Five" under the initiative of Russia.⁶⁴ After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, APEC members announced the

⁶³ In the APEC Summit of 2002, Mikhail Kasiianov, secretary of state, attended. Yeltsin never attended APEC. On Russia's debut in APEC, then Prime Minister Primakov attended. See APEC's Website, <http://www.apec.org/>.

⁶⁴ "Kontseptsiiia vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii 2000 g.," in Torkunov, *Vneshniaia politika i bezopasnost' sovremennoi Rossii*, tom 4, *Dokumenty*, 119.

leaders' statement on counterterrorism and took joint action to prevent the flow of funds to terrorists. Russia regards its APEC membership as an important measure to strengthen the fight against terrorism both at the global and regional level.⁶⁵ President Putin has offered rail freight transportation between Asia and Europe across the Korean Peninsula and Russia for a project of APEC.⁶⁶ If the project is successful, there will be a substantial cut in the cost of transportation between Europe and Asia, although it would require stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Looking at the present situation, Russia's foreign policy toward Asia-Pacific was shaped by four factors that directly serve Russia's national interests: the settlement of North Korea's nuclear development issue, the Siberian oil pipeline issue between Russia, China, and Japan, integration into the Asia-Pacific regional cooperation, and arms export. That is, Russia's interests continuously focus on relations with China, Japan, and two Koreas. However, unlike the Yeltsin government, President Putin, since the latter part of his first term, has restored relations with former allies Vietnam and North Korea, and has been enhancing dialogue relations with ASEAN.

Today, Russian foreign policy experts regard ASEAN as an important partner in creating a multipolar world and in shaping a coherent system of regional security, and counteracting new challenges and threats.⁶⁷ Russia's main aim in relations with the ASEAN states is firstly to gain their support to become full member of all regional international organizations. In particular, Russia seeks to enhance her influence in Asia-Pacific countries through the dialogue and the cooperation in the SCO, ASEAN's conferences, and EAS, which are not led by the United States. Russia has also demonstrated a willingness to join the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) since 1996.⁶⁸ Now, Russia needs ASEAN's support for

⁶⁵ See the contributed article by President Putin. *Asahi Shimbun*, November 17, 2005.

⁶⁶ *Asahi Shimbun*, November 17, 2005.

⁶⁷ "Opening Remarks by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov at Russia-ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, Kuala Lumpur, December 10, 2005," The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation, no. 2645-10-12-2005, December 10, 2005, http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcb3/f982bd095207f90cc32570d500524cd7?OpenDocument.

⁶⁸ *Speech by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov at the Session of the Russia-ASEAN Postministerial Conference, Phnom Penh, June 19, 2003*, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation, no. 1441-19-06-2003 June 19, 2003, <http://>

membership both into ASEM and EAS. But there is a problem regarding Russia's acceptance—whether it views itself as a European country or as an Asian country. This identity problem has embarrassed participating countries of not only ASEM⁶⁹ but also other institutions.

Russia in the New Dimension of the Asia-Pacific Regionalism

Russia and ASEAN signed a joint declaration on the partnership for peace and security, and prosperity and development in the Asia-Pacific region in June 2003.⁷⁰ The foreign ministers of both sides confirmed advocating a further enhancement of the effectiveness of the United Nations and existing multilateral regional mechanisms, particularly ARF. In this document, Russia referred to the encouragement of dialogue partners to accede to ASEAN's two basic norms, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) and the Protocol on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-free Zone (SEANWFZ). Furthermore, ASEAN noted Russia's efforts to promote peace and security in the region within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The following year, Russia signed TAC after AMM, and a joint declaration on cooperation in combating international terrorism. They also decided to regularize the ASEAN-Russia Summit in December 2005. They are keen to enhance cooperation in counterterrorism and combating transnational crime through sharing information on terrorist organizations, potential acts of terrorism, and the possibility of WMD attack.⁷¹

www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/273f45b5e07cbd4943256d4c0027aac7?OpenDocument.

⁶⁹ The member countries decided not to accept Russia because they could not conclude Russia's position in ASEM either as a European side or an Asian side. SATO Koichi, *ASEAN rejimu: ASEAN ni okeru kaigi gaiko no hatten to kadai* [*The ASEAN Regime: Development and Challenges of the ASEAN Foreign Policies*] (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 2003), 194.

⁷⁰ *Joint Declaration of the Foreign Ministers of the Russian Federation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on Partnership for Peace and Security, and Prosperity and Development in the Asia-Pacific Region*, June 19, 2003, ASEAN, <http://www.aseansec.org/14849.htm>.

⁷¹ For details, see *Comprehensive Programme of Action to Promote Cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Russian Federation 2005–2015*, December 13, 2005, <http://www.aseansec.org/18074.htm>.

In the economic sphere, the ASEAN-Russia trade value increased from \$1 billion in 1998 to \$3.1 billion in 2004.⁷² It came close to totaling ASEAN-New Zealand trade, \$3.5 billion in 2004.⁷³ However, Russia's exports to ASEAN were almost one percent of its total exports in 2004, and ASEAN's exports to Russia were 0.3 percent of their total exports. They have made efforts to boost trade ties through a working group on trade and investment and the ASEAN-Russia Business Council. It is important for Russia to become a supplier of not only raw materials but also modern technology such as oil extraction and space exploration.⁷⁴ At the same time, Southeast Asia is a potential new market for Russian arms export.

The partnerships with ASEAN will contribute to not only strengthening Russia's position in Asia, but also using multilateral cooperation for solutions to social-economic problems and security issues including the fight against terrorism.⁷⁵ In November 2004, the holding of the first East Asia Summit was determined at the ASEAN+3 Summit. The participation of a wide range of countries, especially India, Australia, New Zealand, and Russia, was disputed until just before the date of the first summit in December 2005 among members of ASEAN+3. In the end, President Putin was invited to address the summit, but was not a participant.

ASEAN foreign ministers established the following three-point criteria for participation at their meeting in Cebu in April 2005.⁷⁶

The country

1. is a full dialogue partner of ASEAN;
2. has acceded to or agreed to the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in Southeast Asia;
3. has substantive relations with ASEAN.⁷⁷

⁷² *Tamozhennaia statistika vneshnei torgovli Rossiiskoi Federatsii: sbornik*, (1999): 9–10; tom 1 (2005): 8–9.

⁷³ *ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2005* (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 2005), 70–73.

⁷⁴ Vladimir Putin, "Rossiia: novye vostochnye perspektivy," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, November 14, 2000.

⁷⁵ Aleksandr Alekseev, "Proruabaia okno v Aziuu," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, December 26, 2005.

⁷⁶ *The Financial Express*, April 16, 2005, http://www.financialexpress.com/print.php?content_id=89010.

These conditions were approved at the first East Asia Summit in December 2005, and the participating countries recognized ASEAN as the driving force.⁷⁸ Unlike the case of APEC, Russia's relations with ASEAN has important implications in joining East Asian regional cooperation. Russia meets the first and second criteria, but not the third. While Malaysia, China, South Korea, and Thailand expressed their approval of Russia's involvement, Singapore opposed it because Russia's economic links with many ASEAN countries were quite weak.⁷⁹ Japan faced a dilemma. Japan supported the involvement of India, Australia, and New Zealand under the open regional policy to counteract China's influence in EAS. However, the policy accelerated further applications from Russia, Mongolia, Pakistan, and the EU. Japan is concerned that Russia's entry may enhance China's influence.⁸⁰

While there seems to be a struggle for leadership between China and Japan, member states of ASEAN try to maintain a stable balance of power among the major regional powers. By integrating Russian power into the Asian balance composed of China, Japan, India, and the United States, ASEAN would benefit. More specifically, the rise of China and India adds Malaysian-Russian strategic engagement in Asia-Pacific to incentives to ensure equilibrium over the next few decades.⁸¹ Malaysia has also purchased fighter jets and military transport helicopters from Russia as a part of its policy of diversifying its sources of defensive weapons and as an endorsement of its policy of maintaining equidistance with external powers.⁸² Besides, Russia is expected to be a cheaper and more stable oil supplier to Southeast Asia. The Philippines in particular should seek to diversify its sources of crude oil products and ensure a sufficient energy

⁷⁷ These membership qualifications were contained in the declaration on the first East Asian Summit. East Asian Summit, *Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the East Asia Summit*, December 14, 2005, ASEAN, <http://www.aseansec.org/18098.htm>.

⁷⁸ East Asian Summit, *Chairman's Statement of the First East Asia Summit*, December 14, 2005, ASEAN, <http://www.aseansec.org/18105.htm>.

⁷⁹ *The Straits Times*, November 5, 2005.

⁸⁰ *Asahi Shimbun*, December 10, 2005.

⁸¹ K. S. Nathan, "Malaysia and Russia: Strengthening Strategic Partnership in the 21st century: A Malaysian Perspective," in Gennadii Chufirin, Mark Hong and Teo Kah Beng eds., *ASEAN-Russia Relations* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; Moscow: Institute of World Economy and International Relations, 2006), 24.

⁸² Nathan, "Malaysia and Russia," 25.

supply. The Philippine foreign secretary Alberto Romulo and the Philippine National Oil Co. president Eduard Manalac held a meeting with Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow in October 2005, and they reached several agreements including the expansion of energy cooperation and anti-nuclear proliferation.⁸³ Romulo stressed that the Philippines was the nearest Southeast Asian country to Russia's resource-rich part.⁸⁴ As mentioned above, today, Russia and ASEAN have found the sphere of congruity in each other's interests.

Although it was decided to regularize EAS, the aim and direction of the summit remains unclear. It will take some time to create a true community in East Asia due to the great diversity of its members and the distrust among the major powers. However, it is necessary for Russia to join the regional integration process in the early stages to avoid its exclusion from this region again. Also for Russia, it is important to strengthen bilateral and multilateral regional economic agreements and promote the socio-economic development of its fragile Far East and Eastern Siberia to balance a rising China.

Conclusion

Even after Russia's foreign policy was revised from a prominent Westernizing line to a more pragmatic course at the end of 1992, Russia's foreign policy priority was given to the major Northeast Asian powers rather than Southeast Asian countries. In Asia-Pacific, Russia had firstly to ensure the stability of its border region and maintain its territorial integrity as well as participate in the regional cooperation organizations to overcome international isolation from the regional integration process in both Europe and Asia. In South Korea in 1992, as for economic cooperation, Yeltsin showed enthusiasm to join the existing regional cooperation framework such as APEC. However, in terms of the security sphere, Yeltsin aspired to establish a multilateral mechanism especially on the nuclear nonproliferation problem in Northeast Asia. This means Russia wanted to be involved with the conflict resolution process as one of the influential powers in Northeast Asia. However, from 1994 to 1995,

⁸³ *Asia Pulse*, October 17, 2005.

⁸⁴ Romulo said that the Philippines could be a hub for the delivery of Russian fuel and energy products to other Asia-Pacific countries. *Business World*, October 6, 2005.

the negotiation process over North Korea's nuclear programs was conducted without Russia. In addition, as mentioned above, the Japanese Foreign minister persisted in saying no to Russia's request to support its accession to APEC, mainly because negotiations on the territorial disputes over the Northern Territories had been plagued with stagnation. At that time, Evgenii Nazdratenko, the then governor of Primor'e, campaigned against the 1991 agreement on the Sino-Russian (then USSR) eastern border demarcation work.⁸⁵ In Russia, the tension between the central and local governments over the transfer of territory to China increased.

Under these strained circumstances, ASEAN provided Russia with an opportunity to be involved in the dialogue and cooperation on regional nonmilitary security problems by inviting Russia to ARF. Naturally, it was important that Russian officials meet with Asian leaders and officials even if there were intractable conflicts between the countries. As for the position of ASEAN and its influential role in the regional integration process, Russia began to regard ASEAN as another door to political and economic integration in Asia-Pacific.

From January 1996–September 1998, Foreign Minister Primakov played a leading role in foreign policy making; Russia became a dialogue partner of ASEAN and a full member of APEC. This was proof of Russia's recognition as a regional player, and a confirmation of its legitimate right to participate in the decision-making process regarding regional and subregional problems. Up until the mid-1990s, Russia's foreign policy toward Southeast Asia largely relied on its bilateral relations in Northeast Asia. From when Primakov expressed ASEAN as one of the most important poles of a multipolar world, ASEAN as a group was given an independent role as a door to multilateral cooperation in Asia-Pacific.

President Putin has restored Russia's right to take part in regional affairs by effectively using the multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as SCO, the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear programs, and ASEAN. As Foreign Minister Lavrov said, ASEAN is an important partner in the creation of a multipolar world as well as a center of the integration process in Asia-Pacific. For Russia, ASEAN conferences are

⁸⁵ For details on the territorial campaign, see IWASHITA Akihiro, *A 4,000 Kilometer Journey Along the Sino-Russian Border* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2004), 18–23.

effective tools that appeal to Russian policies and cooperation projects in Asia. Since each Asia-Pacific country regards its relationship with the United States as its most important bilateral relationship, only through these multilateral conferences can Russia enhance its influence in the region.

Russia's relations with ASEAN have so far been limited to the political sphere. To foster substantive relations, Russia has to make an assertive effort to become a stable resource supplier as well as an arms and technology supplier. Both sides also have considerable Muslim populations. Russia regards both ASEAN and APEC as important counterterrorism mechanisms.

Meanwhile, ASEAN has needed Russian power to balance the external great powers comprising China, Japan, India, and the United States. ASEAN countries traditionally aim to avoid the emergence of one dominant power in the region. In addition, Russia's status in the world makes its role as an ASEAN partner all the more important. Russia is recognized as both a nuclear power and a conventional military power. Also, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia can contribute to ASEAN proposals of establishing in Southeast Asia a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality (ZOPFAN), a nuclear weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia and TAC. Besides, Russia is expected to become a supplier of energy and inexpensive arms.

Northeast Asia was and will be at the center of Russian foreign policy toward Asia-Pacific. However, Russia has to avoid exclusion from this region again to ensure the economic development of Siberia and the Far East. In this context, political and economic cooperation with ASEAN countries has more significance in Russian eastern policy than it did in the late 1990s.

Great Power Relations, Regional Multilateralism, and International Relations of East Asia

G. V. C. NAIDU

The principal intent of titling the article in the above way is to highlight two important dimensions of international relations of East Asia, i.e., the changing nature of great power relations and the genesis of regional multilateralism. The role and relations that govern the great powers had undoubtedly been at the heart of East Asia's discourse in the past, continue to be central in the present, and may become even more important in the future if the current trends are any indication. What is different today when compared to the Cold War era is that regional political and economic relations are being increasingly conditioned by new rising powers, which in turn are leading to the realignment of forces among great powers to ensure regional power balance. There is also a new element, that is, regional multilateralism that is beginning to make its mark towards which the attitudes of great powers have varied from skepticism to strong support to sheer indifference. It must, however, be mentioned that regional multilateralism is still in its infancy and its future remains uncertain. Capturing this dynamic in the larger context of fundamental changes, both economic and politico-security, that are occurring in the region would provide us with useful pointers on the nature and direction of the current international politics of East Asia. Surely, East Asia is an integral part of the global system, and it is not immune to events at world level. Nevertheless, perhaps the changes that

are sweeping this part of the world will have implications far beyond the region. This is what makes this region special and significant.

While the Cold War era of East Asia was dominated by the super powers, in the aftermath of which we are still in search of a paradigm though more than a decade and half has elapsed we still talk in terms of a post-Cold War era. This, in a nutshell, exemplifies the fluidity and flux that characterize the current period, a period of enormous transition and change. The change is best manifested by the metamorphosis the great powers are undergoing in terms of their power, role, and attitude.

The article proposes to discuss, aside from an overview of major trends across East Asia, aspects of two triangular relationships that have been talked about: one involving China, Russia, and India, and the other, the United States, Japan, and India. There is, of course, another great power triangle that has been talked about consisting of China, Japan, and India as the future determinant of regional relations concomitant with their near simultaneous rise, an entirely new and unprecedented development. However, that triangular relationship is yet to fructify in any concrete fashion, though its dynamics is clearly manifesting in many ways. The logic and rationale of these triangles in the context of a fast-changing East Asian political environment needs a closer look and deeper examination. Secondly, the article also examines the role and viability of regional multilateralism, both economic and security, in influencing the international relations of East Asia.

East Asia: A Region of Focus and Transformation

There are several crucial aspects of the changes the world is witnessing that are influencing international relations. The geoeconomics, contrary to the previous geopolitics that dominated much of the debate, has come to the fore in a big way. No power, small or big, can any longer ignore the critical role that economic factors play in shaping and influencing relations with other countries. Similarly, nontraditional security issues, from terrorism to WMD proliferation, never considered serious issues of security in the past, are emerging as dominant issues of global politics. Yet another dimension that is influencing relations among countries is the phenomenon of globalization. Notwithstanding the enormous and ongoing debate on whether or not it is good, it has come to be recognized as

something unstoppable. Thanks in part to globalization, the great powers especially are forced to forge cooperative relationships among themselves. As a result, one sees in a relative sense the best of relations among global great powers despite lingering suspicions and rivalry.¹

As noted, in East Asia, great powers historically had played a vital role in shaping relations not only within the region but without, as well. The fact that India and China exerted enormous influence since ancient times culturally, religiously, linguistically, and economically is well documented and is still visible. Once these powers became weak after the onslaught of colonialism, the European powers started having complete sway over regional affairs. Towards the end of colonialism, the newly rising powers, the United States and Japan, began to have an enormous impact on the region greatly. During the Cold War, the bipolar order that dominated the world was reflected in East Asia, too. The post-Cold War period is characterized by the rise of new power centers within the region.

The current changes have to be seen in the context of the transformation the region is undergoing even as the global shift of focus to East Asia in both economic and security terms continues. The region remains the most promising economically—the rise of new economic powerhouses, huge foreign exchange reserves, vibrant consumption patterns, rapidly expanding markets, and, more importantly, an unparalleled demographic advantage. Regional security, however, continues to be a cause of concern, as exemplified by the developments in Northeast Asia. In the East Asian context, issues of security and economic development are not mutually exclusive; they influence each other either in the promotion of peace and prosperity or in imperiling them. Two, the subregions of East Asia, Southeast, and Northeast Asia, whose linkages during the Cold War were relatively tenuous, are being strengthened, and hence the segregation of issues of security and economic development between them is no longer valid.

A major hallmark of East Asia today is that the regional major powers, China, Japan, and India, are becoming more assertive and are at the center of a new regional economic and security architecture that is unfolding. The impact of a rapidly rising China as a military and economic power, India's attempts to catch up and match China's might,

¹ David Sadler, "A Study in Harmony: The Great Powers in Asia and the Pacific," *Global Change, Peace and Security* 17, no. 3 (2005): 299–314.

and Japanese determined moves to become a “normal” country are yet to be fully felt. How relations among these powers evolve will be a critical element in the shaping of regional security.

The issue that most visibly looms larger in East Asia at present is the rise of China on which opinions are divergent, although most countries in the region feel that it is both an opportunity as well as a challenge. Dubbed as the world’s factory for manufacturing, China’s economy is the second largest in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms and may become the largest by leapfrogging the US in less than three decades if it manages to maintain the current momentum. It can create huge opportunities for a variety of goods and services for other countries. China has already become the largest trading partner of most of the East Asian countries, notably for two of America’s closest political and economic partners, Japan and South Korea. The rapidly expanding Chinese market and prosperity are also providing vast investment opportunities. In fact, much of the phenomenal surge in China’s trade is investment driven. Despite unabated skepticism about the sustainability of double-digit growth rates for prolonged periods, growing income disparities among people and between provinces, increasing incidents of social unrest, and mounting concerns about overheating, the Chinese economy has demonstrated a remarkable resilience, and signs of major disruptions in the foreseeable future appear rather remote.

China, however, is also a challenge as it becomes a magnet for investments at the cost of others. Growing wealth is also allowing China to spend more on defense, enabling it to rapidly expand its military capabilities. The lack of transparency especially in defense expenditures and attempts at rapid modernization of its armed forces at a time when it hardly faces a military threat are already ringing alarm bells. Both the US and Japan time and time again have expressed their anxieties about China’s military modernization. Suspicions of this kind can lead to a debilitating arms race. On a different plane, if history is any indicator, an economically and militarily rising power not only tends to fundamentally alter the existing balance and equilibrium, but also becomes more assertive even as its interests grow. Thus, China is redrawing the map of economic and political relations in East Asia. The implications of these are too obvious. Japan, which used to be the biggest economic player

since the early 1970s, feels it is being pushed to the margins.² A comparison of ASEAN's trade with Japan and China in the last decade is revealing: between 1995 and 2004, ASEAN exports to Japan declined from 14.4 percent to 12.1 percent, and imports, from 24.7 to 15.8, whereas ASEAN exports to China increased from 2.1 percent to 7.4 percent, and imports jumped from 2.2 to 9.4 percent.³ It is little wonder that the Southeast Asian countries have become so conscious of the China factor in their economic and political calculations. Beijing's deft diplomacy, often called a "charm offensive," especially since the 1997–1998 financial crisis, has further contributed to its growing stature.

Either because of China or pressure from the US or propelled by the desire to play a larger role, Japan, too, is transforming, and the numerous moves that Tokyo has made in the last few years are indeed profound. The decision to extend logistical support to the American counterterrorism efforts in Afghanistan by sending war ships to the Indian Ocean, the dispatch of troops for the first time since World War II to Iraq, a combat zone, in support of the US, the participation in the development and deployment of ballistic missile defense (BMD) systems with the US, attempts at amending its constitution so that its armed forces can become a regular military and participate in collective defense activities, openly coming out with a joint statement with the US that Taiwan was a common security concern, naming China and North Korea as potential threats, etc., are some measures that are likely to have considerable implications for East Asia. With conservatives at the helm, Tokyo's quest for "normal" power status will continue under Abe Shinzo's leadership, which means Japan will become more assertive and can be expected to assume a larger security role, which some Southeast Asian leaders feel may not be such a bad thing after all. In an interview, for instance, Indonesian defense minister Yuwano Sudarsono stated that "a forceful and assertive Japanese security role in East Asia security would be welcome. I think it would provide good balance." India is also beginning to figure prominently as a

² URATA Shujiro, "Declining Importance of Japan in East Asia: Are Free Trade Agreements the Answer?" *NRB Special Report*, no. 5 (2004): 29–34, <http://www.nbr.org/publications/specialreport/pdf/SR5.pdf>.

³ *Asean Statistical Yearbook 2005*, chap. 5, <http://www.aseansec.org/SYB2005/Chapter-5.pdf> (The data exclude Laos and Vietnam); "Countries turn to China: Japan marginalized as APEC focuses on terror," *Japan Times*, October 22, 2003, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pl5?nn20031022b7.htm>.

potential partner in the changing Japanese security policies after a series of steps that these two have taken starting from the eight-point initiative agreed upon during Koizumi's visit to India in April 2005.⁴ Japan also appears to be desperately trying to regain its economic supremacy by supporting East Asian integration attempts and in the creation of an Asian currency unit.

Not to be left behind, India, too, is intensifying its efforts to identify and integrate itself with East Asia through the "Look East" policy. This has since evolved into a multifaceted policy encompassing political, economic, and strategic dimensions. Strongly underpinned by a variety of institutional and bilateral linkages to promote economic cooperation, India's political and strategic interactions with East Asia are extensive. Reciprocally, the countries of East Asia can no longer overlook an increasingly confident, assertive, and rising India. Many look at India not just as an economic opportunity but as a potential countervailing power to China.⁵ As Singaporean minister George Yeo stated, "We in Southeast Asia have no wish to become merely an adjunct to the Chinese economy."⁶

The US continues to be a major factor although its overall importance appears to be on the wane, partly because of its preoccupation with its war on terror and its involvement in Iraq, and partly because of its changing policies especially relating to forward deployment of its troops. While the US security partnership with Japan is strengthening, its relationship with South Korea is beginning to unravel. Growing differences between Washington and Seoul on tackling the tricky North Korean nuclear problem and mounting opposition to US troops in South Korea will have considerable impact on regional security. Growing ties between China and South Korea and between China and Russia would further increase Japanese consternation, which in turn might force it to undertake drastic measures.

Russian fortunes in East Asia have always fluctuated although much of Moscow's focus has traditionally been on Europe and to a lesser extent,

⁴ *Eight-fold Initiative for Strengthening Japan-India Global Partnership*, April 29, 2005, Japan-India, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/partner0504.html#eight>.

⁵ Anindya Batabyal, "Balancing China in Asia: A Realist Assessment of India's 'Look East' Strategy," *China Report* 42, no. 2 (2006): 179-197.

⁶ Philip Day, "Singapore: Dancing with Giants," *Far Eastern Economic Review* 167, no. 14 (2004): 44-45.

Central Asia. Russian engagement with East Asia began, one, with the emergence of China as a communist country and a close ally and later as a major antagonist; two, with the existence of the so-called weakest link in its Far East theater and hence militarily the most vulnerable; and three, with border and territorial disputes involving fairly large tracts. However, Russia managed to maintain good relations with two important countries, India and Vietnam. The disintegration of the former Soviet Union had a more profound effect on its Far Eastern region than others, and it took nearly a decade and half for it to realize the import of East Asia. Thus, Russian reengagement is a recent phenomenon, and it is still not deep enough to warrant great attention. Nonetheless, one should recognize important developments in order to appreciate its likely enhanced role in East Asian relations in the coming years. One such development is that the strategic partnership between Russia and China is increasingly being cemented by large quantities of modern defense hardware supplies to China. It also helps that they share common political views on a range of issues, especially on the US-led unipolar movement. Russia is also emerging as a major supplier of defense equipment, not just to its traditional markets such as India and Vietnam, but also to several other countries in Southeast Asia like Malaysia, Indonesia, and possibly even South Korea and the Philippines. Finally, energy is emerging as a major link between the Russian Far East and East Asia. All the three major energy consumers in the region—China, Japan, and India—are eying a share of the vast reserves of oil and gas in the Russian Far East. Russia also has institutional linkages with ASEAN as a dialogue partner, is a member of the ARF and APEC, is part of the six-party talks on North Korea, and more recently, was invited as an “observer” to the inaugural East Asian Summit (EAS) in December 2005. Nonetheless, Russia is likely to be more preoccupied with Europe and Central Asia than East Asia in the nearer term and hence is not yet a major factor in the East Asia security calculus.

East Asian Multilateralism

The other discernible trend in East Asia is regional multilateralism, and invariably, ASEAN figures prominently in any discourse on this. Despite not being monolithic and differences on a range of political and economic

issues remain, Southeast Asian countries have managed to create and sustain many multilateral structures to enhance their own collective influence and, importantly, to engage the great powers. Both ASEAN as an organization and Southeast Asia as a region are under focus as a result of certain recent developments thus casting doubts on ASEAN's ability to lead these multilateral institutions. Further, the ASEAN region as an economic entity has become less attractive when compared to larger and faster growing economies such as China and India. In PPP terms, the combined GDP of the entire Southeast Asia is about 60 percent of India's and less than one-third that of China. Importantly, the gap will further widen if the current trends continue.

In security terms, in the overall context of East Asia, the focus is shifting away from Southeast Asia to Northeast Asia and to a lesser extent to the Indian Ocean region. Southeast Asia does not command the same political attention it did during the Cold War, notwithstanding the dispute in the South China Sea and growing concerns about terrorism. There is no question that far more serious security issues lie in Northeast Asia. The deadlocked North Korean nuclear issue could have serious repercussions if unresolved, triggering a domino effect with a potential nuclear arms race between China and Japan (and India and Pakistan). Unabated tensions between Japan and China and the simmering Taiwan question are other issues that could have far-reaching impact. Additionally, there is considerable uncertainty because of changing American military strategy towards East Asia even as it prepares to reorder its military in Northeast Asia, and the EAS is the first occasion on which the US is not involved.⁷

All these developments are having a combined effect on ASEAN and its ability to manage regional economic and security affairs. Both Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), although they still exist, have clearly lost their sheen. Waning American⁸ and Japanese⁹ interest will further reduce their role and

⁷ See for instance Daniel Sneider, "Asia's Polite Response Masks Declining US Influence," *Yale Global*, November 17, 2005, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=6531>.

⁸ Evelyn Goh, "The ASEAN Regional Forum in United States East Asian Strategy," *Pacific Review* 17, no. 1 (2004): 47–69.

⁹ YUZAWA Takeshi, "Japan's Changing Conception of the ASEAN Regional Forum: From an Optimistic Liberal to a Pessimistic Realist Perspective," *Pacific Review* 18, no. 4 (2005): 463–497.

importance, not that the track record of ARF's achievements (for that matter, even APEC's, as discussed below) is particularly impressive. ASEAN would have to devise ways to accommodate the interests of India, China, and Japan rather than a regional agenda dominated by terrorism and religious radicalism and issues of domestic stability. Perceived clashes of interests along with the persistence of historical animosities and mutual suspicions among the great powers will persist for ASEAN to grapple with. The American attitude toward China has vacillated from Bill Clinton's "strategic partnership" to Bush's initial "strategic competition," whereas China-Russia strategic cooperation is deepening. As the row between Japan and China reaches new highs, Tokyo sees strategic convergence with New Delhi. Suddenly, India appears to be in demand, wooed by all these major powers because of its potential to tilt the balance decisively in the East Asian emerging balance of power. India is paying enormous attention to ensure that its rise and its recent improvement of relations with both the US and Japan are not either directed at or at the cost of China.

Russia-China-India Strategic Triangle

Relations among major powers are witnessing a peculiar phenomenon. On the one hand, they are forced to cooperate to deal with certain issues of common concern, terrorism, illegal transfers of WMD material, a number of maritime security issues, disaster management, for instance, but there is also a fair amount of distrust among certain major powers, on the other. It is this dynamic that has given rise to the idea of strategic partnerships contrary to the alliance partnerships of the Cold War. It is not the purpose of the article to deal with bilateral strategic partnerships or alliances but to focus on the changing contours of major power relations, especially what are popularly called "triangles" that have often come up. There have been several of them, however. In the post-Cold War East Asian context, the first one mentioned included Russia, China, and India, the second one was the US, Japan, and China, the third consisting of China, Japan, and India, and the fourth and most recent comprising the US, Japan, and India. Here, it is proposed to examine two triangles—Russia-China-India and US-Japan-India.

When in December 1998 Evgenii Primakov, then Russian prime minister, proposed the creation of a strategic triangle with China and India, it was received both with skepticism and bemusement. It was promptly interpreted as Russian frustration with and fear of a US-led unipolar movement, particularly in the light of two events: one, the eastward expansion of NATO into what the Russians had traditionally considered their backyard, and two, NATO's unilateral military action in Kosovo. Russia was also obviously concerned about a lack of balance vis-à-vis the US and hence sought to bring together China and India who appeared to share a similar concern. As these countries tried to find some common ground apart from the US, it turned out that there were three global issues on which they shared some interest although certain differences on details remained—one, the emerging global system, two, Islamic terrorism, and three, America's ballistic missile defense (BMD) program.

Firstly, it appeared all three countries were uncomfortable with the idea of global unipolarity. As a result, they started advocating the concept of multipolarity wherein the global order is characterized by several centers/poles of power although not necessarily to the same degree. When it became apparent that such an idea was increasingly becoming unrealistic (partly fueled by a severe economic downturn in Russia), some Indians started advocating the idea of a "polycentric" world, which while not disputing the preponderance of the US, sought to underline the existence of several poles of power of various kinds. With the dramatic improvement in relations between India and the US, New Delhi's perception of the US has undergone a fundamental change. Resultantly, India is much less vociferous about global multipolarity. These views are obviously out of sync with either Russian or Chinese thinking.

Two, all the three countries faced the problem of terrorism, religious extremism, and separatism to varying degrees in Chechnya, Kashmir, and Xinjiang. Although no apparent and direct connection between these problem areas could be established, there was a common concern about greater radicalization of these movements after the Taliban's emergence in Afghanistan with Pakistan's support. While India and Russia had been more strident in castigating Pakistan and the Taliban for fomenting terrorism, China was more circumspect in accusing Pakistan for obvious reasons.

Three, the BMD issue, at least until India changed its stance in 2001, seemed to provide a strategic consensus in opposing it. These three

countries had a different set of reasons to oppose American plans to pursue BMD research and deployment. Russia was more concerned about unilateral abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which might further accentuate the strategic disparity with the US and supremacy in space, and China quite unexpectedly turned out to be the most vocal opponent of BMD because of Japan's participation. In Chinese thinking, BMD deployment in Northeast Asia would, on one hand, make its nuclear deterrent ineffectual and make the incorporation of Taiwan into the mainland all the more difficult if Taiwan was brought under the BMD shield. India, too, initially opposed it on the grounds that it would trigger a nuclear arms race in Asia as China would try to counter BMD by further accelerating the build-up of its nuclear arsenal, and India (and Pakistan) would invariably be affected by this. India has since made an about-turn as it is interested in erecting some kind of missile defense, possibly with American assistance, primarily because of the political uncertainties Pakistan is now facing and the real danger of some WMD falling into the wrong hands.

Despite not having a tangible agenda or consensus even on those issues where there is some convergence, the foreign ministers of Russia, China, and India have been holding their annual meetings. Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov in an interview to an Indian newspaper claimed that:

it is about shared values on how to approach international relations these days. It's about our common belief that multilateral approaches are the best solution to global problems and regional conflicts. It's certainly our belief that our three countries can do a lot together to keep and promote stability in the Asia-Pacific region, Eurasia in general and in the United Nations.¹⁰

It must be mentioned, however, that there are limitations to this triangle, although bilateral relations have witnessed considerable progress. There are, for instance, several problems that plague Sino-Indian relations such as the intractable border dispute, China's policy toward Pakistan, and wariness about each other in East Asia. Similarly, China is also concerned about the new bonhomie between India and the US and between India and

¹⁰ Sergei Lavrov, interviewed by Amit Baruah, *The Hindu*, October 11, 2004, <http://www.thehindu.com/2004/10/11/stories/2004101104331000.htm>.

Japan. Any attempt to increase its role in South Asia by China is viewed with suspicion in Delhi, and similarly, India's forays into Central Asia would make Beijing uneasy. India-Russia relations, too, have undergone a fundamental shift in recent years. It is not premised on shared ideology or threat perception as during the Cold War but mostly based on mutually convenient military cooperation. On the contrary, Sino-Russian relations have improved remarkably primarily based on their shared concern about the US, and also their strong defense cooperation. Thus, the Russia-China-India triangle is a stillborn idea beset with too many problems to become a viable idea.

US-Japan-India Strategic Triangle

Currently, the much-talked-about triangle is US-Japan-India, and obviously, this will have a far greater impact on East Asian international relations and regional security. An instant reaction to such a major power triangle is that it is aimed at China, but this is not the sole reason as there are also several other dimensions to it, including the management of the transition that the region is undergoing. A factor that has greatly contributed to such an idea is the astonishing pace with which India-US relations are progressing. Much of the acrimony that marked the relationship during the Cold War was due to extraneous reasons, such as India's close links with Moscow, the American attitude toward Pakistan, Washington's policy towards nuclear nonproliferation, etc. Surprisingly, there was no major bilateral dispute between the two. Hence, it was easier to quickly forge close links once the Cold War strategic divide ended. Of course, India's nuclear tests in 1998 were only a temporary setback. Relations, however, quickly bounced back once Washington recognized the sensitivity of the nuclear issue in India and security challenges it was faced with and the potential India has as a global player. Starting from President Clinton's visit in early 2000 to India, relations have witnessed a remarkable turnaround. Right from his campaign days, President Bush had underscored the importance of improving relations with India. His administration's decision "to help India become a major world power in the twenty-first century" represents the grand transformation. Relations are driven by the intrinsic value of each country to the other and their shared interests, such as commitment to democracy, countering terrorism,

and nuclear proliferation, and preserving a stable balance of power in Asia. Growing defense and economic cooperation and nearly four million highly educated, super-rich ethnic Indians are also making an impact on the decision making process. The biggest and most important (and controversial, too) agreement so far between the two is the July 2005 agreement that includes nuclear civilian cooperation.

In a remarkable coincidence, India-Japan relations, too, have started improving in a big way alongside Indo-US relations. Contrary to Tokyo's relations with rest of East Asia, which have been marred by historical issues, the people of India and Japan have always had a good opinion of each other. Once again, the Cold War environment rather than any bilateral problems was responsible for creating a big political divide between the two countries. Even as relations started showing considerable improvement beginning from the mid-1990s, they nosedived following India's nuclear tests in 1998. The momentum was quickly regained with Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro's visit in 2000 and the announcement of a "global partnership" with India. Whereas the 2001 Indian prime minister's visit further cemented relations, the landmark visit was by Koizumi Junichiro in April 2005, which resulted in the most comprehensive bilateral agreement ever signed between India and Japan. The eight-fold initiative covered vast ground, importantly including defense cooperation. Thus, a new "Japan-India strategic partnership" started taking shape. Undoubtedly, China looms large in Japanese attempts to seek closer relations with India. China's rise obviously poses serious challenges to Japan. It not only severely undercuts Japan's role and influence in the Asia-Pacific region but there is a direct clash of interests, too. For the first time in the last several centuries, Japan has to contend with the rise of a new power center in its vicinity and its impact on the regional order in East Asia. It would be too simplistic, however, to link the new-found Japan's interest in India to its concerns about China. There are other motives such as economic, maritime and a number of non-traditional security issues, and, of course, the future architecture of Asian security.

The new US-Japan-India triangle is going to be much more substantial and important in the coming years than probably any other triangle, impacting not only on East Asia but on the world at large, as well. For the first time, the three large, well-established democracies have more convergence than clash of interests. This trilateral relationship is likely driven by a range of factors not necessarily limited to the management of

China's rise. It is necessary to differentiate the changed nature of these partnerships from Cold War threat-based to post-Cold War interest-driven. Thanks to globalization and growing interdependence, no major power can afford to openly antagonize any counterpart. Any conflictual situation is simply too heavy a price to pay. Thus, notwithstanding the acrimony, rancor, and suspicion, either Japan and China or the US and China or China and India have to find ways to address each other's concerns. The common interests that govern the US-Japan-India triangle are democracy, respect for civilian liberties, rule of law, terrorism, WMD proliferation, export controls, maritime security, disaster management, management of Asian security, etc. As Richard Armitage, former deputy secretary of state, rightly pointed out:

India is a very young country, and will soon have the largest and fastest-growing middle class in the whole world. India is going to be a tremendous power in the world. India's society is open, free, and transparent, so it poses no threat to the international community . . . The US and Japan should be working closely together to deepen ties with India. The point is not to contain China. The point is to embrace India as a nation with which we share common values of democracy and openness. India is looking East, and political leaders in Washington and Tokyo should embrace that.¹¹

A similar sentiment was expressed by Shyam Saran, a former foreign secretary of India:

India and the United States could contribute to a better balance of power in the Asian region at a time when a major process of realignment is taking place on the continent with the emergence of China as a "global economic power house" and New Delhi poised to be a major player, as well. The US, Mr. Saran claimed, had been very careful to put across that it wasn't engaged in any containment policy regarding China. And, I wonder if that's at all practical, given the scale of the US-China engagement, especially on the business and investment side."¹²

¹¹ "Armitage on Asia," *PacNet*, March 23, 2006, <http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/pac0612.pdf>.

¹² Amit Baruah, "India, US can Contribute to Better Balance of Power in the Asian Region: Shyam Saran," *The Hindu*, November 29, 2005, <http://www.thehindu.com/2005/11/29/stories/2005112919470900.htm>.

What it signifies is that India has become for the first time in several decades a factor and player in East Asian international relations. India was neither consulted nor involved in the deliberations leading to the creation of regional multilateral mechanisms, both economic and security related, in the early 1990s. When the first East Asian Summit was proposed to be convened in late 2005, India could no longer be ignored despite reservations by some countries.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, relations among major powers will to a large extent determine the nature of East Asian international relations and regional security even as the region hogs the global spotlight. This unprecedented economic dynamism is, however, accompanied by enormous political uncertainty. The great power relations are undergoing a major transformation wherein there are both competitive and cooperative elements. The emergence of nontraditional security issues, particularly terrorism and nuclear proliferation as major global concerns, along with globalization are having a profound effect on the way the major powers interact with each other. There are elements of wariness about the rise of new powers and their impact on redrawing the regional political and economic architecture, and hence attempts at “balancing” by employing the strategy of “hedging.” At the same time, they need to cooperate because of strong economic stakes and commonly shared interests and concerns. The US needs Chinese cooperation to rein in the recalcitrant North Korean regime on the nuclear question and to maintain peace across the Taiwan Straits. China needs the US for markets, capital, and technology and to ensure that Japan does not embark on a militaristic path once again. Japan needs China for its economic recovery and China needs Japanese investments, technology, and aid. Japan also needs the US as a security guarantor, and the US wants Japan for its forward deployment and as an alliance partner for its East Asian strategy. The US and Japan look at India both as an economic opportunity and to counterbalance China, where as India wants their capital and technologies and a potential partnership to enhance its security and political standing. There is also a limit to India and China in maintaining an antagonistic relationship. China needs a friendly India so that it will not become a part of the coalition to

contain China. Similarly, India wants a friendly China because of its leverage with Pakistan. This does not mean there is no competition among them, nor have the suspicions about each other gone away. The emerging pattern of relations among Russia, China, the US, and India thus becomes important. The strengthening of relations between China and Russia and between India and the US (and Japan) is an indication of a new permutation of power balancing.

What is noteworthy is that a rising China and India are emerging not just as megamarkets and economic powerhouses but also as military powers equipped with nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. With Japan poised to play a larger political role, the regional political architecture will undergo a major change. For the first time in history, the region has to contend with the prospect of three powers simultaneously aspiring to play a larger role. They can offer numerous opportunities for the region to significantly improve its economic prosperity but can also pose serious challenges if they start competing with each other or if they perceive that their interests are becoming undermined due to these changes. The recent tense relationship between China and Japan is a good example. Thus, there are, on one hand, economic imperatives pushing the entire region to reap the benefits of economic cooperation, but political and security factors, fueled by historical suspicions and mistrust, are emerging as impediments that can potentially jeopardize economic cooperation attempts, on the other. A greater appreciation of the nature of evolving great power relations thus becomes crucial to understanding the East Asian dynamic.

The ostensible principal purpose of regional multilateralism is to promote economic cooperation and politically engage the major powers to encourage dialogue and transparency in security and military matters. The results, however, have been mixed. Due mainly to these structures, attempts to economically integrate the region and thus increase their interdependence so that it will reduce the chances of conflict and increase stakes have made some progress, but they have not been able to mitigate security concerns altogether. The ARF, for instance, has not been able to shed the image of a talk shop since it has not made much headway in addressing any regional security issue, such as East Timor or the North Korean nuclear crisis. Both in Washington and Tokyo, interest in the ARF is waning, although Beijing is more upbeat whereas in the case of India and Russia, their stakes are limited anyway. Multilateralism either at the

global or the regional level will succeed only as long as major world powers extend their full support, and this will happen only if they perceive that their interests are advanced in such an initiative. There is obviously no uniformity of opinion on the role of security multilateralism in East Asia, whereas there appears to be greater enthusiasm for economic multilateralism despite areas where differences persist.

Among the many strategic triangles involving major powers, two seem to have drawn considerable attention: the earlier Russia-China-India triangle and the present US-Japan-India triangle. The first, which came about as a Russian initiative primarily to counter US-led unilateralism and on certain shared values, has failed to make progress primarily because of a lack of shared political perceptions and continuing mistrust between China and India. The second triangle seems to be more promising as the constituents face fewer contradictions. There are, of course, limitations for any triangle because of other imperatives.

Insofar as India is concerned, the “Look East” policy will remain one of its top priorities, which will result in further engagement with East Asia. Started with the limited objective of reestablishing relations with Southeast Asia, it has since evolved into a comprehensive policy. India has some advantages unlike other regional powers since it neither has the historical baggage that plague other nations nor any land or maritime disputes in Southeast Asia. Hence, it has been relatively more successful in forging defense cooperation relations with several countries of the region. India is also striving to become a major economic player. What is certain is that, along with its increased engagement, India has become an inalienable part of the East Asian political and economic calculus.

In any case, East Asia will have to grapple with competing interests of major powers as its international relations will be largely determined by the nature of inter-major powers relations. Asia’s future will not necessarily have to be Europe’s past, but the political flux that characterizes the region will continue for the foreseeable future.

Non-proliferation and Political Interests: Russia's Policy Dilemmas in the Six-party Talks

HA Yongchool and SHIN Beomshik

This article is an effort to explain where and why the US and Russia agree or disagree on the North Korean nuclear issues and non-proliferation on the Korean Peninsula and identify the characteristics and causes of Russian non-proliferation policy toward Northeast Asia. In addition, this article will show how the Russian position is reflected in the six-party talks for the second North Korean nuclear crisis, and will clarify the significance and constraints of Russia's nuclear non-proliferation policy in the Northeast Asian context.

First, it analyzes Russia's general positions on nuclear non-proliferation in Northeast Asia and second, it attempts to explain why there has been a lack of consistency in Russia's position on North Korean nuclear issues as reflected in Russia's approach to the six-party talks for the second North Korean nuclear crisis.¹

Russia and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Model

US-Russian cooperation played the most important role in the formation of a non-proliferation regime. Both during and after the Cold War, US-Russian cooperation played a central role in non-proliferation not only at

¹ This is a revised and updated version of the paper read at the conference, "US-Russia: Regional Security Issues and Interests" (Washington, DC, April 24–26, 2006).

the global level but also at the regional level in Europe and Eurasia. However, despite all the successes and achievements of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the rising optimism about nuclear security is disappearing.² The weakening of US-Russia cooperation has made it difficult to maintain a multilateral basis for dealing with nuclear proliferation at the regional level since the late 1990s. The US strengthened its unilateral security policy based on its power rather than multilateral security cooperation, and in this situation, the US and Russia have been unable to reach an agreement on nuclear issues.³ As the initial optimism faded, the permanent members of the UN Security Council could not properly cope with Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation, and failed to prevent the efforts of India, Pakistan, Iraq, and North Korea from developing WMD. In addition, they disagreed on policies toward Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, showing a lack of common interest and perception.⁴ Under such circumstances, India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests and became de facto nuclear powers with intermediate-range ballistic missiles. Moreover, the danger of super-terrorism, coupled with the possible use of nuclear weapons by terrorist groups, increased. It turned out that Iran and North Korea had purchased nuclear technology and equipment, and their nuclear programs seriously challenged the international non-proliferation regime. Thus, it has become increasingly necessary to develop new forms of cooperation to face these challenges.⁵

Differences in perspectives between the US and Russia on the Iranian and North Korean nuclear problems are unmistakable. As a backdrop to understanding these differences, first, three models for the resolution of nuclear non-proliferation will be introduced. The main feature of the Ukrainian model can be characterized by active US-Russia cooperation and its diplomatic settlement of nuclear weapons diffusion. After the

² Alexei Arbatov, "Horizontal Proliferation: New Changes," *Russia in Global Politics* 4, no. 6 (2004).

³ Aleksei Arbatov and Vladimir Dvorkin, eds., *Iadernoe sderzhivanie i nerasprostranenie* (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 2005), 12–14; George Perkovich et al., *Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), 9–10.

⁴ Philip Saunders, "New Approaches to Non-proliferation: Supplementing or Supplanting the Regime?" *The Non-proliferation Review* 8, no. 3 (2001): 128–130.

⁵ For example, see Perkovich et al., *Universal Compliance*.

collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine possessed 130 SS-19, 46 SS-24, approximately 3,000 strategic nuclear weapons, and 600 cruise missiles, which ranked Ukraine the 3rd nuclear power in the world. The US and Russia persuaded Ukraine to give up its nuclear weapons through compensation, so the Ukrainian congress ratified the NPT in November 1994 based on the Lisbon Protocol. Its last nuclear warhead was finally transferred to Russia in June 1996, and the US compensated Ukraine for this process. It exemplifies a positive-sum game of nuclear non-proliferation with which the parties involved are satisfied.⁶

However, such a model could not be applied to other cases. Libya carried out anti-western policy based on its seventh-largest petroleum production in the world, and tried to develop nuclear weapons for the purpose of securing its position in Northern Africa and the Islamic world and preparing for a US attack and a war with Israel. In 1979, Libya imported a nuclear reactor from Russia for research purposes and maintained nuclear cooperation with Russia until 2002. In reaction to Libya's efforts to develop WMD, the US passed the "Iran and Libya Sanctions Act" in 1996 and imposed non-military sanctions by suspending Libya's foreign trade. Before this, the UN Security Council accused Libya of terrorism and passed Resolutions No. 731, 748 and 883 in 1992 and 1993, imposing non-military sanctions. These sanctions hugely damaged the Libyan economy; Libya finally ended the UN sanctions only after promising to compensate the victims' families of the 1988 terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 2003. Especially after the Bush Administration took office, the resolute US attitude on the war on terrorism and its classification of Libya as a target state for a preemptive nuclear strike on Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), and after 9 months of negotiations as well as contact with the British intelligence agency, Libya finally gave up its nuclear weapons program on December 19, 2003, right before the US attack on Iraq.⁷ In short, in this model, the US achieved its objective of non-proliferation by putting the pressure of non-military sanctions through the UN Security Council and increasing the threat of preemptive strike without any active objection from Russia.

⁶ Roman Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations* (Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 1996).

⁷ Shannon A. Kile, "Nuclear Arms Control and Non-proliferation," *SIPRI Yearbook: Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security* (2004), 617-619.

Finally, the Iraqi model is an example of using military means. Iraq neither developed nuclear weapons nor opposed to the end accepting UN or International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) investigations. The UN Security Council had already passed Resolution No. 687 in 1991 and imposed economic sanctions on Iraq. United Nations Special Committee (UNSCOM) had also conducted 250 field investigations by December 1998 and removed 48 long-range missiles and 690 tons of materials for making chemical weapons. However, even after these investigations, economic sanctions were not lifted, so Iraq took a non-cooperative posture toward UNSCOM activities. UNSCOM withdrew its investigation team, and the US and the UK bombed suspected WMD facilities in Baghdad. Afterward, the Bush Administration announced its warning of preemptive strike on September 20, 2002 and gave an ultimatum on November 8, 2002. The UN Security Council supported the US with Resolution No. 1441, increasing the possibility of military action, and Iraq finally agreed to accept United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and IAEA investigations. However, these investigations found no evidence of Iraq's nuclear program. In spite of Saddam Hussein's appeal that there was no nuclear program in Iraq, the investigation team's request for a cautious reaction, and the objections of Russia and other UN Security Council members, the US invaded Iraq and completely removed any hint of Iraq's nuclear development. Similarly, the US attempt of non-proliferation through military action was viewed as a unilateral act.

The US and Russia currently disagree on exactly how to resolve the Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues. Especially regarding the North Korean nuclear issue, the US favors the Libyan model, while China favors the Ukrainian model. China appears to believe that the Ukrainian model might persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear program by providing a multilateral security guarantee as well as economic compensation. But Russia seems to have some ambivalence towards these two models.⁸

⁸ John S. Park, "Inside Multilateralism: The Six-party Talks," *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (2005): 84-85.

North Korean Nuclear Problem and Russian Interests in Northeast Asia

Although the US and Russia agree with the goal of non-proliferation as a general principle, they disagree on dealing with specific cases. After President Putin took office, significant changes have been made in Russia's national security strategy, based on the reevaluation of various factors such as the expansion of NATO, ABM, MD, and terrorism.⁹ Russia pursued a series of security and foreign policies to seek a new strategic balance in the US-led world order and tried to strengthen its benefits and causes.¹⁰

So, what is Russia pursuing between North Korea and the US? In fact, Russia seems to have good reason to support Iran's position.¹¹ However, North Korea does not appear to bring as much economic benefit to Russia as Iran does. If so, why would Russia support North Korea's position?

Russia's interest in North Korea and Asia-Pacific has been consistent since the Soviet period. Various multilateral formulas have been proposed by the Russians since the late 1960s. For instance, the Soviet Union proposed the "Asian Collective Security System." Mikhail Gorbachev, in a similar vein, also proposed various multilateral formulas, such as the "Comprehensive International Security System," an Asian version of the "Helsinki Conference," and the "All Asia Forum." After the collapse of the Soviet Union, President Boris Yeltsin also proposed the establishment of a multilateral negotiation and regional risk-management system for

⁹ Cf. Celeste A. Wallander, "Wary of the West: Russian Security Policy at the Millennium," *Arms Control Today* 30, no. 2 (2000), <http://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/march00/cwmr00.htm> (accessed August 21, 2004); Mark Kramer, "What is Driving Russia's New Strategic Concept?" *PONARS Policy Memo* 103 (2001), <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~ponars/POLICY%20MEMOS/Kramer103.htm> (accessed July 21, 2005); Nikolai Sokov, "Russia's New National Security Concept: The Nuclear Angle," *Global Beat*, January 19, 2000, <http://www.nyu.edu/globalbeat/nuclear/CNS0100.html> (accessed July 21, 2005); Stephen J. Blank, *Threats to Russian Security: The View from Moscow* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2000).

¹⁰ The Russian and Eurasian Program of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *An Agenda for Renewal: U.S.-Russian Relations* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2000); "U.S.-Russian Relations: A Turning Point?" *Russia Watch: Analysis and Commentary* 5 (2001): 1, 4–8.

¹¹ Vladimir A. Orlov and Alexander Vinnikov, "The Great Guessing Game: Russia and the Iranian Nuclear Issue," *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2005).

Northeast Asia when he visited Korea in November 1992. In March 1994 during the first North Korean nuclear crisis, Russia, emphasizing its position as a member of Northeast Asia, proposed the eight-party talks, which included participants from North and South Korea, Russia, the US, China, Japan, the IAEA and the UN Secretary General. Russia also proposed ten-party talks (North and South Korea, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Japan, the UN Secretary General, and the IAEA Secretary General) for the Korean Peninsula that would include general and working-level meetings.¹² Most recently, regarding the second North Korean nuclear crisis, Aleksandr Losiukov, deputy minister of the Russian Foreign Ministry, proposed six-party talks in October 2002 in order to create an environment for the resolution of the issue.¹³ Thus, Russia has shown a consistent position on the Northeast Asian multilateral security system.

However, the rise of China and the subsequent change in the balance of power, the most important change in Northeast Asia in the post-Cold War era, is posing a great challenge for Russia. Because the US will cautiously pursue policies to balance against the rising challenger, China is also very cautious in responding to this. In fact, the Bush Administration does not consider Russia a serious enemy at this point. Assuming there will be no major war for hegemonic change in Eurasia for at least a generation, they conclude that the potential threat referred to as the “hydraulic pressure of geopolitics” is moving toward East Asia.¹⁴ Especially because there are conflicting interests of major powers in this region, the US believes that it has a special stake in maintaining its regional hegemony. Furthermore, serious militarization is taking place in the region.¹⁵ In light of these geopolitical changes, Russia felt a need to

¹² Such a proposal shows that the working-group meeting after the second round of the six-party talks has been raised by Russia. For Russia’s proposals for a multilateral security system on the Korean Peninsula, see: Valentin Moiseev, “On the Korean Settlement” *International Affairs* (Moscow) 43, no. 3 (1997).

¹³ Vladimir Kutakhov, “Russia Offers Six-party Discussion Format in Northeast Asia,” ITAR-TASS, October 1, 2002.

¹⁴ PARK Kunyoung, “Bush Administration’s East Asia Policy,” *State Strategy* 7, no. 4 (2001).

¹⁵ Combined military expenditures of the East Asian nations reached \$165 billion at the beginning of the twenty-first century, twice as much as in 1990. The Asian share of military purchases from US military producers rose from 10 percent to 25 percent of US arms exports.

increase its weakening influence and renew its presence in Northeast Asia. In fact, Russia assesses that its influence in this region, as in Europe, diminished after NATO's expansion. After all, Northeast Asia is searching for a new balance of power due to the rise of China, and this circumstance makes it difficult for regional powers to decisively choose their policies.

In addition, the issue of nuclear proliferation is very important in Northeast Asia. Setting aside two North Korean nuclear crises, the two largest major nuclear powers, the US and Russia, are deeply involved in this region, and China has recently been trying to raise its nuclear capability. This condition may make vertical nuclear proliferation more serious in this region. Moreover, Japan and South Korea possess the capability to produce nuclear armaments and have a special interest in North Korea's nuclear program. Thus, if North Korea becomes a nuclear power, Northeast Asia is more likely to experience serious vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation.¹⁶ This situation will not only cause instability on Russia's eastern border but also place on Russia the extra burden of adapting itself to the new competition for nuclear weapons.

Russia's Northeast Asia policy cannot but be influenced by its various geostrategic interests, such as relations with major powers such as the US, China and Japan, its complex calculations regarding the two Koreas, as well as by its own political and economic factors. All these make Russia's Northeast Asian policy extremely complex.¹⁷

In the "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" released in June 2000, President Putin stated clearly that Russia's Korea policy would focus on guaranteeing Russia's equal participation in Korean issues and maintaining balanced relations with both North and South Korea.¹⁸ This policy intended to focus on economic cooperation with South Korea, while focusing on political and security cooperation with North Korea.

¹⁶ For nuclear armament and capability of Northeast Asian countries, see Aleksei Arbatov and Vasili Mikheev, eds., *Iadernoe rasprostranenie v Severo-Vostochnoi Azii* (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 2005).

¹⁷ Vasily Mikheev, "Multilateral Approaches to Peace Building in Northeast Asia: Cooperation-Security Strategy," in YOON Youngo, ed., *Six Party Non-governmental Dialogue in Northeast Asia*, The KAIS International Conference Series, no. 15 (Seoul: Korean Association of International Studies, 2005).

¹⁸ "Kontseptsiia vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 (August, 2000).

Putin attempted to regain Russia's strategic position on the Korean Peninsula by restoring rather than by harming Russian-North Korean relations. In short, Putin's Korea policy was based on a pragmatic policy line to overcome Russia's dilemma by pursuing the "causal benefit" of expanding its political role on the Korean Peninsula and the "practical benefit" of securing economic benefit by strengthening political and security ties with North Korea on the basis of the "New Russia-North Korea Friendship Treaty" while increasing economic cooperation with South Korea.

What does Putin hope to achieve through this equidistant foreign policy on the Korean Peninsula?

First, the central issue in East Asia for Russia is to ensure its position and restore its influence on the Korean Peninsula. Because Russia shares its Eastern border with the Korean Peninsula, the Korean Peninsula has always been included in Russia's national interest; therefore, Russia is determined to play a central role in resolving the Korean issue.¹⁹ Russia's national interest in the Korean Peninsula can be clearly defined by Korea's significance as a strategic point in Northeast Asia, i.e., a geostrategic gate connecting the continent and the ocean.²⁰ In order to restore its influence and build a geopolitical context (favorable for Russia) in Northeast Asia, Putin needed strong diplomatic efforts to build an influential position on the Korean Peninsula. Russian strategists such as Aleksei Voznenskii commented on the geopolitical significance of the Korean Peninsula: "The situation on the Korean Peninsula is not only a simple political problem, but an important coordinate to decide the flow of international security, politics, diplomacy, and economics in the Asian-pacific region in the future. Therefore, states that are not involved in the Korean issue will be excluded from East Asian affairs."²¹ In other words, Russia's failure to be involved in Korean Peninsula issues would mean relinquishing its influence on the entire Asia-Pacific region. So it is very

¹⁹ Vadim Tkachenko, "North-South Summit and Russia-North Korea Relations," *KIEP Global Economic Review* 3, no. 7 (2000).

²⁰ SHIN Beomshik, "Politika Rossii v otnoshenii Koreiskogo poluostrova vo vremia 2-ogo prezidentskogo pravleniia Vladimira Putina i ee znachenie dla Respubliki Korei," *Zhurnal slavianovedeniia* (Seoul) 19, no. 2 (2004): 675-710.

²¹ *Daehan Maeil Daily*, February 19, 2001.

natural that Russia regards diplomacy related to the Korean Peninsula as a “center nerve” of Russia’s Northeast Asia strategy.

Thus, Russia’s key security interest in the Korean Peninsula is to form a peaceful and stable Korean Peninsula, which could help Russia focus its own domestic reform. Russia’s security goal on the Korean Peninsula can be summarized as preventing direct military conflicts between the two Koreas or military conflicts caused by the intervention of a third party. The former is to remove the security cost produced by the military instability on the Korean Peninsula, and the latter is to prevent a domino effect in the Northeast Asian arms race that may seriously destabilize Russia’s Far East security.

Second, Putin’s political interest in the Korean Peninsula is to be involved in moderating Korean issues and, if possible, Northeast Asia’s balance of power and consequently in strengthening Russia’s geopolitical position according to its national interest.

Third, Putin’s Russia sets four economic goals in the peninsula.²² The first goal is to make the Korean Peninsula a bridgehead into the Asia-Pacific economy. As a Eurasian country, Russia seeks a balanced development of eastern territories beyond the Urals and influence in Asia. By increasing cooperation with South Korea, which has a significant geopolitical position in the region, Russia is attempting to enlarge its field of activity into ASEAN, APEC, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and to strengthen its position in the Asia-Pacific region by joining ASEM.²³ The second goal is to open markets for Russia’s competitive products such as energy resources, high-tech weapons, and nuclear technology. The third goal is to develop an economic partnership for the development of Russia’s economic “desert,” Siberia and the Russian Far East. From the standpoint of national development strategy in the twenty-first century, Russia is actively pursuing projects to develop the large oil and gas resources in Siberia and the Far East. Given the geopolitical competition with Japan and China, Russia regards South Korea as an important source of capital and technology for the exploitation of resources; economic revitalization

²² Georgii Toloraia, “Rossiia-Respublika Koreia: posle sammita v Seule,” *Problemy Dal’nego Vostoka*, no. 2 (2001): 14–19.

²³ Alexandre Mansourov, “Russian Policy towards East Asia under President Putin,” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 15, no. 1 (2001): 42–71.

in this area is encouraging South Korea's large-scale economic cooperation and investment.²⁴ The fourth goal is to extend the final destination of the Trans-Siberian Railway (TSR), the Eurasian land-bridge of transportation, to the South. Russia has recently emphasized the connection of the Trans-Siberian Railway and Trans-Korean Railway (TKR). Russia once stated, "We are willing to invest more than one billion dollars in the TSR-TKR connection project," and made diplomatic efforts to persuade the two Koreas to connect the main course of TKR to TSR along the east coast line.²⁵

In fact, Putin's new equidistant diplomacy, provided by the normalization of Russia-North Korean relations, has helped Russia to recover its geopolitical position on the Korean Peninsula. North Korea is an important geopolitical leverage for Russia to control the situation on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia. In the future, Russia may demand greater reward from South Korea by using Russian-North Korean relations, and if the reward does not meet its expectations, Russia may use diplomatic resources that South Korea does not want to see. This option may include sales of high-tech weapons and military support for North Korea. However, Russia has more diverse and important political and economic interests with the South than with the North, and is less likely to provoke the South. If Russia inevitably has to give military support to the North, it is more likely to limit that support to defensive weapons, considering strategic stability on the Korean Peninsula, and even in this case, it will demand hard currency based on its history of reciprocity.²⁶

²⁴ IV Baikal'skii Ekonomicheskii Forum, "Reziime doklada Soveta Federatsii Federal'nogo Sobraniia Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 'Strategiia razvitiia Rossii v ATR v 21-om veke' (po itogam Baikal'skogo ekonomicheskogo foruma)," <http://www.forum.baikal.ru/about/strateg.htm> (accessed December 5, 2004).

²⁵ SHIN Beomshik, "Politika Rossii v otnoshenii Koreiskogo poluostrova." Besides, there are other economic policy goals such as the redemption of the North Korean bond, the promotion of North-South-Russian triangular cooperation to repair North Korean industrial facilities (that the Soviet Union had built), the construction of a natural gas pipeline that goes all the way across the Korean Peninsula and South Korea's participation in the free economic zone project for foreign companies in Russia's Far East.

²⁶ Putin's security cooperation with North Korea focuses more on the "political security cooperation" for deterring US hegemonic behaviors and strengthening its geostrategic position on the Korean Peninsula than "military security cooperation" for providing high-tech weapons. For example, when Kim Jongil visited Russia, Russia agreed with North Korea regarding observance of ABM, opposition to MD, North Korea's insistence on the

Here, we can see a facet of Russia's dilemma in Northeast Asia. In short, Russia is apparently pursuing an equidistant policy toward the two Koreas based on the separation of economy and politics, but in reality, it cannot help but maintain its Southern bias based on realistic calculations of national interest. Russia needs to cooperate with South Korea for its national projects, such as energy development in Siberia and Far East, the connection of TKR and TSR, its access to the Korean weaponry market monopolized by the US, and its entry into world economic organizations, soliciting South Korea's security interest in the six-party talks and multilateral security system in this region.

Thus, Russia may face numerous and complex difficulties in Northeast Asia in the event of military tension caused by the North Korean nuclear crisis. Russia's worries primarily begin with the fact that unlike Iraq, North Korea shares a 19-kilometer border with Russia and is directly and structurally affected by the stability of Northeast Asia. First of all, a nuclear North Korea may threaten the strategic stability of Northeast Asia and Russia's Far East security by sparking a chain reaction of nuclear armament by potential semi-nuclear powers such as Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, and by providing an excuse for the development of a US MD system and the rearmament of Japan. In short, Russia cannot but worry about a potential arms race in its own backyard, a change of the regional security order, and unstable relations in this region.

Furthermore, Russia has strategic concerns about a military conflict on the Korean Peninsula that it can neither ignore nor in which it can fail to become involved. Unless Russia gives up North Korea, it will inevitably have to deal with deterioration of relations with the US, but North Korean refugees in the Far East will also be politically troubling for Russia.²⁷ If the US conducts surgical strikes on the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, radioactive fallout could be a potential disaster for the region. In the economic sphere, conflicts on the Korean Peninsula will hurt two of Russia's most important national projects of energy development in West Siberia and the Far East as well as the TSR-TKR connection.

withdrawal of US troops from South Korea and emphasis on the peaceful purpose of North Korea's missile development, but there was no military agreement on sales of high-tech weapons. Russia's reluctance regarding military security cooperation with North Korea is due to the North's inability to pay and Russia's intention not to provoke the South.

²⁷ Goergii Bulychev, "Koreiskaia politika Rossii: popytka skhematizatsii," *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka*, 2000, no. 2.

In conclusion, as Losiukov, the vice minister of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, once stated, “A military conflict on the Korean Peninsula is not conducive to Russia’s national interest.”²⁸ Military conflicts on the Korean Peninsula due to the North Korean nuclear crisis are a worse-case scenario for Russia. Russia currently regards stability on its borders as the central issue of its foreign policy in East Asia in order to secure its domestic dynamics, such as the consolidation of democracy, the development of a market economy and political and social stabilization. Since Russia is seeking a peaceful regional environment, the North Korean nuclear issue is one of the focal points of its foreign policy. Russia cannot sit back as a passive spectator regarding the North Korean nuclear issue because it needs to eliminate the security cost caused by military instability on the Korean Peninsula, recover its national pride hurt by being left out of the four-party talks during the Yeltsin era, and balance against US hegemonic behavior in the region.²⁹ This explains why Russia was the first nation that proposed being an active moderator when the second Yongbyon crisis might invite a possible US preemptive military strike against the North.

Dilemma and Role of Russia in the Six-party Talks

Russia’s reaction to the second North Korean nuclear crisis was to secure its national interest, but Russia also had other dilemmas. In fact, after the Putin Administration took office, Russia’s North Korea policy became more active than before. However, Russia’s gains have been marginal thus far. For instance, Putin visited North Korea during the missile crisis and spoke about the North Korean position to his Western counterparts at the G8 Summit in Okinawa, and this was a clear shift of Russia’s foreign policy in Northeast Asia toward a more active role. Since then, Russia has supported North Korea’s position on the nuclear issue, despite surrounding countries’ suspicion of the North’s nuclear program. When US Special Envoy Kelly announced in October 2002 that North Korea had admitted to developing a nuclear program, Russia maintained a neutral

²⁸ *ITAR-TASS*, January 19, 2003.

²⁹ Georgii Bulychev and Aleksandr Vorontsov, “Voina kompromissov: Rossiia nachinaet mirit’ SSha i KNDR,” *Kommersant*, January 16, 2003, also available at <http://north-korea.narod.ru/vorontsov.htm>.

position, demanding that the US provide “hard evidence” and that North Korea explain US suspicion. However, after North Korea admitted its development of nuclear weapons in the three-party talks in Beijing, Russia’s efforts based on such reservation were pursued in vain, resulting in a diplomatic crisis. Putin had persuaded the West to believe that North Korea could be a trustworthy partner and keep its international agreements, and had worked on a framework to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue since 2000, but the North’s unveiling of its nuclear program put Russia in an awkward position. Critics in Russia asserted that the North Korean pronouncement made President Putin’s foreign policy regarding the North useless, and increased the international community’s distrust of Russia. A report published by the “Foundation for Prospective Studies and Initiatives” argued that if North Korea does not give up its nuclear program, Russia should participate in international sanctions against North Korea for the sake of its reputation.³⁰ Similarly, Russia’s reaction to North Korea, which rendered useless Russia’s attempt to strengthen its position in Northeast Asia using North Korean leverage, has a flip side, and at this point, Russia’s first dilemma in choosing between hard reaction and soft reaction can be understood.

However, Russia’s official reaction focused on North Korea’s intention and capability of its nuclear program. And in this situation, Russia overcame the first phase of its dilemma, redefining its role as the “honest broker.” That is because Russia recognized through its communication channel with the North that the purpose of the North Korean nuclear program was not to secure nuclear deterrence but to pursue a “regime protection function.”³¹

³⁰ *Rossia i mir: 2003* (Moscow: Foundation for Prospective Studies and Initiatives and The Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), 2002), http://www.psifoundation.ru/en/publications/russia-003/excerpts_from_the_report.html; see also <http://www.psifoundation.ru/publications/russia2002/index.html>.

³¹ In the earlier stages, nuclear weapons were considered by North Korean rulers as an additional factor in the regional military balance on the Korean Peninsula. Now, after regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq have been overthrown by the US and the Western coalition through the use of military means, nuclear weapons are starting to be perceived as a “last-resort guarantee” for the preservation of North Korean regime in a global correlation of forces. See Alexander Nikitin, “The Changing Priorities of Russian Foreign Policy and New Mechanisms for Security in Eurasia,” The First KPSA-RPSA/MGIMO Joint Annual Conference Proceedings *Korean-Russian Cooperation for Peace and Prosperity in Northeast Asia* (Seoul: IFANS, Nov. 30–Dec. 1, 2005).

So Russia dispatched Deputy Minister Losiukov to Pyongyang as a special envoy in January 2003, where he listened to the North's opinion and proposed a "package deal" as an amicable solution to the unresolved issues. This was Russia's first response to the North Korean nuclear issue as an active moderator that listened to Kim Jongil and other high-ranking officials and delivered the North's position to South Korea, the US, China and Japan. In this process, Russia presented both a "package deal" and a "collective security assurance" plan. The "package deal" included 1) that both the US and North Korea observe the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the Agreed Framework of Geneva, 2) that the US and North Korea resume bilateral and multilateral talks and provide security assurance for the North through these talks, and 3) that the US and other countries resume humanitarian and economic support to the North. Since a US-North Korean non-aggression pact is actually impossible to achieve, a "collective security assurance" can be understood as a compromise.³²

Russia's official position on this issue became clear when Foreign Minister Sergei Ivanov met with Canadian Maurice Strong, top UN envoy for North Korea, in March 2003. Ivanov emphasized that Russia's proposal for the "package deal" is the only solution to the crisis and insisted that the international community maintain a "cautious and balanced approach." Emphasis was put on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through North Korea's observation of the NPT and acceptance of the IAEA's inspections, and on peaceful political-diplomatic resolution of the crisis through direct US-North Korean talks rather than on a military approach.³³ There are two implications for this argument. First, Russia agreed with North Korea's position that the North Korean nuclear issue should be resolved between the US and North Korea. However, Russia made an official announcement that it "objected to North Korea possessing nuclear weapons, and at the same time, to the US's military pressures on North Korea."³⁴ This Russian position shows Russia's second dilemma on the issue. Although Russia does not want nuclear

³² *Izvestiia*, January 20, 2003.

³³ "O vizite v Moskve Spetsial'nogo poslannika General'nogo Sekretaria OON po KNDR M. Stronga," Press Release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation, no. 546-06-03-2003 (March 6, 2003).

³⁴ *Vremia novostei*, January 20, 2003.

proliferation on the Korean Peninsula, it must moderate negotiations and advocate the North's concerns, and cannot therefore merely follow a US initiative on economic and/or military sanctions.³⁵

Russia's proposal implies that it has already acknowledged, through a steady line of communication with the North, that North Korea developed its nuclear program to counter a security threat from the US, and also believes that bilateral talks should come before security assurance from the US. Therefore, Russia urged direct US-North Korean dialogues along with China, contrary to its previous policy. While Russia complained strongly when it was excluded from the previous four-party talks, it accepted that the Beijing three-party talks on April 23–25, 2003, would not include Russia, and understood that the Beijing talks were direct US-North Korean dialogues mediated by China. However, Russia insisted that bilateral talks between the US and North Korea or the three-party talks were insufficient to build a fundamental solution to the issue. They argued that the talks should develop into six-party talks that would include other regional powers, such as Russia, Japan and South Korea.

After the US rejected direct talks with North Korea, the North expressed on May 25, 2003, that it might accept a US proposal for multilateral talks. After July 23, it officially informed the other countries of its acceptance of the talks. In particular, on August 1, 2003, the Russian Foreign Ministry announced in detail the North Korean position on multilateral talks after consulting with North Korea's Ambassador to Russia Park Euichun. Along with China, Russia played a very critical role in persuading North Korea to accept the multilateral talks.³⁶ China and Russia succeeded in persuading North Korea to understand that the US would not accept the non-aggression pact and that North Korea needed the multilateral framework to guarantee the North Korean regime's survival through mutual compromise and agreement. In this process, Russia appeared to succeed in carrying out its role as a moderator, overcoming the second aspect of its dilemma.

Russia's third dilemma is that North Korea proposed to include Russia in the crisis solution process. It was not the US, but North Korea that insisted on including Russia in the six-party talks. The US tried to

³⁵ On this difference, see Alexander Zhebin, "The Bush Doctrine and Russia: A Great Discord," *Asian Perspective* 27, no. 4 (2003): 147–181.

³⁶ *New York Times*, April 12, 2003.

isolate Russia from the North Korean nuclear issue. Just as the US excluded Russia from the four-party talks in 1994, the US left out Russia and tried to expand the three-party talks into a five-party talks that included North and South Korea, US, China, and Japan.³⁷ Of course, the US opened the possibility of including Russia, but it depended on whether Russia was willing to agree with the US preference, namely the Libyan model of denuclearization. Although South Korea did not object to Russia's exclusion, North Korea wanted Russia to be involved in the multilateral process. Because of Russia's active efforts as a moderator, North Korea insisted on Russia's joining the talks, and the US accepted it.

In fact, after the US decided to participate in the five-party talks, China sent Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo to Pyongyang and urged Kim Jongil to accept the five-party talks. However, Kim Jongil rejected the five-party talks and insisted on holding six-party talks. Although Russia disapproved of North Korea's nuclear program, North Korea believed that Russia would support its position and lobby the US on its behalf. Furthermore, Kim Jongil called Putin in July 2003 and asked Russia to join and host the six-party talks. Putin agreed to join the six-party talks, but refused to host the talks because of the continuing Chinese efforts to mediate between the US and North Korea.³⁸ By including Russia in the process, North Korea expected Russia to check the US hard-line policy, and support North Korea's position. However, Russia did not wish to take the hosting role because Russia's in-between position was limited by its previously described dilemma. Instead, Russia has supported China's role as host of the six-party talks.

Russia's goal was to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear program by relaying the North's position, providing partial support for the North and urging the US to cooperate. Of course, this goal resulted from Russia's complex calculation of its position. Russia's position can be summarized as follows. First, Russia has a right to participate in the process of resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis as a regional power. Russia made its position clear by strengthening its geopolitical and geo-economic positions. Second, Russia made clear its objection to the

³⁷ *Segyeilbo*, June 14, 2003.

³⁸ ITO Tadashi, "Rokkakoku kyougi no butaiura Kim sousyoki 'Rosia de kaisai' yousei Putin daitouryou 'kenmohororo' kyohi" [PRC Source Cited on Putin Rejecting Kim Jongil's Request to Host Talks in Russia], *Sankei Shimbun*, September 9, 2003.

proliferation of WMD, including nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. North Korean proliferation would harm the stability of the Korean Peninsula and stimulate an arms race that could include the rearmament of Japan, threatening Russia's security in its Far East. Third, Russia made clear its strong support for a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue through dialogue. The outbreak of conflict on the Korean Peninsula would not only threaten Russia's security but also damage its national strategy of developing the Far East and Siberia. Consequently, in order to accomplish Russia's national strategy, peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis and stability on the Korean Peninsula are necessary for the development of the Russian Far East and Siberia, regional economic cooperation, and securing Russia's position as a regional power by connecting East Asia and Eurasia.

Russia's achievements through the four rounds of the six-party talks can be summarized as follows:

First of all, as mentioned before, the rapid development of Russian-North Korean relations after 2000 appeared to have enabled the six-party talks to occur. However, the six-party talks did not result directly from the restored relations between Russia and North Korea, but from Russia's positive image as an impartial moderator and its increased influence on the North. Although Putin's friendship with Kim Jongil may have been important, Russia's "persuasive power" became more influential than its "coercive power" over North Korea.

Second, Russia's role as an "honest broker" should be recognized. Russia hopes that its role as a moderator and its "package deal" proposal will play a critical role in the comprehensive and gradual resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis. In particular, Russia succeeded in relaying the North's position to other countries and persuading them of its merit.

Third, Russia prevented the rapid acceleration of tensions and helped avoid a conflict between the US and North Korea. After the US disclosure of the North's nuclear program in October 2002, Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov stated that no conclusion should be given without hard evidence. Russian Nuclear Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumiantsev also denied North Korea's capability of developing nuclear weapons.³⁹ While

³⁹ On the North's nuclear development capabilities, see: Larry A. Niksch, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program," *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, IB91141, June 9, 2003; Alexandre Y. Mansourov, "The Origins, Evolution, and Current Politics of the North

prospects for the second round of talks seemed uncertain in October 2003, high-ranking Russian military officers stated that North Korea was trying to develop nuclear weapons but did not yet possess them.⁴⁰ Russia's behavior can be understood as an attempt to check US efforts to drive North Korea into a corner. Russia's buffering role regarding the North's nuclear program gave other countries more time to respond discreetly to this issue, but it may also have negatively impacted on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula by giving more time for the North to continue proliferation.

Fourth, Russia has played the role of safety net for sudden changes or military conflict that may result from a second North Korean nuclear crisis, especially after the current Bush Administration upset North Korea with the statement of "ending the tyranny," which hurt the six-party talks. As a result, North Korea officially announced its possession of nuclear weapons and refused to participate in the talks. Such statements that imply regime change may worsen the North's perception of the US.⁴¹ Russia continued to object to such negative statements, although it acknowledges that changing the domestic regime is necessary for the ultimate resolution of the Korean Peninsula problem. If North Korea cannot change and join the international community, a crisis may recur and threaten Russia's national security once again. However, Russia prefers a gradual transformation over a sudden change through military means by helping the North cooperate with other nations, recover its economy and obtain multilateral security assurances. Even if North Korea starts a minor military conflict or the regime collapses, a large number of refugees may

Korean Nuclear Programs," *The Nonproliferation Review* 2, no. 3 (1995): 25–38; S. A. Letun, "The North's Capability of Developing Nuclear Weapons: Russian Perspectives and Prospects," paper presented at ROK-Russia Defence Forum "North Korean Nuclear Issue and Northeast Asian Security", co-hosted by the Korean Institute Defense Analyse (KIDA) and Russia Academy of Military Science, KIDA, Seoul, November 11, 2003.

⁴⁰ Even with regard to the North's announcement of nuclear possession in 2005, Konstantin Kosachev stated that it cannot be verified, and Russian scholars believe that North Korea's announcement is designed to get as much from the US as possible. According to the author's interview with Russia's Korean and military experts, North Korea does not possess nuclear weapons. This is one of the most important differences between the US and Russia.

⁴¹ PAIK Haksoon, "What is the Goal of the US Policy toward North Korea: Nonproliferation or Regime Change?", http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/0530A_Paik.html (accessed May 8, 2005).

flood across the border, and Russia will have to deal with the consequences, leading to serious instability in this region. As a result, Russia agrees with South Korea in favoring a gradual change in North Korea.

Russia's achievements did not entirely result from its opposition to the US as noted above. The US and Russia must cooperate with each other in regards to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, although this cooperation is far from comprehensive. Russia's daily newspaper *Izvestiia* reported before the first round meetings a possible Russian preemptive strike against North Korean nuclear facilities.⁴² According to the report, many strategists argued that if Russia catches signs of an attack from North Korea or if there is a possibility of North Korea waging a nuclear war against the US and South Korea, Russia may need to perform a preemptive military strike against North Korea through its Pacific fleet, because the North's use of nuclear weapons on the South may result in serious pollution and damage in the Far East. This can be interpreted as Russia's warning to the North regarding its possible renunciation of the six-party talks and nuclear tests.

In addition, Russia carried out a large-scale military exercise in August 18–27, 2003, for the first time in 15 years. One of the main purposes of this military exercise that was performed under a state of emergency in the Russia Far East was to gauge the ability to absorb an influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees in case of war.⁴³ South Korea and Japan also participated in the rescue exercises and other multipurpose exercises, including the TU-160. Through this, Russia made clear its importance as a Northeast Asian military power, sending a signal warning against the North's provocation and America's use of force.⁴⁴ This was a strong expression of Russia's position regarding the Korean issue and its significant effort to show its capability as a great power.

Fifth, Russia had worked like a coupling device in the six-party talks by continuously insisting on a multilateral approach to the security of

⁴² Oleg Zhunusov and Elena Shesternina, "If There Is a War Tomorrow, Vladivostok will be Involved in Two to Three Hours' Time," *Izvestiia*, August 1, 2003.

⁴³ Oleg Zhunusov, and Dmitrii Litovkin, "This Is Legend: A State of Emergency Has Been Introduced," *Izvestiia*, August 22, 2003.

⁴⁴ JOO Seungho, "Russiay bukhaekmunje 6jahoedam jeonryak [*Russian Strategy for Six-party Talks on North Korean Nuclear Crisis*]," *Kookbang Yeongoo* 47, no. 1 (2004): 95–96.

Northeast Asia. In fact, multilateralism has not easily been realized in Northeast Asia. Strictly speaking, the six-party talks cannot be labeled as a “multilateralist” framework.⁴⁵ However, it was more of a multilateral experiment, with Russia playing the role of a coupling device by repeatedly urging other countries to resolve their difficulties step by step. Russia’s position on the creation of a Northeast Asian multilateral security organization took shape as a common interest among regional powers at the joint statement of the fourth round of the six-party talks.

Thus, Russia’s plans are to strengthen its position as a regional power along with China in the six-party talks, and actively pursue a stable balance of power in the region. In this sense, Russia seems sure that it will play an important role in the long-term regional stability. Even at the height of the North Korean nuclear issue, Russia continued to argue for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, for North Korea’s observance of the Agreed Framework, against a US preemptive strike on the North and for the peaceful resolution of the crisis through dialogue. If Russia is excluded from the Korean issue, it could be very detrimental to any multilateral effort. It is quite controversial but thought-provoking to consider Vadim Tkachenko’s statement that “one of the most important reasons for the collapse of the Agreed Framework was that Russia was excluded from the process.”⁴⁶

An Assessment of the Russian Role in the Six-party Talks

The most important variable that determines Russia’s non-proliferation policy is its relations with the US. Russia acknowledged that its US policy right after the Cold War was biased and changed its foreign policy strategy. Such a change made Russia pursue a new strategic balance with regard to its relations with the US. This is the basic factor that defines Russia’s non-proliferation policy. In order to pursue a new balance of power, Russia shows balancing and band-wagoning simultaneously, and this made Russia favor a multilateral approach to overcome its power disadvantage. Such factors differentiate Russia’s position from that of the

⁴⁵ Cf. John Gerald Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution,” *International Organization* 46, no. 3 (1992): 561–598.

⁴⁶ Vadim Tkachenko, “Osnovnye elementy rossiiskoi politiki v Koree,” in *Vneshniaia politika Rossii v CVA* (Seoul: The Hankook University for Foreign Studies Press, 2002), 13.

US regarding vertical and horizontal proliferation problems. Thus, Russia's policy toward the nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula can be summarized as follows.

Firstly, Russia's regional policy cannot be defined in simplistic terms in Northeast Asia where a new power dynamic is forming. The rise of China and America's new Northeast Asia strategy presents Russia with a great challenge and opportunity. Because Russia's place in the region is unstable, it is trying to use the North Korean issue to strengthen its position as a regional power.

Secondly, Russia wants to develop the Far East and Siberia to position itself as an Asian power with projects of transportation and energy development. Such non-nuclear issues greatly affect Russia's approach toward the Korean Peninsula, so Russia's Northeast Asia strategy is pursued within the context of both military-political factors and economic factors, leading to a nexus between nuclear and non-nuclear issues.

Thirdly, through this position, Russia found itself caught in a dilemma due to the second North Korean nuclear crisis. Russia agrees with the US in its objection to the proliferation of WMD, including nuclear weapons, but it refuses to acquiesce to a hard-line policy toward North Korea because it is afraid of losing a means to maximize its interest in Northeast Asia. Because Russia believes that the weakening of the NPT and horizontal proliferation is mainly due to the US, Russia is cooperating with the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula but objects to America's one-sided hard-line policy.

Fourthly, Russia may be in the dilemma of losing the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue or denuclearization if the six-party talks drag on, resulting in a situation that is favorable to neither the US nor North Korea. Thus, Russia needs to create a consensus to make a compromise between the US and North Korea with China and South Korea. In particular, Russia believes that North Korea does not yet have nuclear weapons, so it supports the North's position and is cautiously attempting to regain its influence on the Korean Peninsula.

This explains why Russia's response regarding the second North Korean nuclear crisis from the start differed from that of the US. While the first Bush Administration tried to use the Libyan model, North Korea favored the Ukrainian model that China supported. In this process, Russia

supported the Chinese position and tried to strengthen its influence in Northeast Asia.

The Bush Administration tried to form the “5 against 1” structure to pursue the UN Security Council sanctions following the Libyan model without much success for the following reasons. First of all, China and Russia did not accept the US hard-line policy, and South Korea could not give up its engagement policy toward the North implemented since the Kim Daejung Administration. The US’s “5 against 1” structure did not succeed. Had the US formed the structure and obtained UN sanctions, it might have pursued the Iraqi model that shifts from economic sanctions to military sanctions. Of course, if the six-party talks collapse and North Korea conducts nuclear tests, the US plan may be realized. In case of nuclear tests by the North, not only South Korea’s position but also Russia’s place as an opportunistic moderator will be greatly weakened, and China will have some difficulty in supporting the North. However, because North Korea is not likely to give up the six-party talks and cross the “red line” that China does not support, it is less likely to be the North’s policy option.

So, was the Ukrainian model that China and North Korea pursued and Russia supported successful and useful in reality? Of course, there are several limitations in applying the Ukrainian model to the North Korean case. The number of nations that are involved in the issue was different. While the US and Russia were involved in the Ukrainian issue, there are six nations with different positions in the North Korean issue. Furthermore, while the US and Russia cooperated to persuade Ukraine together, the US, China and Russia do not agree completely on this issue. Because even if Russia and the US in cooperation on nuclear reduction and control in the European context could (and did) negotiate bilaterally between Washington and Moscow, regional arrangements in Northeast Asia could only be comprehensive if China with its nuclear and naval capabilities took part.⁴⁷

In addition, they have different understandings of this nuclear crisis. While the US regards North Korea’s violation of the Agreed Framework as a global issue related to the spread of terrorism, China emphasizes North Korea’s perception of security, ascribes some responsibility to the US, and argues for the need for a Northeast Asian security system. Russia

⁴⁷ Nikitin, “The Changing Priorities of Russian Foreign Policy.”

plays a mediating role with South Korea that tries to harmonize two different positions. As a result, the six nations' position has shifted to the "2:2:2" framework.

This change appears to have had some influence on the second Bush Administration. President Bush's mention of "Mr. Kim" and Secretary of State Rice's comment of "sovereign state" showed the beginnings of the change. Afterward, North Korea returned to the six-party talks and resumed negotiations in July 2005.

Especially when the US refused to accept North Korea's peaceful use of nuclear energy and made it difficult to achieve joint agreement of "word for word"⁴⁸ at the fourth round of the talks in September 2005, Russia and China supported North Korea and persuaded the US that South Korea also supported this compromise and cooperated to persuade the US, creating the formation of "3:1:2" or "4:2" and overcoming another sticky patch in the talks.

This complex mechanism of the six-party talks shows that the Ukrainian model has some limitations in direct application to the Korean case. Nonetheless, there is always the possibility of a grand deal in which the US and North Korea will give and take more than expected.⁴⁹ What North Korea demands in return for the dismantlement of its nuclear program is assurance of regime and military security, abandonment of hostile US policy and the conclusion of a peace treaty, its removal from the list of states sponsoring terrorism, economic support, normalization of US-North Korean relations, and so on. Its give-and-takes are not impossible, but what matters in the six-party talks is how to reach a compromise. Russia is trying to shift the approach of the talks from the Libyan model favored by the US to the Ukrainian model as a compromise. If Russia's goal were achieved, a new model of denuclearization might be produced in which the moderator, not the parties concerned, leads.

However, the six-party talks were caught at a stalemate right after the "Joint Statement" on September 19, 2005. After freezing North Korean accounts at Banco Delta Asia, the pressure of US financial sanctions had

⁴⁸ The Joint Statement at the fourth round of talks on September 16, 2005 can be evaluated as the agreement of "word for word" for the next agreement of "action for action."

⁴⁹ For the possibility of such grand deal, see Michael O'Hanlon and Mike Mochizuki, *Crisis on the Korean Peninsula: How to Deal with a Nuclear North Korea* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), chap. 3.

been increasing. Against this measure, North Korea resisted opening a new round of six-party talks, officially pronounced its possession of nuclear weaponry on February 10, 2006. And the notion that the six-party talks are no longer useful for resolving the second North Korean nuclear problem was widely spreading, especially in the US. Furthermore, North Korea's test-fire of long-range missiles in July 5, 2006 seems to have given the US an excuse for its higher level of pressure. Thus, the United States increased its financial sanctions, and North Korea ventured on with a nuclear test on October 9, 2006, as a sign of crossing the "expected" red line. On the initiative of the United States and Japan, the UN Security Council passed Resolution No.1718 on October 14, 2006, which involves nonmilitary sanctions.

This move initially made the prospects for the resumption of the six-party talks very dim. And Russia's weakening advantage as a moderator seemed to disappear completely, and Russia seemed to have no other choice but to join the US's Libyan model position in strengthening the global non-proliferation system. However, Russia once again moved quickly, as it did at the first stage of the second North Korean nuclear crisis, dispatching Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs Aleksandr Alekseev to North Korea. After his visit to Pyongyang, he stressed that possibilities still exist for political resolution, and that Russia strongly opposed military sanctions. Owing to the strong opposition from Russia, along with China, the application of military means was excluded from the UN resolution. But Russia cannot help taking part in nonmilitary sanctions toward North Korea. This kind of "dualistic" position still seems to continue without serious changes. As the Russian special envoy had predicted, North Korea agreed to return to the six-party talks on October 31, 2006.

Real serious change occurred after the United States elections on December 7, 2006. Finding a breach through a high-level contact at Berlin on January 17-19, 2007, the United States and North Korea seemed to reach a consensus on a peaceful settlement of the nuclear crisis through dialogue. The six-party talks have resumed, and the participating six countries agreed to a Joint Statement on February 13, 2007. Due to the changes of the United States' and North Korea's position, an early harvest may be able to be reaped but it will be fraught with difficulties. However, in spite of the significant changes of the situation after the nuclear test and 2/13 Joint Statement, a long and tiresome tug-of-war between the United

States and North Korea seems to be in line. Thus, Russia can play its role of “honest broker” as long as North Korea does not cross the “real” red line, even though we cannot be convinced of its boundary, for example, transferring nuclear technology and materials to terrorist groups or other rogue states. If the guess is right that the US government abandoned the Libyan model of nuclear settlement or that the US government aim of crisis management policy is not at denuclearization of Korean Peninsula but at nuclear non-proliferation, the other participant states in the six-party talks, including Russia, are required to play a more active role. To fulfill the Beijing agreement on February 13, 2007, Russia should provide to North Korea energy resources or economic aid worth at least \$100 million. Among Russian experts there exists some opposition to joining the implementation of the Beijing deals.⁵⁰ If Russia wants to get out of its policy dilemma rising from its intermediate position, Russia as a responsible member of international community should take a more active and constructive role in settling this nuclear problem. Especially, Russia’s active participation in the compensation program for North Korea can make the six-party talks process a more elaborated version of the Ukraine model of nuclear crisis settlement, for it has promising instruments of economic cooperation with North Korea such projects like railway linkage, gas and oil pipeline construction, electric power grid construction and port development project etc.

⁵⁰ Alexander V. Vorontsov, “North Korea Nuclear Problem Resolution Prospects after the Joint Statement on February 13, 2007: Russia’s view,” International Conference hosted by Korean Association of International Studies on *North Korea’s Strategic Choice after Nuclear Test and February 13 Agreement, and the Future of the Korean Peninsula* (Seoul: Korea Press Center, April 16, 2007).

Russia and Contemporary East Asia: Also on the Interaction of Sino-Russian-Japanese Trilateral Relations in the Early Twenty-first Century

FENG Shaolei

As President Vladimir Putin has been vigorously boosting an east-oriented diplomatic strategy over the last several years, contemporary relations between Russia and East Asia have become the focus for discussion among international academics and decision-makers. Yet the focal point of relations between Russia and East Asia is in the trend of Sino-Russian-Japanese trilateral relations. Will the trilateral relationship become a new start of multilateral cooperation in the new century, or will it become a dangerous axis triggering turmoil throughout Northeast Asia, toppling the existing global order?

Reflections on this question involve not only judgments on the internal development of the three countries as well as development of their foreign policies, but also a lucid understanding and interpretation of the mutual relations and the complicated interaction arising out of it. Even more imperative is the linkage within the Northeast Asian region in which the three countries are located, and the entire international scenario needs to be further probed so that a more comprehensive and objective understanding of the above-mentioned important objective can be achieved.

Major Contextual Factors Influencing Current Russian-East Asian Relations

James F. Hoge Jr., editor of the *Foreign Affairs* journal, pointed out in his article “A Global Power Shift in the Making” in the July/August 2004 issue of that journal that “The transfer of power from West to East is gathering pace and soon will dramatically change the context for dealing with international challenges—as well as the challenges themselves. Many in the West are already aware of Asia’s growing strength. This awareness, however, has not yet been translated into preparedness.”¹ Almost at the same time, on July 9, 2004, the *Washington Post* published an op-ed piece by Henry Kissinger under the title “A Global Order in Flux,” in which Kissinger commented that with the worsening and deepening chasm coming into shape with the War on Iraq, the focus of international affairs is shifting to the Pacific region. Almost all the major players on the world stage are adjusting their roles. Such changes are at the level of fundamental concepts, instead of being mere tactical considerations.²

The author of this article does not completely agree with the above two writers. Despite indications that the focus of international affairs has shifted in certain areas, this does not mean the shift is complete. However, it remains an indisputable fact that East Asia has had unprecedentedly significant influence in global affairs.

If there is truth in the observations made by these two scholars, we can conclude that the most important region in the new focus of international affairs, namely the Asia-Pacific region, is Northeast Asia.

The Northeast Asia region is a confluence of tremendous forces of major powers, namely the United States, China, Japan, Russia and even Europe, which have been actively engaged in exercising influence over this region. According to statistics of the World Bank, economic development in the world since the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s has been in favor of East Asia, with annual growth rates of 6.67 percent, 7.87 percent and 7.29 percent, more than three percent higher than the average growth

¹ James F. Hoge Jr., “A Global Power Shift in the Making,” *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 4 (July–August, 2004): 2–7.

² Henry Kissinger, “A Global Order in Flux,” *Washington Post*, July 9, 2004.

rate of the world economy. Apparently, China and Japan in Northeast Asia have been respectively making significant contributions.

With East Asia's economic growth gaining obvious speed over the rest of the world, the gross volume of China's export and import ranked fourth in the world trade, namely \$851.2 billion in 2003, 40.3 times higher than that in 1978, which amounted to \$20.6 billion. Different from the situation during the economic take-off of Japan, China's trade growth has provided neighboring countries with tremendous market opportunities. In 2003, China's export volume reached \$412.84 billion, 36.9 times higher than it was in 1978, which amounted to \$10.89 billion, becoming the third-largest import country in the world after the US and Germany. Even when international commodity imports dropped by one percent in 2001 and increased by 1.6 percent in 2002, China's import volume still gained 8.2 percent and 21.2 percent. When world trade had a recovery growth rate of 4.5 percent in 2004, China's import volume showed a 39.9-percent rise, in which imports from Asian countries grew by 42.4 percent, higher than imports from the US (24.3 percent) and the EU (37.77 percent). Academics around the world almost unanimously agree that China's domestic demand has provided the world, especially Asian countries, with good opportunities.

While the Northeast Asian region is demonstrating a strong impetus to sustain development, the region has not yet solved its old problems. Firstly, the integration of Northeast Asia or the whole East Asian region has greatly lagged behind that of Europe and North America. Secondly, although the Cold War confrontation became less serious as early as the early 1970s in the Northeast Asian region, the formal end of the Cold War atmosphere came much later in this region than in Europe, as this region has witnessed the split-up of two countries since the end of World War II, namely China and the Korean Peninsula. In fact, an unprecedented situation has emerged in Northeast Asia: for more than 2000 years, China was a considerably strong power with Japan having retreated to the fringes. However, in the past 150 years or so, Japan became increasingly stronger while China declined to a very weak position. Yet since the inception of the new century, China and Japan, the two countries that have never simultaneously been in possession of great strength, have become two major players in the international arena at the same time. This situation is bound to bring great possibilities of change to regional development.

Accompanying the eastward shift in international focus is the shift in Russia's geoeconomic and political focus. In his annual address, President Putin said, "Today, the Asia-Pacific region is becoming the most dynamic center of world economic development, and our foreign policy line on deepening relations with the Asia-Pacific region should be closely tied up with domestic tasks, with the promotion of potential Russian interests towards using these ties to further develop the economy of Siberia and the Far East."³ Sergei Karaganov from the Institute of European Studies, Russia's Academy of Sciences, provided annotative remarks to President Putin's words: Since the end of 1999 and the beginning of 2000, Russia has attempted to bring Russia's policies more in line with Europe. This experiment did not succeed partly because of various external factors, and partly because of Russia's unsystematic policies, but more importantly, because of the exclusiveness of the European Economic Community, which has become increasingly reluctant to adopt active policies in dealing with external matters. Therefore, the existing relationship with Europe and the general trends in international relations have made Russia embrace pluralistic policies in terms of geopolitics, including policies that encourage closer links with Asian countries.⁴ It seems that the strategies of NATO to expand simultaneously with the EU have somehow pushed Russia to maintain a more balanced attitude towards the East and the West. The so-called "color revolutions," climaxing in 2004 and 2005, initiated turbulence in the former Soviet region and moreover, directly drew Russia closer to the East Asian region.

Indeed, one of the most important international contexts for the study of mutual relations among China, Russia and Japan is the fact that Northeast Asia has become the major focus of international economic and political attention. In this regard, domestic political and economic trends are apparently the internal dynamic for the three countries' respective external policies. First, within several years following the start of the twenty-first century, the domestic political and economic systems in China, Russia and Japan have been facing deepening reform and adjustment, and second, in varying degrees, economic growth and recovery have emerged in these three countries. Third, what is more noteworthy is that the consciousness of national identity in the three

³ Vladimir Putin, President Annual Address, Moscow, 2004. www.strana.ru.

⁴ Sergei Karaganov, "A President Out of His Time," *The Russia Journal*, July 28, 2004.

countries has been more or less boosted. The emergence of this mentality of national identity can lead to the rise of nationalism if it is not properly controlled and managed.

To sum up, current relations between Russia and East Asia are at a phase of unprecedented, profound, overall, regional and even internal changes in different countries.

Bilateral Relations among China, Russia and Japan since the Beginning of the New Century

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, bilateral relations among the three countries have their own distinct and unique features, while possessing several shared characteristics. Each pair of bilateral relations is both independent and closely mutually related.

Maturing Sino-Russian Relations

In fact, the Sino-Russian (Soviet) relationship has experienced three stages, namely the stage of empire, the stage of revolution and the stage of reform. The stage of empire refers roughly to the bilateral relationship before Russia's October Revolution in 1917. The stage of revolution is between the October Revolution and the end of China's Cultural Revolution. The stage of reform started from the end of China's Cultural Revolution, through the collapse of the Soviet Union, and has continued until the present day. Sino-Russian relations in the three stages are different with issues and concerns unique to the particular times. However, the three stages are linear with links between each stage. Each new stage would inherit legacies from its historical past.

Talking about the level of present-day Sino-Russian relations is not without controversy. Government leaders of both countries tend to use the phrase "the best in history" when describing current bilateral relations. Given the volume of bilateral trade, the consensus reached by the top of the governments on a series of important issues, and the steadfast and flexible posture that the bilateral relationship takes when major important issues occur, "the best in history" is apparently not an exaggeration. However, on the other hand, calling the bilateral relations "the best in history" is relative as there are still important challenges to meet in Sino-Russian relations.

This new era has the following unique features: firstly, the heads of state of both governments are personally involved in pushing ahead development of the relationship, while on the other hand, there has been an unprecedented concern regarding Sino-Russian relations at a non-governmental level. Reports on China-Russian affairs have been eye catching in the Chinese media. Secondly, significant breakthroughs have been achieved on a number of issues, while patient negotiations have been carried out in dealing with major challenges under the principle of mutual trust. In the areas of politics and security, Sino-Russian relations have endured changes in leadership in both countries and have moved ahead smoothly. Heads of state of both countries have based the bilateral relationship on the principle of “strategic partnership” to reach agreements on various issues including China-Russia border disputes, anti-terrorism, anti-separatism, the War on Iraq, Russia’s accession to the WTO, etc. In economic and trade relations, bilateral trade has gained an annual increase of 20 percent over the past six years. The volume of trade is expected to reach or even exceed \$30 billion in 2006. The bilateral communiqué even set the target for 2010’s bilateral trade volume at \$100 billion. This is well over the previous general estimate made by scholars in both countries. In the sensitive area of military and technological cooperation, some scholars estimate that even after the EU countries reopen the sale of weaponry and high technology to China, Russia will still be one of China’s most important partners in military and technological cooperation. And, in particular, the joint military exercise conducted by China and Russia in the summer of 2005 has become a major event in the development of bilateral relations.

What is especially worth noting is that, first, President Putin has been pushing forward the development of Russia’s far eastern territory, while China has been engaged in revitalizing the traditional old industrial base in Manchuria. The conjoining strategies for development in both countries provide a sound basis for cooperation between the two countries. Second, not only are the two countries starting to cooperate in developing the remote, less developed regions of each country, but economic cooperation between the more developed areas is also substantially catching up. For example, Shanghai and St. Petersburg enjoy a sister-city relationship. In recent years, big enterprises in Shanghai have been leading cooperation in major projects, including large-scale investments in St. Petersburg’s construction of infrastructure and the service industry, which, marked by

the “Baltic Pearl” project, have achieved significant progress. Third, the issue of investment and protection of safe trade in China and Russia, an issue of great concern to nationals of both countries, is being tackled further. It is expected that the Chinese and Russian governments will sign an Agreement on Encouragement and Protection of Mutual Investment in the near future. The Agreement will bring considerable improvement to the trade and investment environments of both countries.

All in all, the fact that both countries are able to make adjustments and push forward bilateral relations when major problems and challenges occur provide ample justification to the conclusion that Sino-Russian relations are moving ahead toward a more mature level.

The issue of the China-Russia energy pipeline has been the focus of attention in the international community. Although non-government opinions as reported in the media are quite heated, with frank negotiation and sincere communication, a breakthrough has been made as a result. (A later section of this article will discuss this issue further.)

Apart from cooperation in energy issues, immigration control between China and Russia has been another major focus of media attention. Since the spring of 2004, senior Russian officials, such as Sergei Prikhod’ko, foreign affairs aide to the Russian presidency, have written to indicate that the so-called Chinese emigration to Russia’s Far East territory “should not be exaggerated as has been done by the media. The total number of Chinese nationals regularly residing in Russia is no more than 150,000 to 200,000, while the official census made by Russian authorities is as low as 35,000.” Untrue reports exaggerating the number of Chinese immigrants in Russia are thus rebuffed by such senior officials in foreign affairs as Prikhod’ko.⁵

Major problems for bilateral relations between China and Russia include, first, the development in bilateral relations still lagging behind the respective internal development of each country. In other words, mutual understanding of the profound internal changes of both systems, or the development strategies rapidly taking place in both China and Russia, still needs to be deepened although great improvement has been made in this regard. Second, both China and Russia should improve their capacity for effective management in relation to the development of bilateral relations.

⁵ Sergei Prikhod’ko, “Moskva—Pekin: My nuzhny drug drugu,” *Rossii v Global’noi politike* 2, no. 2 (2004): 166–171.

For example, criminal activities in bilateral commerce are yet to be totally curbed. Third, insufficient cultural exchange between China and Russia is one of the most acute problems. Generally speaking, exchange between the two peoples at the humanistic and cultural levels are far from compatible with the status of the two great countries, each with a long cultural and historical heritage, or with the status of the two biggest neighboring developing and transition countries. Only when such exchanges reach adequate levels can a mutual trust mechanism be soundly built.

Japan-Russia Relations in Upheaval

While China-Russia relations have been moving ahead more steadily after the end of the Cold War, Japan-Russia relations have been characterized by false starts and upheavals.

The end of the 1990s witnessed a peak in Japan-Russia relations. With Russia's initiative to push forward its Euro-Asian-based diplomacy, and Japan's so-called "three principles of Hashimoto," Japan and Russia drew closer. The Tokyo Declaration on Japan-Russia Relations signed in 1993 pointed out that the two countries should sign a peace treaty and solve the Northern Territories dispute. According to the Declaration, Japan would be involved in large-scale cooperative development of the Northern Territories, and even the whole Kurile Islands. Meanwhile, Japan would support Russia's attempt to join APEC, while Russia would support Japan's attempt to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. However, Boris Yeltsin aborted his visit to Tokyo at the last minute in the face of strong domestic opposition at the end of 1998. Senior government officials and analysts believed that it was almost impossible for the two countries to sign a peace treaty before 2000.

After Putin took presidency in 2000, two Japanese prime ministers, Mori Yoshiro and Koizumi Junichiro, devoted their energies to promoting the development of Japan-Russia relations, the result of which was a visit in January 2003 by Koizumi to Russia. The two governments reached an agreement according to which Russia would continue its support of Japan to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and Japan would support Russia's bid to accede to the WTO. Japan would also welcome Russia taking part in the ASEM. Koizumi displayed great enthusiasm in the energy diplomacy with Russia, and even raised the question of Russia building an oil pipeline from East Siberia to Nakhodka.

Since then, Japan has promised Russia to not only invest in the Sakhalin 1 and 2 projects, but also to provide a \$7 billion (which was later raised to \$13 billion) loan as a guarantee to help Russia build the pipeline from Angarsk (later changed to Taishet) to Nakhodka. The Japanese government has started an unprecedented lobbying campaign to Russia for the Far East oil pipeline. Although negotiations between Japan and Russia concerning the Far East pipeline are yet to be concluded, various signs show that Japan-Russia relations may not be developing as speculated by some critics, i.e., given Japan's enormous investment, Russia could easily build the pipeline according to Japan's blueprint, and soon solve the dispute over the Northern Territories. On September 2, 2004, Koizumi inspected the four disputed islands, trying to exert pressure on Russia. This, in fact, indicated that the territorial dispute has been put on the agenda between Japan and Russia. Some Russian scholars estimated that the value of the four islands is \$2.5 trillion, equivalent to six years' GNP of Russia. In this regard, Russia will not easily concede on the Northern Territories dispute.

During President Putin's visit to Japan in November, 2005, for the first time since his coming to power, both sides signed 12 agreements to strengthen bilateral cooperation, including Japan's support of Russia's accession to the WTO, and confirmed that they would attempt to reach an agreement on the oil pipeline in the Far East in 2006. But no flexibility has been seen in the most crucial issue of the Northern Territories.

Japanese scholars have several predictions concerning the development of Japan-Russia relations in the twenty-first century. First, Russia has drawn significantly closer to Western countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union, even sharing ideology with the West. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Russia has actively supported America's campaign against terrorism, allowing the United States access to and entry into Central Asia. This policy orientation is in line with that of Japan. Although Japan is situated in East Asia, it is already a member of the Western countries. The closer Russia becomes to the West, the better it would develop its relations with Japan. The Russia-Japan relationship would become better, and even serve as a containment of the China-Russia relationship.

The second opinion is that although Russia is drawing closer to the United States and other Western countries, this does not necessarily mean closer relations with Japan. After the start of the anti-terrorist campaign,

Putin's closeness with the West does not originate from shared concepts, but is a reflection of his pragmatic principles considering Russia's national interests. Russian scholar Andrei Piontkowski believes that "there is not much feeling towards each other between America and Russia, nor are there many shared values. The only affinity lies with similarities in both countries' geopolitical interests." Some Japanese scholars believe that given the context that Putin's support of the United States' anti-terrorist campaign has not received support from Russian conservatives, especially as the Russian media believes that Russia has done so at a great price, the West has not given Russia the expected returns but rather, constraints and containments resulting from the eastward expansion of NATO and the EU, and mutual distrust between Russia and the United States has become resurgent. With this international and domestic background, Putin is not likely to give much concession to Japan.

A third group of academics points out that constructive consideration of Russia-Japan relations should break out of the framework of Russia's relations with the West. The Russo-Japanese relationship has unique features independent of Russia's relations with the West, and is not necessarily subordinate to US-Russia relations.⁶

I think that given the above-mentioned opinions, the following conclusions can be made. First, the development of Japan-Russia relations can be traced to domestic developments in Russia and Japan in the recent decade. Both Japan and Russia have experienced almost ten continuous years of economic crisis and depression, especially the East Asian financial crisis of 1997 and the Moscow financial crisis in 1998. The two countries have just walked out of the quandary toward recovery and growth, but there are enormous problems pending a solution, including business group interests, systemic issues and different directions of development, all of which need to be adjusted, tackled, integrated and coordinated. Within the context of resurgent nationalism in both countries, compromise is not likely to be expected on such major issues as the Northern Territories dispute. Second, given the context of the shift in the international political and economic focus and the new trends in the Northeast Asian geopolitical situation, both Russia and Japan need to seek

⁶ KIMURA Hiroshi, "Iaponskoe napravlenie vneshnei politiki Rossii," *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, 2003, no. 3: 84-94.

a new strategic balance. It is no easy job to maintain and develop the momentum of cooperation between Japan and Russia while readjusting the strategic balance.

Sino-Japanese Relations as the Background to Russian-East Asian relations

China and Japan are close neighbors. Even during the Cold War, the two peoples had very impressive friendly exchanges. However, Sino-Japanese relations have recently undergone serious difficulties since the establishment of a formal diplomatic relationship in the early 1970s.

First, with a series of events after Koizumi took power, especially his five consecutive visits to Yasukuni Shrine, it has been very difficult for both China and Japan to find the opportunity to hold top-level meetings in the past several years. Second, different from expectations of “cold political relations with hot economic ties,” there are signs that the growth of Sino-Japanese economic and trade relations has been slowing down. Generally speaking, the proportion of trade with China in Japan’s volume of international trade is becoming more and more significant. In 2000, it was 9.9 percent, but in 2003, it was as high as 15.6 percent, only five percent less than that with the US, Japan’s biggest trade partner. This shows that Japan’s dependence on China in terms of trade is increasing. On the other hand, the proportion of China-Japan trade is dropping in China’s international trade, from 20 percent in the early 1990s to 15.7 percent, close to the lowest level experienced in 1992 (15.3 percent). Since 1993, Japan had been China’s biggest trade partner, but between January and May, 2004, the trade volume between China and the EU overtook that between China and Japan, making the EU China’s biggest trade partner, with Japan retreating to second place. Despite an increase of some 12 percent in trade volume between China and Japan in 2005 over the previous year, this was the 11th consecutive year in which the growth of trade volume between China and Japan was lower than the average increase in China’s international trade. Although China has become the biggest trade partner of Japan, the proportion of China’s export to Japan to its total export is on the decline. Third, non-governmental concern regarding Sino-Japanese relations has been on the rise. The incident during the final game of the Asia Cup soccer match in the summer of 2004, as well as the demonstrations targeting Japanese in some Chinese

cities in 2005, indicates that disharmony in Chinese and Japanese public opinion is considerably significant.

What effects will Sino-Japanese relations have on Russia's role in East Asia?

First, with world opinion in favor of China's economic development, Japan has had its third year of recovery and growth since 2002. Some economists forecast that this growth will maintain. If this forecast is accurate, this boom will be the longest since the end of Japan's "bubble economy." With more than a decade's adjustment, Japan's economic system has been further perfected. The development of high technology has demonstrated that there is a solid foundation for Japan's growth. We can expect that in Northeast Asia, there will emerge a situation in which China and Japan will be the two major powers for a comparatively long period of time. This has confronted Russia with a situation in which it has options not only with great limitations but also with great opportunities in the future.

Second, changes in the US-Japan alliance, considered as the pillar of Japan's external relations by Japan, is one of the major factors with significant impact on Russia. Particularly in the case of Russia faced with great pressure from NATO's eastward expansion, if there emerged another "quasi-NATO" in East Asia, Russia's "vulnerable" mentality would be further strengthened.

Either the expansion of Russia's influence into East Asia or the direction and progress of Sino-Japanese relations might possibly hinge on the emergence of a stable and effective multilateral mechanism in Northeast Asia and East Asia. The formation of such a mechanism will take some time to mature as it will experience a relatively long period of contest and rivalry among countries.

Looking at Sino-Russian, Russian-Japanese and Sino-Japanese relations, we can see that the China-Russia relationship is relatively stable, while Sino-Japanese and Russian-Japanese relations will develop smoothly only after significant adjustments regarding major problems are made. On the other hand, the three pairs of relationship are also complicatedly interactive. In other words, even with the smooth development of China-Russia relations, support from the other two pairs of relations is needed to bring about positive interaction, without which even the China-Russia relationship would experience upheaval and frustration. Therefore, we should not only pay attention to the

development of bilateral relations, but also look more comprehensively at major issues on a large scale and at the interaction among the three pairs of relationship. Only by doing so can we achieve a better, more pertinent understanding of the issues of this region.

Mutual Relations among China, Russia and Japan from a Multilateral Perspective

Mutual relations among China, Russia and Japan from a multilateral perspective involve the construction of the Far East energy pipeline, nuclear non-proliferation on the Korean Peninsula, and the planned integration of East Asia, including contextual mutual relations among China, Russia and Japan in Central Asia.

The Far East Energy Pipeline

The biggest issue in recent years for the trilateral relations of China, Russia and Japan is the Far East energy pipeline issue.

From the mid-1990s to the beginning of the twenty-first century, with the support of the Chinese and Russian governments, the China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (CPCC) and Russia's Yukos and Pipeline Transportation Corporation signed a series of agreements, stipulating the direction of the pipelines, volume of oil supply, and the promised ways of purchase and sale of crude oil. The agreements especially stipulated the "Angarsk-Daqing" pipeline, which would start from Angarsk in Russia, through Manchuria in China to Daqing in China. But after many years of repeated discussions, it was decided only during Putin's fourth state visit to China in March 2006 that the pipeline in the Far East would start in Taishet in the first phase and would end in Skovorodino, 60 kilometers away from the Sino-Russian border area, and is estimated to be completed by around 2008 with a transport capability of 10 million tons of oil a year.

The direction of the Far East pipeline reflects some important changes at three levels in the trilateral relations among China, Russia and Japan. The first problem is the relationship between the domestic government and companies. The Russian government has had tension with Yukos over a series of political and economic issues. The auctioning of the core industries of Yukos had made the China-Russia pipeline deal "nobody's child." However, that was several years ago and now this crisis

is no longer. The second change involves the bilateral relations between China and Russia. Russia has been reiterating its support of the cooperation between the two countries in energy development, and China has been strongly indicating its belief in Russia's sincerity in adhering to its support of the pipeline project. China also expressed its understanding of Russia's necessity to make certain adjustments out of concern to protect its national interests. The third change is the trilateral relations among China, Russia and Japan revolving around the energy issue. China and Russia have been able to overcome difficulties to push forward cooperation in new situations.

In fact, with medium- or long-term perspectives, either China, or Russia, or Japan can find mutual or complementary interest in cooperation in developing the Far East energy pipeline, thus promoting a coordinated development of trilateral relations. Various opinions offered by scholars can be summarized as follows.

First, an "East Asia Energy Forum" or "Energy Foundation" can be established to push forward the development of new energy and solutions regarding the direction of the oil supply pipeline. Some scholars have pointed out the possibility of using a considerable part of Japan's earlier aid to China for this project.

Second, since 50 percent of the imported crude oil of China, Japan and Korea is from the Middle East, 80 percent of which goes through the Malacca Strait, various related parties have been seriously considering and discussing the possibility of building a land passage in the past several years. Although opinions vary, the prospect of cooperation still exists.

Third, cooperation development has been explored to develop the oil and LNG in the Sakhalin and Caspian Sea regions. China is willing to participate in the development and purchase of Sakhalin oil and LNG. Japan as the investor and China as the purchaser can expect to interact and cooperate positively.

Four, as suppliers and purchasers, China, Russia and Japan can cooperate in not only exerting influence to control energy prices, but also cooperate at full scale in the mining, processing, transportation and sale of energy, thus making a network of multilateral cooperation in the development of East Asian energy.

Relations among China, Russia and Japan in the Nuclear Non-proliferation Issue on the Korean Peninsula

The nuclear non-proliferation issue is the most urgent and pressing problem in present-day Northeast Asia. While competition over the much needed energy supplies in the Far East is fierce, the failure to peacefully resolve the Korean issue could result in the resumption of a nuclear arms race in the region.

There are many similarities in the positions adopted by China, Russia and Japan. First, all three countries wish to see the Korean Peninsula become a stable, nuclear-free region. Second, with different perspectives, all three countries wish to see North Korea initiate further reforms to promote a market economy and democracy. Third, as neighbors around the Korean Peninsula, the three countries are opposed to extreme measures to solve the nuclear proliferation problem. Fourth, the three countries wish to promote the six-party dialogue mechanism out of concern for their own interests. Fifth, the three parties are all in support of improvement of the relationship between the North and South Korea, although they all believe such an improvement would take a rather long time. There are some who believe that China, Russia and Japan do not wish to see a unified, strong Korean Peninsula. But I believe such a process is natural, independent of whims and wants.

The three countries have different emphases in their standings regarding the Korean Peninsula. First, the three countries have different formal relations with North Korea. Technically, China still maintains its Treaty of Military Friendship Alliance with North Korea; however, in practice, China is not necessarily in support of the use of force over the issue of the Korean Peninsula. Russia and North Korea have a friendship treaty that does not involve military cooperation. Japan, on the hand, has not established formal diplomatic relations with North Korea. Second, the actual development of the relations of North Korea with the three countries is quite different. China has sustained steady development with North Korea, while Putin has drastically adjusted Russia's relations with the isolated country. Japan has not yet solved the problem of the kidnapping issue. Third, the three countries have different attitudes concerning whether to "freeze" or "eliminate" nuclear weapons, and whether to put in force a linkage mechanism providing security guarantees to North Korea. With the United States' shift in attitude from "freezing"

to “eliminating” North Korea’s nuclear weapons, Japan has kept pace with the US. However, neither China nor Russia can provide security guarantees to North Korea. China and Russia still share much common ground with North Korea, and stress the importance of real parallel relations between the US and North Korea in implementing “denuclearization” and providing a “security guarantee.”

As for the prospects of the six-party talks regarding the Korean nuclear problem, I believe, first, that the six-point consensus reached at the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue in 2005 provided a strong incentive for Russia to continue participating in and promoting the development of the current situation in the Korean Peninsula in the direction of denuclearization and stability. Second, since China, Russia and Japan have shared interests in nuclear non-proliferation, in making the six-party dialogue into a regional security guarantee mechanism, and in making use of the economic opportunities arising from North Korea’s possible economic reform, the three countries can still expect to have room for cooperation.

China, Russia and Japan at Play in Central Asia

From a medium- and long-term perspective, Central Asia can be a region in which changes in the balance of power on the Eurasian continent become the most fierce and most significant. This is not only because of the strategic space left after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, but also because this region has great strategic resources awaiting exploration. With the increasingly clearer picture drawn by scholars of the resource potential of this region, the pattern of struggle by the great powers is becoming more and more distinct.

The existence in Central Asia of China, Russia and Japan can serve as a complement to the Far East order. If Russia can be perceived as holding an advantageous position with its energy resources in trilateral relations in Northeast Asia, Russia will likewise recover its traditional influence in the Central Asian region, thus gaining a balance of power that was once lost. Particularly after the “color revolution” and marked by the attempt to form closer ties with Russia by Uzbekistan as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s request that the US put forward a timetable for its withdrawal from Afghanistan, it indicates that Russia is

staging a comeback following its loss of influence after the “color revolution.”

Compatible with the recovery of Russia’s influence over Central Asia, Japan has been invigorating its activities in this region. The Astana Conference held by Japan with the five countries of Central Asia on August 28, 2004 can be seen as an important landmark. The direct target of Japan’s Central Asian strategy is energy and the environment. Japan promises to provide a loan of the value of 16.4 billion Yen to Uzbekistan, while accepting 1,000 students to study in Japan. Japan is now the biggest donor country for Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. By the end of 2004, Japan had provided Central Asian countries with \$2.5 billion worth of official development assistance. The meeting of “Japanese-Central Asian foreign ministers” under the initiative of Japan on June 5, 2006 can be viewed as a new strategic and significant measure in Japan developing its relations with the Central Asian countries.

China’s relations with Central Asia have witnessed rapid growth after the Cold War, but the total volume of trade between China and Central Asian countries was \$3–4 billion in 2003, half of Russia’s trade with the same region, and 0.5 percent of China’s total external trade volume. China’s investment in Central Asia is only just above \$1 billion, much less than the large-scale investment by Japan.

Although the secretariat of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is set up in Beijing, and the first secretary-general was a former Chinese diplomat, this organization represents more the cooperation and coordination of the member countries.

Therefore, in view of strategic, economic and political influences, Russia still leads the power structure in Central Asia. In Central Asia today, there is no great power that can dominate local affairs, which provides room for multilateral cooperation in the region. Perhaps some new tendencies will become factors in promoting such multilateral cooperation. First, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has insisted on being an “open” regional cooperative organization; second, significant adjustments by the US to its Central Asian strategy, which not only sees Central Asian affairs and South Asian affairs as a whole, but also stresses advancing economic cooperation in areas such as energy and infrastructure, have been made. From medium- and long-term perspectives, the above-mentioned changes might possibly provide opportunities for Russian-Japanese-Chinese trilateral cooperation.

China, Russia and Japan Relations, Regional Cooperation in the Northeast Asian Region and the Planned East Asian Integration

One important topic of heated discussion in recent years in the governments, media, and academia of East Asia is the prospect of East Asia's integration. What is the relationship between integration and the trilateral relations as discussed above?

Obviously, the concept of "East Asia" cannot be limited to the east of Asia, but rather, it should refer to the west of Pacific Asia, which should of course include countries like China, Russia and Japan. Particularly when considering the issue of an energy pipeline in Northeast Asia, the west of Pacific Asia that includes China, Russia and Japan should be taken as a whole.

At present, there are the following characteristics of the considerations regarding East Asia's integration and its very limited practices. First, countries in the region tend more to negotiate for a free trade area on the basis of bilateral relations. Multilateral regional cooperation has been put aside as their medium- or long-term plan. This reflects the loose pattern of the geopolitical situation in East Asia. It is still a long way from achieving East Asian integration in any real sense. Second while, it is the general expectation that China and Japan should play a more important role in East Asia's integration, Russia's push into the Asia-Pacific region has received recognition and support from some countries; for example, China supports Russia's participation in the East Asian summit. The advantage enjoyed by Russia in terms of its resources has made it increasingly important in the region. Future East Asian integration cannot leave Russia out of the picture. Third, East Asian integration is different from European integration. In other words, it is not like in Europe where France and Germany led the integration process. In East Asia, integration started from a sub-regional level. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and China's negotiation with ASEAN for FTA, the trilateral negotiation for strategic cooperation among China, India and Russia, and the six-party talks over the Korean Peninsula all indicate the formation of a new geopolitical landscape, which is emerging in the surrounding area of China's territory. Many countries in this region are making themselves more market economy and democracy oriented. This situation makes China not only unlikely to return to a time in its history when it was closed to the rest of the world, but take a more open attitude

and shoulder more responsibilities towards regional stability, cooperation, progress and prosperity. It is very possible that Northeast Asia will become the start of regional cooperation in the entire East Asian region. China, Russia and Japan are apparently decisive, indispensable players in this process.

Although the interaction and contest between China, Russia and Japan in the process of regional integration is just starting, with a better study of the history of European integration, lessons can be learnt to facilitate the process: display of forgiveness and tolerance of past enemies; strengthening sovereignty while experiencing transfer of sovereignty; and all-round cooperation and integration starting through partial, functional cooperation.

Conclusion

All in all, the following conclusions can be made based on our study of the multi-level relations among China, Russia and Japan.

First, there is a realistic possibility of a potential crisis occurring in the Northeast Asian region. There are also issues pending resolution in the core countries in the region, namely, China, Russia and Japan. However, people's awareness and the regional management mechanism are still far from satisfactory in facing the need to solve possible crises.

Second, compared with existing problems in the trilateral relations, there is still enormous room for complementary cooperation among the three countries. Intentions and practices are emerging, too.

Third, most imperative is for the three countries to quicken the process of dialogue and negotiation starting from functional departments and the highest levels of government. The six-party talks, and the Proliferation Security Initiative under the UN's Security Council, including APEC and the East Asia Summit, can be adapted into platforms for the three countries' further cooperation, with proper adjustments made to the function and membership structure.

Last but not the least is the existence of the United States, which serves as the background to the trilateral relations. Although the United States does not want to see its influence dwindling because of the cooperation among China, Russia and Japan, neither does it wish to see itself bogged down in unrestrained competition in the Northeast Asian

region. Therefore, US support is one of the keys to the rational development of trilateral relations among China, Russia and Japan.

Russia's Unofficial Relations with Taiwan

Sergey VRADYI

Taiwan is one of the most dynamic centers of financial and economic development in the Asia-Pacific region. It plays an important role in the economy of Pacific Asia as well as in the world.¹

From the point of view of potential possibilities for the development of business, scientific, and technical cooperation, Taiwan could be considered as a prospective partner for Russian business in Southeast Asia. It is defined by the island's high degree of import dependence for most raw material resources and by its leading role in producing a number of items in the manufacturing industry.

This article will briefly review the contemporary history of Russia's unofficial relations with Taiwan. It will also analyze the current status and presume the possibility of future prospects of bilateral economic and trade relations.

The strategic significance of Taiwan is defined mostly by its advantageous position on the South China and East China Sea routes as well as its proximity to the Philippines. For decades, the Guomindang government, which found refuge on the island after the establishment of the PRC in 1949, has been taken by the West as a bulwark against the spread of communism in Asia. Thus, the island has always had great

¹ Per capita GNP in Taiwan in 2005 was \$15,659 (twentieth in the world), and its GNP was \$355 billion. External trade in 2005 was \$371 billion (sixteenth in the world), with export being \$189.4 billion and import, \$181.6 billion. Foreign exchange reserves in 2005 were \$253.3 billion. That is third place in the world after Japan and PRC. Source: Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, the Republic of China.

political significance. Being equally distant from Korea and Vietnam, countries that saw some hard fighting during the Cold War, Taiwan was the base for military operations against the PRC and pro-communist forces in Indonesia and Indochina.

The major migration to Taiwan from the continent started in the seventeenth century. Considering it to be one of the remote territories of the Celestial Empire, the Chinese officials paid little attention to the situation on the island. The indifferent attitude started to change after the Sino-French War of 1884–1885, when the Qing Dynasty realized that the island could be used as a base for foreign intervention and influence on the continent. After the war, Taiwan was given the status of independent province (the island having been part of Fujian Province). A hero of the Sino-French War, General Liu Mingquan, was appointed the island's first governor.

As a result of the Shimonoseki Treaty in 1895, which ended the Sino-Japanese War, Taiwan was transferred to Japan, which was promptly made a Japanese colony. Foreign consulates resumed their activities on Formosa,² including Russian activities in 1896. The first Russian consul was the German native Paul Shabert.

Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Chiang Kaishek agreed to return Taiwan to China at the Cairo Conference of 1943. Stalin recognized this agreement during the Teheran Conference. The official return of Taiwan to China was finally approved at the Potsdam Conference in July 1945, and in September of the same year, Formosa was returned under Chinese jurisdiction.

Chiang Kaishek arrived on the island along with one and half million troops in June 1949. In September 1950, the Soviet UN representative Iakov Malik demanded the inclusion of Taiwan's status into the Security Council agenda and insisted on inviting the PRC delegation. During the discussion, the Soviet delegation maintained that since Taiwan was an integral part of China, all American troops located on the island and adjacent territories ought to be withdrawn.

² Formosa, the name of island popular in English literature, means "magnificent island." The island was given its name by the Portuguese who first discovered it in the sixteenth century. The island is located about a hundred kilometers to the east of continental China and has a territory of approximately fourteen thousand square kilometers.

After the end of the Korean War in 1954, the US signed a security treaty with the government of the Republic of China, which included a clause providing for American participation in military action in case of confrontation with mainland China. The Soviet Union minister of foreign affairs in a statement called the treaty a “rude violation of international agreements, sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of the PRC.”

All contact between the USSR and the Republic of China defined by the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation of 1945 was broken off. The announcement of the breakup was made on October 3, 1949 after the Soviet Union became the first country to recognize the PRC on October 1. Although there have been some weak tendencies towards change in the status quo since the late 1950s, up to this day, the Russian Federation has had no official relations with Taiwan. It is worth mentioning that the USSR had always adhered to the policy of “one China” but insisted on a political solution to deal with the crisis, unlike some Beijing leaders who were considering military action in 1954 and 1958. Possibly, it was one of the reasons for the cooling of Sino-Soviet relations at the end of the 1950s.

When in September 1954 bombardment of the Taiwan-adjacent islands provoked the first of the three Matszu-Amoi crises, the Soviet Union in Nikita Khrushchev’s statement officially announced its support of the PRC. At the same time, Foreign Minister Viacheslav Molotov expressed concern that the regional conflict would turn into a major war, while accusing the US of provoking the conflict.

Not long before the crisis in 1954, Taiwan’s coast guard captured the Soviet oil tanker “Tuapse,” which was on course from Odessa to Vladivostok. Forty-nine crew members were arrested, four of whom later managed to escape and returned home. A year later, twenty-nine other crewmembers were released and returned to the USSR. The rest opted to stay in Taiwan; later, nine of them would eventually immigrate to the US and Germany. By the end of 1958, seven crewmembers were still in Taiwan, and the tanker itself stayed in Gaoxiong Port where it remains to this day.³

³ In 1958, a film called “An Extraordinary Incident” was made in the USSR that was based on a true story. The black and white movie is full of ideological stamps of socialist propaganda; however, it remains popular to this day. Despite socialist stereotypes, the main theme of the film is the courage of the people who were deliberately sacrificed for ideological reasons. In 1959, the movie was a major hit with 47.5 million viewers in the country.

In the summer of 1958, the bombardment of Matszu and Amoi Islands was resumed (the so-called “second crisis”). Unlike in 1954, when Soviet diplomats commented on the situation relying mostly on the PRC media, in 1958, their attention to the issue was more thorough. In addition to the PRC media, the Hong Kong and Taiwanese press were also taken into account. A September 5, 1958 article in *Pravda* reported that attacks on the PRC would be regarded as attacks on the USSR with all the subsequent countermeasures.

The 1960s witnessed some substantial changes. The American military presence on the island was diminished. Although in the 1950s, Taiwan enjoyed the second place in the amount of American economic and military support, in the 1960s, this financial flow was considerably cut down.

Changes in US policy towards Taiwan can be attributed to the following. Firstly, in the hope of weakening its archrival, the USSR, America started to work with the PRC with the intention of deepening the contradictions between the two former socialist allies. Secondly, in search of a way out of the mess in Vietnam, the US was hoping to attract China as a negotiator between them and the North Vietnamese government. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, American businesses soon realized the endless possibilities of the Chinese market. The chance of getting closer to China was worth sacrificing its former ally.

The official position of the USSR remained the same—the PRC government is the representative of China in the international arena, not the Chiang Kaishek clique that took over the island, lawfully belonging to the PRC.

Unofficial contact between the USSR and Taiwan started at the end of the 1960s, after the tendency toward a US-PRC rapprochement had become obvious.⁴ It is well-known that the visits by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger resulted in the signing of the so-called Shanghai communiqué in 1972 when it was declared that the US “acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China.” Meanwhile, Taiwan hoped

⁴ It is worth mentioning the visit of the Soviet citizen Victor Lui in October 1968, who worked with London’s *Evening Post*. He managed to meet with Minister of Defence Jiang Jingguo, Chiang Kaishek’s son successor. In 1969, the deputy minister of education of Taiwan visited the USSR.

that a Soviet-Taiwanese rapprochement would prevent the rising number of Sino-American contacts. It is possible that the USSR in its turn considered that restoration of relations with Taiwan would help to slow down the aggravation in Soviet-Chinese relations. Taiwan was eager to compromise since after the weakening of its relations with the US, it had little to lose. The Soviet Union, however, was very careful in its policy towards Taiwan, trading with it via Hong Kong, Japan, West Germany, and its East European allies.

The Soviet leadership was probably worried that a reestablishment of official relations with Taiwan would bring too many problems to its relations with the PRC and could undermine its image. Therefore, most of the contacts were conducted through third countries on a nongovernmental level.

Although diplomatic, economic, and military relations with the PRC were interrupted for some time, the Soviet Union was unwilling to completely forget its former ally and embrace Taiwan. Each time Taiwan suggested establishing trade relations, the USSR showed restraint for ideological reasons and refrained from direct contact.

Taiwan was also held back by its traditionally suspicious view of Soviet policies, as well as by possible disapproval from the American side. Also, the Taiwanese government was afraid of losing the trust of the anti-communist countries in the case of establishing relations with the USSR.

After the Carter administration reestablished Sino-American relations from January 1, 1979, the Taiwanese leaders had nothing left to do but to try to diminish their dependence on the US and search for a more flexible foreign policy.

When the reforms started in the USSR in the 1980s, Taiwan, one of the "Asian dragons" was often used as an example of a successful market economy.

In 1990, Taiwan abolished restrictions on direct trade and investments in the USSR, stimulating cooperation in the timber industry and fishery while supporting cultural and technological exchange.

After the breakup of the USSR, Russia became its official successor internationally. In September 1992, Boris Yeltsin signed the "Relations between the Russian Federation and Taiwan" decree that at present is the legal base for further development of their relations. The decree provided for the creation of an unofficial economic and culture coordination commission. Its Moscow representative office was opened in 1993

(Taipei-Moscow Economic and Culture Coordination Commission). The Taiwanese representative office was established in 1996 in Taipei (Moscow-Taipei Economic and Culture Coordination Commission). The offices carry the function of a communication channel, support cultural exchange and economic and trade relations, and provide information services. The same presidential decree stated that there would be no change in Russia's position on the Taiwan issue. Only unofficial contacts take place between Russia and Taiwan, and all activity is conducted by nongovernmental organizations, private companies, and trade associations.

Since 1991, the Moscow-based Taipei World Trade Center has been in operation, as well as the representation of the TAITRA, the Taiwan External Trade Development Council.

In September 1997, Moscow and Taipei signed an agreement on air communication. In January 1998, a protocol for sea transport was signed, and in 2002, a protocol for cooperation in small and medium-sized businesses.

At the beginning of the cooperation in 1987, the volume of trade between the USSR and Taiwan was a mere \$7.6 million. Some years later, however, there was some improvement.

Table 1 is the trade data for the last decade.

The data prove the development of bilateral trade and economic relations, although the process is far from stable. For instance, there was some decrease in 1998, 2001, and 2005, but the overall trend is positive. The year 2004 proved to be a peak year in trade: \$2.9 billion.

In 2005, the trade volume was \$2.7 billion, while Taiwan's export to Russia showed significant growth (19.3 percent). According to the statistics, the volume of trade in 2005 was 6.9 percent lower than in 2004. The decrease was mostly caused by a fall in steel prices on the world market. Taiwanese exports grew because of the increase in the trade of Taiwanese notebook PCs, cosmetics, etc. In total, the increase in Taiwanese exports to Russia in 2005 was \$83 million.

In the first quarter of 2006, the trade volume was \$759.6 million, which is 29.2 percent less than in the same period in 2005.⁵

⁵ <http://cus93.trade.gov.tw/english/FSCE/FSC0011E.ASP>.

Table 1. Taiwan's Trade with Russia (1996–2005)

Year	Total Trade Volume		Export		Import		Trade Surplus (Deficit)	
	Amount (US\$)	% change (same period)	Amount (US\$)	% change (same period)	Amount (US\$)	% change (same period)	Amount (US\$)	% change (same period)
1996	1,205,084,164	-33.125	141,241,167	-18.841	1,063,842,997	-34.652	-922,601,830	-36.544
1997	1,409,296,630	16.946	172,496,494	22.129	1,236,800,136	16.258	-1,064,303,642	15.359
1998	981,518,681	-30.354	137,536,002	-20.267	843,982,679	-31.761	-706,446,677	-33.624
1999	1,291,077,336	31.539	107,837,229	-21.593	1,183,240,107	40.197	-1,075,402,878	52.227
2000	1,565,685,445	21.270	186,074,314	72.551	1,379,611,131	16.596	-1,193,536,817	10.985
2001	865,901,098	-44.695	262,374,800	41.005	603,526,298	-56.254	-341,151,498	-71.417
2002	1,179,762,679	36.247	252,715,993	-3.681	927,046,686	53.605	-674,330,693	97.663
2003	1,601,280,827	35.729	301,993,466	19.499	1,299,287,361	40.153	-997,293,895	47.894
2004	2,901,701,798	81.211	429,076,900	42.082	2,472,624,898	90.306	-2,043,547,998	104.909
2005	2,701,183,012	-6.910	512,238,539	19.382	2,188,944,473	-11.473	-1,676,705,934	-17.951

Source: Directorate General of Customs, Ministry of Finance, Republic of China
<http://cus93.trade.gov.tw/english/FSC/FSC0011E.ASP>

Table 2. **Statistics on Taiwan's Imports from Russia**

Item	2004/01– 2004/12	2005/01– 2005/12	GROWTH RATE (%)
Total	2,472,624,898	2,188,944,473	-11.473
Iron and steel	1,775,752,060	1,424,633,783	-19.773
Organic chemicals	74,707,758	177,111,988	137.073
Nickel and articles thereof	149,813,303	171,249,231	14.308
Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	195,149,714	150,582,261	-22.838
Aluminium and articles thereof	111,077,616	91,967,710	-17.204
Other base metals; cement; articles thereof	39,903,137	64,868,409	62.565
Paper and paperboard; articles of paper pulp, of paper or of paperboard	14,054,304	23,079,574	64.217
Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, and parts and accessories of such articles	18,275,075	14,655,682	-19.805
Miscellaneous chemical products	9,927,283	14,439,513	45.453
Rubber and articles thereof	11,773,441	11,756,837	-0.141

Source: Directorate General of Customs, Ministry of Finance, Republic of China
<http://cus93.trade.gov.tw/english/FSCE/FSC0011E.ASP>

Table 3. Statistics on Taiwan's Exports to Russia

Item	2004/01– 2004/12	2005/01– 2005/12	GROWTH RATE(%)
Total	429,076,900	512,238,539	19.382
Nuclear reactors, boiler machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	182,513,721	203,256,345	11.365
Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, and parts and accessories of such articles	57,128,935	79,138,888	38.527
Plastics and articles thereof	34,757,311	45,227,732	30.124
Articles of iron or steel	34,867,352	37,390,240	7.236
Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts and accessories thereof	17,979,376	20,520,954	14.136
Iron and steel	18,349,235	15,068,017	-17.882
Essential oils and resinoids; perfumery, cosmetics or toilet preparations	11,270,165	14,337,291	27.215
Tools, implements, cutlery, spoons and forks, of base metal; parts thereof of base metal	10,964,309	12,114,268	10.488
Furniture; bedding, mattresses, mattress supports, cushions and similar stuffed furnishings; lamps and lighting fittings, not elsewhere specified or included; illuminated signs, illuminants	4,595,635	10,949,978	138.269
Organic chemicals	4,530,621	10,378,919	129.084

Source: Directorate General of Customs, Ministry of Finance, Republic of China
<http://cus93.trade.gov.tw/english/FSCE/FSC0011E.ASP>

As can be seen from the data, Russia keeps a positive balance in its trade relations with Taiwan thanks to crude oil, cast iron and steel, nonferrous metals, petrochemical products, ferroalloys, coking coal, timber, and chemical fertilizers. Russia imports mostly electronics and electronic parts, computers and computer parts, and home appliances.

The negative trade balance (\$1.68 billion in 2005) issue is taken seriously in Taiwan. However, the prevalence of natural resources in Russian exports and industrial products in Taiwan are considered in Taiwan to be logical at the present stage of relations.⁶ To improve the situation, it is recommended to increase the export of Taiwanese products to Russia.

The relatively low level of Taiwanese exports to Russia can be explained by several factors. Firstly, the price of Taiwanese products is still quite high for most Russian consumers, the rest prefer high-end European, American, or Japanese products. Secondly, there are difficulties and complexities involved in bank transfers, which are mostly conducted through third countries.⁷ Thirdly, there is insufficient guarantee from the government for foreign investors. Also, the high levels of organized crime in Russia, along with the low levels of security, further impede progress. As a result, foreign business, including the Taiwanese, prefers to invest in more stable and predictable regions.⁸ It is also worth mentioning that Russia imports many products from the PRC, some of which are in fact made at Taiwanese-owned operations. However, this trade is officially considered in the statistics as part of the Russian-PRC trade.

Despite the overall growth of the trade and economic relations between Russia and Taiwan, proportionally, it is extremely low compared to the volumes of their overall foreign trade. For instance, in 2005,

⁶ According to the Taiwan representative in Moscow Chen Rongjie, since Taiwan imports the resources that the island lacks, the trade deficit can be considered positive. See Chen Rongjie, "Republic of China Delegation to Russia," *Liberty Times*, November 22, 2002.

⁷ Taiwanese banks are careful with letters of credit issued by Russian banks. The payments are conducted with bank transfers or in cash. Among the banks that deal with Taiwanese business are Gazprom Bank, International Industrial Bank, Uralsib Bank, Globex Bank, Alfa Bank, and Guta Bank.

⁸ Pavel M. Ivanov, "Nekotorye problemy pazvitiia possiisko-taivan'skikh otnoshenii na sovremennom etape," *Possiisko-taivan'skie otnosheniia i ikh rol' v razvitiu Aziatsko-Tikhookeanskogo regiona: Sb. dokladov konferentsii v Institute stran Azii i Afriki* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii Tsentri ISAA pri MGU, 1997), 48–49.

Taiwanese exports to Russia accounted for only 0.27 percent of its overall volume; Russia imports accounted for only 1.2 percent of the whole.

The volume of mutual investments is also low. In Russia, there are around ten Taiwanese midsize companies operating in trade, service, information, restaurant, and tourism businesses. In St. Petersburg, there are three Taiwanese companies dealing with sea freight, the tea trade, and tourism. Two companies deal with fishery in the Far East. The rest of the Taiwanese companies are located in Moscow; these are representatives of computer companies supplying their products to the Russian market.

In 2002, seven Russian companies operated in Taiwan in the areas of international trade, information services, and sea freight.

Besides the above-mentioned reasons, the low level of investment by the Taiwanese can be explained by the high level of inflation and inefficient procedures for the privatization of state property. Meanwhile, Taiwanese business is trying to establish direct contacts with some of Russia's privately owned businesses, avoiding the inefficient government structures.

Representatives of trade circles often exchange visits and participate in various of trade shows and conferences.

In September 2002, the third investment forum of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was held in Vladivostok. A delegation of twenty-nine people from Taiwan took part in it. It was led by Zhang Junxiong, former prime minister of Taiwan, then secretary general of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party. Besides him, other members of the delegation included the Minister of Transportation Lin Lingsan, the chairman of the Labor Committee Chen Jiu, and officials from the Ministry of Economics and the Committee on Agriculture. According to the media, it was one of the highest levels of presentation of the Taiwanese government in Russia in recent memory.

To promote mutual contacts, the Taiwanese often invite Russian political and governmental dignitaries to visit the island. Among those who have are former USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev, former mayor of Moscow Gavrill Popov, and chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia Vladimir Zhirinovskii, to name but a few. In 1990, Vladimir Putin, then vice mayor of St. Petersburg, met with the future president of Taiwan Chen Shuibian, then mayor of Taipei.

In 2003, the Taiwan-Russian Association was established on the island. The former Prime Minister Zhang Junxiong became the chairman

of this organization, which proves the high level of interest of the Taiwanese in further developing cooperation with Russia.

As for the future prospects of the relations, the Taiwanese side constantly brings up the subject of direct air flights, which would reduce the distance and make the contacts more intensive.

Trade and economic relations between Russia and Taiwan can be greatly expanded. Taiwanese president Chen Shuibian considers that to achieve this, it is necessary to sign a number of bilateral agreements, such as an agreement on the protection of investments, a no double taxation agreement, and a customs clearance agreement. Taiwanese businessmen hope to have the same conditions in Russia as given to foreign investors in the PRC and Southeast Asia. Moreover, they hope for simpler formalities in the Russian administration system.

For further development of the relations, Taiwan could invite Russian specialists. Besides semiconductor technologies, Taiwan conducts a lot of work on biotechnologies, the creation of digital archives, telecommunications, optical electronics, etc.

Many people see good possibilities in buying Russian resources, first of all, oil. Whilst Russia is very rich in resources, Taiwan is extremely lacking in them.

At present, the Russian share of Taiwan's operations with Europe was a mere 3.6 percent. To develop the relations, according to Russian and Taiwanese businessmen, it is necessary to create a legal basis, sign agreements providing privileges for joint projects, and establish correspondent relations between banks. Also, international organizations such as the WTO (of which Taiwan became a member not long ago and which Russia is planning to join) could facilitate the process.

To realize these plans, the participation of competent Russian governmental structures becomes necessary. However, the absence of governmental agreements between Russia and Taiwan is a great obstacle for further development of the relations. It is proposed that economic cooperation can be developed in the absence of governmental cooperation. In fact, despite there being no diplomatic relations between Beijing and Taipei, the volume of trade over the Taiwan Strait accounts for billions of dollars.⁹ Taiwan does not have diplomatic relations with the US or Japan.

⁹ According to the analysis of leading economists, the overall volume of Taiwanese investment in continental China is around \$70 billion. This is comparable to the sum

However, the trade volume between them is many times higher than that between Taiwan and Russia.

Perspectives on Russian-Taiwanese relations drawn by scholars are mostly based on assumptions and are evenly applicable to the economy of the Primorie region. Now, let us take a look at some of them that have significance to the economy of Primor'e.

Opening of a direct air connection between Taipei and Vladivostok could facilitate the expansion of contacts. The first couple of flights were conducted at the end of April—beginning of May 2001. The direct air connection was supposed to have great importance for tourism development.

Vladivostok is a convenient and potentially important transit point for Taiwanese going to the northeastern provinces of China, North Korea, or other Russian cities in the Far East and Siberia and even Moscow. However, first, there was a delay in the organization of flights and later, the whole project came to a halt for an indefinite time. Vladivostok Avia, the nongovernmental company that has the license on air transportation to Taiwan, remains cautious about restoring direct flights, if compared to its Korean rivals.¹⁰ Even now, some technical issues remain unresolved. Besides, the Chinese position on the Taiwan issue remains a strong political factor.

To facilitate this project, there was a plan to relocate part of the investments from China and Southeast Asia to the Far East of Russia, an area rich in resources. The foreign minister of Taiwan stated in 2002 that Taiwan was ready to invest in the development of natural resources of the Far East if “the necessary conditions were created, including financial route control.”

invested by the US in China. Although politically, mainland China is opposed to Taiwan, the Taiwanese economy has become increasingly tied to the Chinese economy. The main reasons for this are the cheap labor force and huge potential of continental China's market. (China's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation; US Commerce Department; Morgan Stanley; Goldman Sachs, in Robyn Meredith, “Giant Slurping Sound,” *Forbes Global*, October 28, 2002, 34–36).

¹⁰ In July 2001, the former Korean prime minister visited Taipei. Among other questions, the issue of reestablishing direct Seoul-Taipei flights that were closed after a diplomatic breakup in 1992 was discussed. The Koreans hope to send tourists to Taiwan because many are now afraid to visit Southeast Asia after a sudden rash of highly publicized terrorist attacks. Before the breakup, up to half a million Koreans visited Taiwan annually.

Among other prospective areas of bilateral economic cooperation is Taiwan's participation in the development, transportation, and utilizing of energy resources located in the Far East, Siberia, and Sakhalin. Taiwanese governmental and commercial organizations are interested in the development of the Sakhalin oil and gas resources. Sakhalin is close to Taiwan, and the transportation expenses would therefore be low, and the supply itself could be more stable than that from the Middle East and other distant regions.

The importance of Primorie's location is also defined by the terminal of the Trans-Siberian Railway, the world's longest railway. The railway could give Taiwanese business an extra opportunity for economic development of Siberia, Russia, and Eastern Europe. Besides, Taiwan could be an investor and benefactor of the project connecting the Trans-Siberian and Trans-Korean Railways.¹¹

In August 2003, the trade port in Vladivostok signed a friendship agreement with Taiwan's Gaoxiong Port, which has the same agreements with ports in the US, Middle East, and Europe. The port in Vladivostok became the fourteenth in this list and the first in Russia. Gaoxiong Port is one of the five biggest in the world and the biggest in Taiwan. It is connected with Russia through supplies of steel.

Cooperation between the Russian Far East and Taiwan could also be profitable in the fishery and replenishing of fishing resources, production and processing of timber, and the development of business.

Searching for cutting-edge technologies, Taiwan could use Russian scientific and technological findings in the areas where Russia still holds leading positions. These would be space monitoring to prevent natural disasters and man-made disasters, minimizing the consequences of such disasters, ship building, and biotechnologies.

The scientists of the Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Science (FEBRAS) could share their views on processing mineral resources, dealing with agricultural waste, producing superclean organic and nonorganic materials, water purification technologies, new information technologies (including satellite monitoring), biotechnologies, and many others. At that, because the FEBRAS has a hard time putting

¹¹ The fact that the transportation of a standard container by sea from Southeast Asia to Europe costs \$1,500–1,800 and takes a month when transportation from Busan via Siberia costs only \$600 and takes 13 days proves the expedience of the project.

these projects into practice and because Taiwan has great experience in selling its products on the world market, there would be new opportunities for the creation of joint ventures, research centers, techno parks, etc.

At present, neither side sees the other as an enemy, which gives more opportunities for broadening economic ties, trade, and mutual understanding.

An analysis of bilateral trade provides considerable evidence of the compatibility and complementarity of the Russian and Taiwanese economies. At the same time, existing possibilities for the development of trade-economic relations are being insufficiently realized.

In its relations with Taiwan, Russia does not recognize the island's independence, considering it to be an integral part of China. The significance of trade and economic relations is recognized by both sides and remains at an unofficial, nongovernmental level.

For Russia, relations with Taiwan do not necessarily seem to be related to its direct interests. Indeed, the security and stability of its shared border with the PRC appear more decisive, although Russia and Taiwan have been gradually evolving dialogue relations in economic cooperation.

Many countries, although not having diplomatic relations with Taiwan, maintain close economic ties with Taiwanese companies, which is profitable for both sides.

While maintaining a firm position on the Taiwan issue,¹² Russia started developing relations with it in various fields. However, for a number of reasons, cooperation with Taiwan is limited to Moscow and St. Petersburg. Primor'e, although located close to Taiwan, has failed to capitalize on any of its geographical advantages. Meanwhile, Taiwan proved its importance to the region after quickly recovering from the world financial crisis.

In conclusion, Russia and Taiwan have a good chance of developing bilateral trade, investment, and technology cooperation. Although the path

¹² Moscow has confirmed its position many times. "We believe that there is only one China and Taiwan is an integral part of it. We oppose the independence of Taiwan in any form and do not recognize the concepts of 'Two Chinas' or 'One China and One Taiwan.' This viewpoint is firmly fixed in the Russian-Chinese Treaty on Good Neighborly Relations and Cooperation of July 16, 2001, as well as in a number of bilateral documents, and will not be changed," according to a statement made by the Russian MOF Information Department on February 6, 2006 in response to the stated intention of the Taiwanese president to abolish the Council on National Unity.

to a good level of cooperation could be difficult and take some time, it is in the interests of both sides.

Russo-Japanese Relations in the New Strategic Environment

YOKOTE Shinji

In the initial years of the twenty-first century, especially just after the September 11 attacks in 2001, Russian foreign policy was expected to take a middle course between the US and China. In those days, Russia seemed intent on establishing friendly relations with the US and every state adjacent to its borders in order to concentrate its attention on pressing domestic issues; Vladimir Putin appeared to realize this priority quite well when he made his personal commitment to support the US decision to start the military operation in Afghanistan.¹ However, as Putin's experience accumulated and as he became increasingly convinced that the US would pursue its self-proclaimed goals of "democratization" everywhere in the world from the Middle East to Central Asia to the detriment of Russia's interests, he gradually changed his position and distanced Russia from the US and the US-led European states, while steering his country closer to China.

The large-scaled Sino-Russian joint military maneuver carried out in August 2005, the invitation of the Hamas leaders for talks in Moscow in March 2006, and the recent exchange of harsh remarks between US vice president Dick Cheney and Putin over Russian policy towards Ukraine seemed to correspond with this shift in policy stance.

¹ See, for example, Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*, Chatham House Papers (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003), 117–118. It should be noted that this is a study clearly focused on the resilience of Russia's great power mentality.

These recent developments raise several intertwined questions for Japanese-Moscow watchers:

First, are these newly unfolded hard-line policies mere tactical steps designed for putting pressure on the US to restrain its hegemonic behavior in the international scene or are they signs suggesting the end of the partnership they have managed to sustain in any event since the end of the Cold War?

Second, will China be a reliable long-term Russian partner against the US regardless of the close economic interdependency that exist between the US and China? To what extent will the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) be an effective instrument in creating a new strategic environment either globally or regionally? Further, is Putin really confident that the present Sino-Russian rapprochement will pave the way to the “multipolar world” that the Russian leader has repeatedly upheld?

Last but not least, what is and will be the impact of the new East-West strained relations on the North-East Asian context, especially on Russo-Japanese relations?

To consider these questions, we should begin with a brief examination of the problem of Russia’s current status in the world order. It is no secret that since the collapse of the USSR, both Russia and Western nations have wondered how to define the new position of Russia in the world configuration. No doubt, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was a major power, but in the light of its domestic chaotic conditions it could not be regarded as a power equal to the US or even to other major European powers. Yet with time, both sides came to the conclusion that there were only two alternatives for them to adopt: either Russia should be seen as one of the leading Western powers equally ranked with such powers as France or Germany or as an independence-oriented, non-Western power like China or India that would be expected to strike its own path, showing an inclination to turn a critical eye toward the US and European behavior in world affairs.

Worried about this situation, in the mid-1990s, European nations decided to take the initiative to incorporate Russia into the summit of the Group of Seven as a regular guest power. They were full of expectations that the granting of membership would encourage the Russian leadership to overcome its domestic disorder and move Russia towards a liberal democratic model. The calculation in the same vein produced the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European

Commission and Russia in 1994 (which came into force only in 1997). During these years, the Russian leaders were, by contrast, continuously divided on future orientations. For example, Evgenii Primakov, appointed foreign minister in 1996, strongly advocated building Eurasian partnerships among Russia, China, and India, although there seemed to be little feasibility of this idea. As was expected, Russian political elite greeted Primakov's idea partly with enthusiasm, partly with cynicism.

After the September 11 attacks, the European nations once again took the initiative, proposing in early 2002 that Russia become the eighth member of the G8 in return for the moral and political support Putin offered for "the War against Terrorism." At least for a year or so, Putin seemed to be content with the new alignment. Russia was accepted as a principal member of the Western club.

Some Russian scholars began to call the newly created world power structure "the pluralistic unipolarity," in which not the US alone, but the US with its closely connected friendly powers in the G7 plays the role of the polar actor.² According to this definition, on the one hand, the non-US member states of this group, although hardly comparable in power potential to the US, have a chance to exert influence over US foreign policy as far as the circumstances permit in a pluralistic framework; on the other hand, in order to be a member state of this group, it is supposed to cope with international threats and conflicts in cooperation with the US and other member states. More importantly, the non-US member states are supposed to acquiesce in a superior US role in world affairs; in return for this cooperation, a fully fledged member can expect that it will be treated more favorably in the international politico-economic order than China, India, or other newly emerged states. In the case of Russia, the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council was a good example of this special treatment, and the Russian accession to the WTO seemed to ensue in the near future (at latest during 2002–2003).

However, seemingly, the two incidents taking place one after another since 2003 severely tested the above-mentioned special linkage in the power structure. The first was the war in Iraq: as is well known, Russia,

² On this concept, see Aleksei D. Bogaturov, "Pliuralisticheskaia odnopoliamost' i interesy Rossii," *Svobodnaia mysl'* 2 (1996): 25–36. See also Bogaturov ed., *Sistemnaia istoriia mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniĭ v chetyrekh tomakh 1918–2003*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Nauchno-obrazovatel'ĭĭ Forum po Mezhdunarodnym Otnosheniiam, 2003), 583–584.

aligned with France and Germany, made every effort to prevent the US-led coalition forces from attacking Iraq, but only to see their persistent protests had no effect. Contrary to the tacit understanding implied in “pluralistic unipolarity,” the US with the support of the UK and Japan totally disregarded both the UN Security Council and the opposition of the three major states. No doubt, Putin must have drawn from this bitter experience an unforgettable conclusion that although membership of the G8 gave Russia great power status, the military power of the US was so preeminent that its serious balancing act with the European states was not enough to curb its hegemonic ambition.

The second was the so-called “color revolutions” in the former Soviet Union. The revolutionary changes began in Georgia in November 2003, spreading to Ukraine in December 2004, to Kyrgyzstan in February 2005, and ended with antigovernmental riots in Uzbekistan in May 2005. Evidently, the chain of events shocked Putin. Up to this time, the former Soviet space, with the exception of the Baltic area, was regarded by the Russian leaders as Russia’s sphere of influence. They have long taken it as a matter of course that the leaders in newly independent states would continue to hold a political system similar to the Russian “managed democracy,”³ while providing Russia with a secure environment. Certainly, it would have been difficult for the Russian leaders to deny the assumption that behind the scenes, the US supported these revolutionary changes with the purpose of reducing Russia’s traditional sphere and in the end damaging the Russian great power status. Putin must have drawn from these incidents another lesson that given the differences between Russia and the US in terms of their value systems, even strategic collaboration with the US and the European states would not ensure Russia great state status in a stable way.

Thus, the brief overview of the recent developments of international relations of Russia strongly suggests that Russia’s present assertiveness is not a mere feint, but a reflection of the distrust that, no doubt, is deeply rooted in its political culture and has been provoked by the recent US behavior in the minds of the Russian political elite. It should be added, though, that however nominal the great power status may be, it is too

³ It should be noted here that influential Russian commentators and newspapers denote politically desirable conditions with this term. Vitalii Tret’iakov, *Nuzhen li nam Putin posle 2008 goda?* (Moscow: Rossiiskaia Gazeta, 2005), 13–16.

comfortable for them to relinquish it by quitting membership of the G8 or other Western institutions such as the NATO-Russia Council. Therefore, Putin is likely to keep Russia in these institutions, without making a decisive departure for the Eurasian partnership. In this sense, Russia's Western orientation is still kept alive. This is a starting point for the examination of the second question: How stable is the Sino-Russian partnership?

No doubt, China and Russia make good partners both psychologically and economically. On the psychological level, both are under strong pressure to democratize their domestic political systems from the US and the European states. Naturally, the leaders of both nations share the same apprehensions about cultural globalization that levels the ground for political homogenization. And economically, the sharp rise in energy prices combined with China's aggressive economic growth prompts the Chinese leaders to ensure access to Russia's rich oil and gas reserves. Putin is a man intellectually prepared for Russia's energy-related strategy. Before coming to power in the late 1990s, he had finished a master's thesis arguing that "Russia's natural resources base will not only secure the country's economic development but will serve as the guarantor of the country's international position."⁴

One of the most important targets that the Russians have set in its long-term energy plan is to diversify its energy markets, which, in turn, requires Russia to open up markets in Asia. In this sense, China is an indisputable partner in this calculation.

Yet, in spite of this "favorable" interdependency and the positive trends, there are several issues casting a shadow over the future of Sino-Russian relations.

First, for both China and Russia, the other is a trade partner of minor importance. While Russian trade with the European states amounts to almost half of its total, China's main trading partners are other Asian countries, followed by the US. This is in part due to the Sino-Russian trade structure; for Chinese businesses, the Russian market is too far for them to transport large amounts of low-cost commodities. The Siberian

⁴ Martha Brill Olcott, "Vladimir Putin and the Geopolitics of Oil," in *The Energy Dimension in Russian Global Strategy*, The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy's study paper (Houston: James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University, 2004), 17.

railway is not yet fit for this purpose; the Russian government and Russian businesses, on their part, hope to heighten the industrial infrastructures with the help of sophisticated Japanese, US, and European technologies. In a word, economically, the US, Europe, and Japan have much more to offer either China or Russia than trade between the two. Some Russians go on to say that China needs only Russian energy resources, and that economic ties with Russia would only serve to make Russia a raw materials supplier for China.

Second, related with the aforementioned point is the salient contrast in the demographic trends in China and Russia. According to a Japanese scholar, while the population in the Russian Far East lost roughly one million from 1991 to 2001, in a neighboring Chinese province (Heilongjiang Province) alone, the population increased by three million in the same period.⁵

Given this startling gap in the demographic trends and a sparse population in the Russian Far East and Siberia, it is no wonder that the Russian residents feel threatened with unmanageable population pressure from the south. Although both Russian and Chinese governments have taken serious measures to cope with the illegal immigration problem in the last decade, the fundamental difficulty seems to remain unsolved or even compounded by the differences in the economic growth rates. Sooner or later, the Russian government will have to face a dilemma: either it will legalize Chinese migration to meet the demands from the regional labor market at the risk of incurring Chinese economic dominance, or it will be forced to take stricter measures to regulate Asian immigration at the cost of economic stagnation in the eastern part of its territory.

Third, there is still a potential territorial dispute between the two neighbors. No one can deny the significance of the agreement in October 2004 concerning the jurisdictional procedures over the remaining three disputed islands: Bol'shoi Ussuriiskii, Tarabarov, and Bol'shoi. The resolution of the territorial dispute was indeed a great achievement for both governments. Yet, there still remains room for skepticism. Some Russian scholars are still concerned with references made by the Chinese

⁵ ITO Shoichi, "Putin jidai no Churo kankei: Roshia toubu chiiki o meguru 2kokukan kankei o chusin ni" [*Sino-Russian relations in the era of Putin*], in IWASHITA Akihiro ed., *Roshia Gaikou no Genzai I* [*Russian Foreign Policy Today I*], *Making a Discipline of Slavic Eurasian Studies 2* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2004), 77–78.

leaders in 1964 and 1989 to “the lost hundred and fifty thousand square kilometers,” expecting that the Chinese people in general will be informed of past claims involving them in the new territorial dispute in the meantime. Judging from the situation, the final resolution of the Sino-Russian territorial issue still needs to be published in China and accepted by the Chinese people.

Fourth, there is a contest over influence in Central and South Asia. The SCO is a suitable instrument to dispel distrust of each other as well as to suppress the threat of terrorism, separatism, and extremism. Moreover, in July 2005, it succeeded in issuing a joint declaration to limit US influences in this area by demanding that the US army pull out of Uzbekistan. Yet, the SCO seems to be indecisive about its future role in regional and world affairs. Although it effectively serves as a forum to expressing anti-American opinions, the leaders of the member states could not make a decision regarding which state among the observers would be admitted as an official member of the organization. If India is permitted to join the organization, the SCO would evolve into a powerful architecture on the Eurasian continent. But almost a year has passed since India was given observer status, and as to this point, nothing has happened. Presumably, this was due to the struggle between Russia and China for the leadership of the organization. Although they repeatedly express the desire to construct a multipolar world, they are not yet determined to make the SCO a reliable power center for challenging US hegemony.

Fifth, the Sino-Russian rapprochement will in the long run touch upon the problem of Russian identity. In other words, however useful it would be as a countermeasure against what the Russian leaders think as rude interference in Russian domestic affairs by the US and European democratic nations, the one-sided orientation towards China would surely raise uneasiness in Russian hearts and minds. In spite of the differences in the historical experiences and religious traditions, the majority of people in Russia have considered themselves as belonging to European Civilization.

To sum up, the arguments in this section suggest that apart from the rhetoric about the new stage in the strategic relationship, China could not be appreciated as a stable partner for Russia against the US and Europe. For both China and Russia, it is unrealistic to counterbalance the US and Europe, given the present power distribution in the global structure as well as moral and cultural perceptions in both Russia and China. So far, the

benefits brought about by the cooperative relations between them seem to be limited to immediate, mainly defensive objectives such as relatively small-scale economic cooperation, insurance against potential turmoil, or agreement to maintain the present status quo around the two countries. Nevertheless, even these modest benefits may have different meanings in the context of Northeast Asia. This last point is related to the theme of the third section.

The first problem concerning the change of strategic circumstances in Northeast Asia is the following: are bilateral relations between Japan and Russia influenced and determined by US-Russian relations as they were in the Cold War years? In my view, the answer is no, because there is neither a functional bipolar system nor a tangible Russian threat to the Japanese people. Today, either the Russian or the Japanese government could formulate its policy towards the other without taking into consideration the US-Japan alliance.

Certainly, Russo-Japanese relations have been stagnant since Putin took presidency, due, as a matter of fact, to the diplomatic failure of the preceding decade; the leaders of both Japan and Russia had exaggerated and boosted the possibility of a resolution of the territorial dispute with their imprudent statements, causing a deep sense of disappointment among the Japanese public. (Boris Yeltsin irresponsibly disclosed his intention to resolve the dispute by 2000, and the Japanese side optimistically regarded his remark as a serious promise to make a final decision in favor of the Japanese side.) In any case, the present blunt Russo-Japanese relations have hardly any connection with the present unfriendly atmosphere in US-Russian relations.

Then, what is the impact of the Chinese factor? As we mentioned above, the Sino-Russian rapprochement has had almost no effect on the US or Europe, as was demonstrated by the Sino-Russian joint military maneuver of last August. While China seemed to make use of the occasion to threaten the Taiwanese, the US showed no serious concern about this seemingly provocative gesture.

However, the problem here is whether or not the same conclusion is applicable in the case of the strategic triangular partnership among Sino-Russo-Japanese relations. To speak plainly, to what extent is Japan's regional isolation in the past few years the result of a Sino-Russian rapprochement?

The closer relations between China and Russia seem to have generated different strategic meanings towards Japan for the two partners. In the case of China, closer relations with Russia have already paid dividends: firstly, they have given the Chinese leaders a better bargaining position vis-à-vis Japan, and they showed greater confidence in maintaining a stronger position following Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine; secondly, the rapprochement contributed towards creating the perception in the region that China transformed itself into a dominant power indispensable for coping with regional affairs, thwarting Japan's bid for regional leadership; thirdly, China could make use of the improved relations with Russia for monopolizing the role of hosting the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue. (Thanks to China's soft approach, North Korea has made great progress in manufacturing its nuclear technologies and missiles.) On top of these benefits, the SCO paved the way for China to expand its influence into Central Asia, hindering Japan from establishing its influence in this area. Thus, China has already reaped a rich harvest from the Russian linkage.

Compared with the Chinese case, the Russian accounts are slightly different. It is true that Russian leaders have shown an increasingly assertive position over territorial disputes since the start of the twenty-first century. In 2005, for example, several high-ranking Russian leaders paid a visit to the so-called Northern Territories, underscoring their allegation that since the islands belonged to Russia, there was no need to negotiate over them. German Gref, minister of economic development and trade, went on to announce that the ministry was determined to implement a fourfold increase in expenditure to improve the social infrastructure of the territories in the next budget when he visited the islands. As expected from these incidents, Putin's visit to Tokyo in November 2005 produced nothing diplomatically.

But interestingly enough, no comment from the Japanese side linked these approaches with the improved Sino-Russian relations. According to Japanese Foreign Ministry officials, Putin's uncompromising attitude during negotiations is due solely to the favorable Russian economic conditions that resulted from high energy prices. Evidently, the Japanese side sensed Putin's approach to regional politics when he decided not to accept the Chinese offer on the oil pipeline from Angarsk to Daqing at the end of 2004. Instead, the Russian government announced that it had

decided to adopt the route stretching from Taishet to Nakhodka.⁶ Although this did not mean ultimate victory of the Japanese plan, the decision signaled to the Japanese government that the Russian side was keen to engage in geopolitical calculations; the more closely Russia connected its economy to China, the more it would be dependent on the latter not only economically but also politically in the Northeast Asian context. And in order to ensure its influential role in the region, Russia needs to avoid the establishment of an economic structure heavily weighted towards China. Thus, while Russia's foreign policy aims to further strengthen its relations with China against the US at the global level, its regional interests in Northeast Asia dictate improved relations with Japan and South Korea, both closely connected with the US.

The analysis of Russia's changed stance up to this point strongly suggests that there is a possibility for Japan and Russia to improve the present stagnant relations. Hitherto, Japan has regarded the resolution of the territorial dispute as the ultimate goal of its relations with Russia. But, in view of the above-mentioned new strategic circumstances in general, and the North Korean nuclear program in particular, it should reconsider its diplomatic means and ends. If Japan wants to be a global player, as is shown by its bid for a seat on the UN Security Council, it has to approach Russia as well as China both regionally and globally. At least Japan needs to elaborate a comprehensive Northeast Asian policy based on its global stance, instead of a mixture of bilateral relations.

⁶ Gilbert Rozman, "Sino-Japanese Competition over the Russian Far East: Is the Oil Pipeline Only a Starting Point?" in IWASHITA Akihiro ed., *Siberia and the Russian Far East in the Twenty-first Century: Partners in the "Community of Asia"*, Slavic Eurasian Studies 6, no. 1 (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2005), 1–20; National Institute for Defense Studies Japan ed., Higashi Ajia Senryaku-gaikan 2006 [*East Asian Strategic Review 2006*] (Tokyo: Kokuritsu insatsu kyoku, 2007), 169.

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