Russia's East Asia Policy: New Opportunities and Challenges*

Anna KIREEVA**

Abstract

Since the demise of the Soviet Union, Russia's foreign policy has evolved from a Western-oriented one to a multi-dimensional one, with substantial focus on East Asia. Russia's East Asian policy is stimulated by its bid for great power status in the region. Russian-Chinese relations have been the axis of Russia's East Asian foreign policy, though the relations have not been without their challenges. Overdependence on China threatens Russia's independent policy in the region and encourages Russia to search for ways to diversify its ties. The rise of China and the US counter-offensive have resulted in a changing strategic environment in East Asia. A need for balancing between the US and China has brought about ASEAN countries' desire to welcome Russia as a "balancer" in the region. It corresponds with Russia's course on intensifying cooperation with East Asian countries in order to facilitate the development of Siberia and the Russian Far East.

Key Words

Russia, East Asia, Foreign Policy, Security.

Introduction

> Asia has every reason to view Russia as a crucial element of military and political stability as well as of sustainable development.… We may effectively contribute to solving the region's energy, transport, scientific, technological and environmental problems, and our partners are well aware of that. Regional military and political stability, collective efforts to counter international terrorism, emergency response cooperation, or dialogue between civilizations are unimaginable without Russia.… We accord priority to the development of economic cooperation focusing on the areas where we have distinct advantages. I am primarily referring to the energy sector, including atomic energy, transport and space exploration.[1]
>
> *Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov*

* The article is prepared with the support of Russian Foundation for Humanities (grant project № 12-03-00538a). I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Alexei D. Voskiressenski and Associate Professor Ekaterina V. Koldunova for their comments on a draft of this article, and to Associate Professor Natalia V. Rodoman for giving me a tool of English political vocabulary to write it.

** Anna Kireeva is a PhD candidate at MGIMO-University, the MFA of Russia. She is a Coordinator of the MA degree programme in World Regional Studies and International Relations, "Politics and Economics of World Regions", and a Lecturer in Asian and African Studies at MGIMO-University, the MFA of Russia.

A need for balancing between the US and China brings about ASEAN's desire to welcome Russia as a "balancer" in the region.

As incumbent Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov noted, Russia is not a newcomer in East Asia. Russia has enjoyed contacts with the countries there since the 17th century, and played an important role in international relations in the region in the 19th and 20th centuries. Although it might be a disputed point, one cannot deny the role of the Soviet Union in the victory of the national liberation movements in Asia.[2] Not to be overlooked is the fact that though a vast Russian empire was made up of numerous peripheral territories situated in Asia, including Siberia, the Far East and Central Asia, they cannot be regarded as classical colonies for a number of reasons. Firstly, Russia's expansion was supported, or at least not opposed, by the local elites. Secondly, Russia's periphery, which was integrated into the empire, was not plundered, as in classical colonial model, but on the contrary subsidised. Thirdly, the peripheral elites were not discriminated against, but incorporated into the national elite.[3]

Since Russia has never been a classical colonial power and has been significantly influenced by both the West and the East, in domestic discourse there has never been clarity about what kind of a country Russia actually is. One school of thought believes that Russia is a European power, and President Medvedev described Russia as one of the three main pillars of the European civilisation, alongside the European Union and the United States. As two thirds of its territory lies in Asia and one third in Europe, Russia throughout its history has been under the influence of both Eastern and Western civilisations. The Russian political system has differed considerably from those in Europe, while Russian culture has been notably distinct from Asian ones. Hence, according to another long-standing tradition, Russia is often regarded as both a Western and Eastern country, a Eurasian one, whereas outside it is mostly perceived as neither a Western country nor an Eastern one. There is a school of thought that holds that Russia is an Asian power, although this point of view is mostly rejected by the majority of the Russians. The 2000s witnessed an attempt to overcome this dilemma of Russia's ambivalence. A newly emerging concept of Russian geopolitical positioning being discussed at the moment argues that Russia is a Euro-Pacific power, which means it has both European and Asia-Pacific dimensions in geographical terms, but in terms of its political characteristics is a European power.[4]

The existence of so many contradictory perceptions makes Russian foreign policy very complicated. Moreover, the Soviet legacy has imposed certain limitations upon it. The Soviet bloc, which also included many Asian and African countries, served as a self-contained military, political and economic system. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the main foreign policy goal of the Russian elite was to gain recognition and support from the developed Western world. The logic of this strategic course was quite justified: with the collapse of the bipolar system the basic aim of those which "had lost" was to join the "winners" in order to become a part of the international political and economic system. However, practical implementation of this Western-oriented policy in the mid-1990s clearly demonstrated its imbalances and contributed to re-launching the Eastern dimension of Russia's foreign policy. Although such regions as the Middle East, North and South Africa and others are of great importance to Russian foreign policy, its primary focus has been on East Asia. Dwelling on the reasons for such a decision, it could be argued that a number of East Asian countries, including Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and others, which are now perceived as sources of economic growth, have quite successfully managed to integrate Eastern and Western political and economic models and represent a desirable model of development for Russia.[5]

However, before exploring the nature of Russia's East Asia policy, it is necessary to establish some conceptual clarity in the use of the key concept, namely that of a "great power". The meaning of this concept in Russia's foreign policymaking cannot be underestimated, because aspiring to a great power status has been a unifying theme for the Russian ruling elite from Yeltsin to Putin and to Medvedev.[6] There have been a number of studies concerning great powers in history, but for the aims of this article only the term itself and its criteria are of actual importance, and it is worth dwelling on the approaches to define a great power. Paul Kennedy defines a great power as a state which is able to stand up to any other state in war.[7] Robert Gilpin characterises great powers as countries that are able to establish and enforce the basic rules that influence their behaviour and that of inferior states in the system hierarchy.[8] Kenneth Waltz lays down five criteria for being a great power: population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, political stability and competence, and military strength.[9]

Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver offer a more coherent definition for and criteria of a great power, which can be explained by the fact that their regional

security complex theory (RSCT)[10] has constructivist roots and is quite operable both in the realist and liberal perspectives. According to them, classifying any actor as a great power requires a combination of material capability (as understood by Waltz), formal recognition of that status by others, and a response by the other great powers on the basis of system-level calculations about the present and future distribution of power in world politics. The last criterion is behavioural in nature and means that great powers are taken into consideration not only when dealing with the countries of the region they belong to, but also when operating in different regions and on the global political system level.[11] This understanding of a great power concept will serve as the methodological basis of the article.

During the early 1990s the primary direction of Russian foreign policy was the Western one, and the Eastern was subordinate to the former.

The objective of this article is to provide an account of Russia's foreign policy evolution towards East Asia, its relations with key partners, and the prospects of its role as one of the new poles in the region. This article is structured around three issues. The first part examines the evolution of Russia's foreign policy from Yeltsin to Putin and to Medvedev, with special reference to competing visions on Russia's strategic goals within the political elite. The second part concentrates on the achievements and blemishes of the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership as well as Russian relations with other East Asian states and Russia's accession to regional multilateral organisations. The third part is devoted to the analysis of the Russia's new bid for great power status in the East Asia region-the impediments to, and prospects of-its implementation.

An Evolution of Russia's East Asian Policy from Yeltsin to Putin and Medvedev

After the demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a democratic but considerably weaker Russian Federation a new foreign policy course was proclaimed by the political elite. In the early 1990s this course was put forward by the Russian President Boris Yeltsin's (1991-1999) first team, which had little experience in foreign policymaking in a democratising country. Moreover, they could not rely on any historical experiences. Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, who appeared to be an advocate of a Western-oriented foreign policy, and the President believed that good relations with Europe and the USA were important for Russia to become a part of the international community. This

idea in fact corresponded with Mikhail Gorbachev's concept of building a common "European house". The main goal of this policy was quite pragmatic, however, and entailed enjoying Western support not only in the political sphere, but also in gaining access to financial assistance and credit lines in order to ensure a Western-oriented development. Consequently, such a foreign policy course left little room for other dimensions. However, it is instructive to note that East Asia was not completely forgotten during this period. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) viewed major Asian countries as the rear of Russia's relations with the West. Above all China was considered a key country, and good neighbourly and pragmatic relations, most notably border trade, were emphasised.[12] A reliable partner was of vital importance for Russia in its bid to ensure security through good relations with NATO and the USA, which was seen as the only way to stabilize Russia after the collapse of the USSR.[13] Therefore, we can conclude that during the early 1990s the primary direction of Russian foreign policy was the Western one, and the East was subordinate to the former. Russian leaders were preoccupied with the internal agenda, including reforming the political system and establishing a market-based economy. As Russia's GDP roughly declined in Yeltsin's period (by 60 % compared with 1990), by 1998 Russia had lost its erstwhile role and almost all influence in East Asia.[14]

Primakov voiced out a strategic triangle of three states: Russia, China and India with a stress on a multipolar world, aimed at counterbalancing American unilateralism in world politics.

The mid-1990s saw a new figure in Russian foreign policy, Yevgeny Primakov, who epitomised an urgent need for altering the strategic course following Russia's economic troubles, political turbulence, and reduced influence in the international arena. But one of the most important factors that contributed to a change in the foreign policy course was the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the West's unilateral decision to agree to the emergence of new states after the collapse of the Soviet Union. By 1994 President Yeltsin had begun reconsidering Russia's lean towards the West, and partnership with China was regarded as the centrepiece of Russian diplomacy. Primakov argued that there was a strategic triangle of three states, Russia, China and India, and stressed a multipolar world, which was aimed at counterbalancing American unilateralism in world politics.[15] However, as the changes took some time

to implement, the 1990s are usually characterised as a decade of degradation in Russia's role in East Asia.

In 2010 Asia was named as an additional source for Russian modernization, while previously these sources included only the EU and the USA.

The late 1990s and the early 2000s witnessed a shift in Russian foreign policy to a more pragmatic and balanced stance, better aimed at realising the country's national interests. It was aimed in general at providing the necessary safeguards on Russia's borders in order to pay attention to domestic concerns, preventing conflicts in the proximity of Russian territory, facilitating economic cooperation with all Eastern countries notwithstanding their ideological standing if it proves profitable to Russia, and ensuring the territorial integrity and control over the Russian Far East (RFE).[16] Under President Vladimir Putin (2000-2008) Russia managed to stop internal political and economic chaos, to reduce armed conflicts inside the country, and to restore a decent level of social and economic development. As Russia has returned as a strong state,[17] many foreign policy experts called this phenomenon Russia's resurgence.[18] As a result, Russia's foreign policy abandoned its pro-Western stance and under Foreign Ministers Igor Ivanov and Sergey Lavrov its Eastern dimension gained momentum. It became especially clear after the 2007 Munich speech by Putin, which demonstrated divergence in positions with the West and Russia's more assertive foreign policy[19]. Emphasis has mostly been put on the Asia-Pacific region, as only these countries could provide resources for the development of Siberia and the RFE.[20] In 2008's *The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*'s list of regional priorities Asia-Pacific held the fourth position after the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Europe and the USA. In addition to the region's role in developing Siberia and the RFE the government's concept of 2008 highlights "the need for strengthening regional cooperation in the fields of countering terrorism, ensuring security and maintaining a dialogue between civilizations".[21]

President Dmitry Medvedev (2008-2012), Putin's successor, proposed a modernisation agenda as the strategy for Russia's development.[22] Some experts believe that despite the differences in the foreign policy strategies of the three leaders- Yeltsin, Putin and Medvedev- the main goal has been to restore Russia's status as one of the main actors in the world, a status it had lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, the end of the 2000s highlighted a

definite shift in Russia's foreign policy priorities towards Asia. In 2010 Asia was named as an additional source for Russian modernisation, while previously these sources included only the EU and the USA.[23] As the "centre of gravity" of economic growth and geopolitics is shifting to East Asia, Russia's MFA sees its priority in taking proactive measures to establish favourable external conditions for the modernisation and innovative development of Russia. The East Asia region is described as one of the key priorities in Russia's foreign policy. Moreover, the economic and technological rise of the region should be used in order to facilitate economic and social development of Siberia and the Russian Far East. Two main tracks in this process include improving bilateral relations and participation in multilateral organisations.[24] This is called multivector cooperation in Russian foreign policy discourse, and reflects a necessity to foster economic ties and take part in shaping a new security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region.[25]

Analysing the effects of Russia's foreign policy, one can state that while there was a consensus over the main foreign policy goals in the 1990s, there were many difficulties in shaping policies and taking practical actions to attain these goals.[26] Along with this, underestimating economic security and "great-power overzealousness" has been viewed by many scholars as the main impediments to a successful Russian foreign policy in the region.[27] However, the latter is a rather controversial point. There has been a plethora of more recent studies that have cast doubt on the idea that aspiring to great power status has had a negative impact on Russia's policy towards the region. Thus, the view that Putin's aim of restoring Russia's great power status has led to a more coherent policy in East Asia seems to be more reasonable.[28]

In this respect, special reference should be made to the key actors in Russia's East Asia policymaking. Determining the actual influence of various factions in Russia's foreign policymaking would be a very thorny way, because the actual process highly depends on personal contacts, which are difficult to define and can differ considerably from those roles outlined in the constitution. Finally, although the president has a final say in foreign policy, the entities that influence his decisions remain obscure. This has lead to a scarcity of literature on this topic, as researchers focus on more accessible subjects. Moreover, a bulk of Western works are dominated either by the stereotypes of imperialistic thinking in Russia's foreign policy or, in contrast, by the perceptions of genuine democratic transition in policymaking.[29] However, this issue is of significant importance, because only a thorough insight into who the Russian

foreign policy elite are can one make a substantiated assessment of this or that policy and grasp the idea of who are the proponents and opponents of this or that decision. The most influential actors comprise the President, the Presidential Administration (PA), the Security Council (SB), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID), the intelligence services, both internal (FSB) and external (SVR, and the GRU), the Defence Ministry (MO), and the Russian Armed Forces.[30]

Different factions competed over the influence on the President, which turned out to be one of the reasons of Russia's incoherent policy in the 1990s.

As Russia is a presidential republic and a federation, it comes as no great surprise that the apex of executive authority lies within the institute of the president, with all the ministers and agencies directors reporting directly to him. The functions of the Security Council seem to be quite significant since it is in charge of responding to security challenges and oversees national security.[31] While there is a view that it primarily acts as a forum and has no real influence,[32] another outlook argues that it serves as a kind of president's private council, where major foreign policy decisions are discussed and decided upon.[33] The president also has a foreign policy aide and there is a special foreign policy division in the PA.[34]

Nevertheless the role of these institutions was different during the terms of Presidents Yeltsin and Putin. Some scholars argue that the profile of relations with East Asia was low in the 1990s as under Yeltsin there was a marked dichotomy between aspirations to assert a great power role in the region, to participate in the regional decision-making process and regional fora on the one hand, and economic and political chaos in the country, resulting in confusion in foreign policy decision making on the other. During that period the role of Russia's MFA was frequently sidelined because other domestic actors, such as individual ministries and agencies, acted independently and without any central control.[35] As a result, different factions competed over influence on the President, which turned out to be one of the reasons for Russia's incoherent policy in the 1990s. Vladimir Putin, in contrast, began by building his own team around him with his own people, mostly his colleagues from St. Petersburg, including former President Dmitry Medvedev. Under Putin and Medvedev the bureaucratic rivalry became covert and the PA and foreign policy aide Sergey Prihod'ko enjoyed primacy in a more centralised foreign policymaking process. However, the PA staff is relatively small and there

are few experts on East Asia, and their scope of responsibility is mostly limited to organisation and protocol work. The relationship between the PA and MFA can be depicted in the following way: the president and the PA set out the overall East Asia agenda, whereas the MFA proposes more detailed initiatives to be discussed with the PA.[36] In addition to that, the prime minister can be quite influential in the foreign policy hierarchy, taking concrete measures and steps, as was epitomised by Putin when he was the prime minister under President Medvedev.

As far as the other "traditional" foreign policymakers are concerned, the main function of the intelligence services, especially of the SVR, is to provide the president with information and advice on all major foreign policy security decisions, including on East Asia. Its role as the key source of information was especially valued by President Yeltsin, and is still relatively high under Putin. The functions of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs are much more numerous and it can be regarded as the core foreign policy body, coordinating, initiating and implementing foreign policy in East Asia in practically all spheres. It is characterised as the most influential body in terms of resources, experience and specialists. Though its role as a foreign policy coordinator was frequently undermined under Yeltsin, the MFA was, and still is, considered to be the main actor in Russia's East Asian policy.[37] Practically, the MFA enjoys almost undisputable authority over specific foreign policy issues, for example, Russia's "strategic partnership" with China.[38]

As for sectoral actors, which include economic and energy ministries, state companies like Rosoboroneksport[39] and Rostekhnologii[40] and others, they have enjoyed some kind of authority over the issues within their scope of responsibility, but mostly have had to coordinate their actions with the MFA.[41] The Russian parliament's role in foreign policymaking was reduced to a minimum under the 1993 Constitution and includes the ratification of international treaties. Under Putin it became a "mouthpiece for views which Putin would like the outside world to ponder, but which he would prefer not to express himself".[42] Academic institutions and think-tanks specialising on Africa and Asia have been playing quite a marginal role in foreign policymaking, and they diminished over time because they receive less state support now. Most of the academic influence on Russian initiatives is considered to be wielded through personal contacts with elites rather than through institutional methods.[43] Deprived from any significant influence on Russia's foreign policy as a whole, the Russian Far East elite did have some

impact on the resolution of the border issues, especially as there was strong opposition to a border resolution with Japan and China.[44]

Summarising the above, Yeltsin mostly employed the "divide and rule" attitude to foreign policymaking, which resulted in chaos and factional rivalry, led to an incoherent foreign policy course, and the absence of a clear strategy at re-establishing a great power status. Russian policy during the 1990s is often described as reactive, ad hoc, and often contradictory. On the contrary, power consolidation under Putin resulted in a more comprehensive and proactive approach towards the region. A bid for great power status made Russian foreign policy elite better define its interests and goals in East Asia and understand that a substantial economic presence in the region as well as internal strength are of vital importance in this respect.[45]

China and Beyond: Bilateral and Multilateral Dimensions of Russia's Foreign Policy

As China has been the core East Asian country in Russia's foreign policy towards the region, a special mention should be made of the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership as the "axis" of Russian policy in the East. Russian-Chinese relations managed to overcome a confrontational period in the 1960-1980s, and have now created a strategic partnership. Their foundation was laid down by Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to China in 1989, and the 1990s saw the beginning of political and military-technical cooperation between the states. In 1996 a strategic partnership aimed at promoting cooperation in the 21st century was proclaimed. In 2001 a Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation was signed, which paved the way for enhanced political, economic and military cooperation. In 2004 a border dispute was finally settled after long negotiations and there were a number of border agreements. Russian and Chinese leaders voiced a vision of a "new world order" in 2005 and a joint initiative on strengthening security in the Asia-Pacific in 2010. The 2000s saw advanced energy cooperation, in particular in 2010 when a spur from the East Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline was completed from Russian Skovordino to Chinese Daqing. As far as regional framework is concerned, 1996 saw the creation of Shanghai Five, including Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on the basis of Treaty of Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions. It laid foundations for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, formed in 2001 after Uzbekistan's accedence, which comprises security and economic agenda.

It is instructive to note that the rationale for the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership included opposition to unilateral actions and support for a polycentric world order, based on respect for mutual sovereignty. The concept of a polycentric world was originally proposed by Chinese policymakers and was then supported by Russian leaders.[46] In this respect America's unilateral actions in Kosovo and Iraq objectively strengthened this partnership. There is a divergence of opinions whether the strategic partnership has an ultimate aim to curb American unipolar preeminence or has a pragmatic, non-confrontational side, which helps contain Western global politics.[47] China's rapid economic development and Russia's relative economic weakness in the 1990s stimulated Russia's favourable policy towards China as it was seen as best serving Russia's national interests. As far as the economic rationale is concerned, China was in need of Russia's high-tech exports, including arms, and there was no distinguished asymmetry in the trade balance in the 1990s. Trade ties, military exchanges and diplomatic support vis-a-vis the West was used in both countries to underpin their standing in the world, as direct competition with it would have been difficult for both countries if they acted separately. However, as Russian scholar Alexei Bogaturov notes, China has been considered as both "a sea of potentials" and "an ocean of fears".[48] While some experts emphasize the benefits of Russian- Chinese cooperation, based on distinguishing non-Western political systems, others maintain that such policy could lead to a more archaic and authoritarian regime in Russia, subordinate to Chinese strategic, political and economic interests. China's rise facilitated the discussion in Russia's political elite whether to pursue a policy aimed to foster a common political space with Europe and the USA in cooperation with China or to create a common anti-American, anti-Western and pro-authoritarian Chinese- centered economic, political and security space[49]. Nevertheless, present Russian-Chinese relations should be distinguished from an anti- US alliance, as both sides value their relations with the world leader too much to start such a rivalry. Even if despite all the problems such an alliance emerged, Russia would be likely to play a subordinate role in it, which does not correspond to its national interests.[50]

A number of blemishes and challenges within Russian-Chinese relations should also be touched upon. First of all, at issue here is the imbalanced trade structure: though the 1990s saw a different situation, since the beginning of the 2000s Russian exports have mostly consisted of energy, raw materials, fishery and timber, while Chinese exports have been to a large degree composed of machinery and manufactured goods. The Chinese economic orientation generates

a threat of Russia becoming a resource appendix, leaving it on the "other side of the barricades" from the leading world, including China itself.[51] In this sense experts argue that China cannot serve as a "beacon of innovation-based model of development" or supply Russia with high-tech equipment, as it is interested only in Russia's resources (except military know-how to a certain extent) and itself uses second-hand Western technologies purchased or copied outright from the West.[52] Secondly, there is a threat to Russia's independent policy in East Asia due to the concept of the "Beijing consensus", which entails restructuring the world order with China in the lead[53] and, inevitably, accepting Chinese interests as priorities.[54] Thirdly, many experts believe that China is trying to "squeeze Russia out of" Central Asia, wielding "soft power" and enhancing energy cooperation through the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).[55] Fourthly, the development of the RFE should be regarded as the most important issue and goal, as far as Russia's East Asian policy is concerned. Only 7 million people live to the east of Lake Baikal, while the Chinese population in the neighbouring provinces totals more than 280 million people. Such circumstances provide a breeding ground for perceptions of the so-called "yellow peril" (*zheltaya ugroza*), which is manifested in the fear of uncontrolled Chinese migration and Chinese business control over the RFE's and Siberia's natural resources.[56]

Russia's relations with Japan were a top priority in Russia's Asian policy in the beginning of the 1990s as Japan was considered as one of the leaders of the developed world.

In this context special reference should be made to the development problems in the Russian Far East. Despite several economic plans to foster development in the RFE and to present the region as Russia's gate to the Asia-Pacific region, the reality falls short of this idea. A new model of its development has not been devised yet, and the region is currently facing an array of problems: dwindling population, de-industrialisation, deforestation (due to a vast export to China), large-scale corruption, "black market" trading schemes, and general degradation.[57] Some experts maintain that a Chinese takeover of the region is likely to take forms not of migration, but of trade and investment domination and that Russia is already increasingly showing signs of economic dependence on China.[58]

The Programme for Cooperation between the Regions of the Far East and Eastern Siberia and the Provinces of

Northeast China up to 2018, adopted in 2009, is aimed at constructing new border crossings, boosting cooperation in transportation, and developing "cooperation zones" and other spheres of bilateral relations. Many Russian scholars have been especially critical of it since most of the projects planned are connected with either developing raw materials, timber harvesting and agriculture on the Russian territory with increasing Chinese staff, or with producing final products on Chinese territory. Labelled This in turn is likely to lead only to the economic and ecological deterioration of the RFE.[59] The illegal Russia-China trade is estimated at large sums, from one forth to a half of official trade turnover, and only contributes to underdevelopment in the RFE.[60] Moreover, in exchange for US $15 and US $10 billion Chinese credits for, respectively, Russian oil companies Rosneft and Transneft to complete the ESPO oil pipeline, Russia guaranteed the supply of 300 million tons of oil over the next 20 years at a fixed price (lower than the average price level in recent years).[61] This means that despite proclaiming Russian-Chinese relations in the political sphere as strategic and enjoying convergent opinions on building a "new world order", economic disparity, aggravated by China's lack of interest in buying more highly processed Russian goods, and ambivalent perceptions that Russia "still owes" the Chinese part of the Far Eastern territories threaten the status of this partnership.[62]

Yet there is a strong belief that a strategic partnership with China is a major safeguard against Russia's diminishing position in East Asia, and that despite all the imbalances China is the most likely country to facilitate modernisation and development in the RFE since it enjoys priority in the region's investment list. Russia's ability to promote multipolar world order is heavily dependent on its cooperation with China, which can be regarded as a kind of force multiplier for Russia's foreign policy. The strong point of Russian-Chinese relations is that if a way to overcome their drawbacks is found, they will significantly contribute to the development of both countries and their standing in East Asia.[63] The new quality of China's role and place in world politics and global economy has made many Russian scholars suggest that Russian-Chinese relations need a complete restructuring and even a "reload" in order to form a mutually beneficial pragmatic strategic partnership.[64]

It would also be unfair to say that Russia's government does not realise the urgent need to develop the RFE. For instance, even on the energy issue Russia has been trying to diversify its directions: despite China's lobbying that the ESPO

pipeline should end in Chinese Daqing, the main pipeline extends to the Sea of Japan without passing through Chinese territory, thus giving access to other consumers in the Asia-Pacific region (Japan, Korea, etc) and making it impossible for the Chinese to dictate oil prices.[65] The Russian government also adopted a Federal Target Programme of Economic and Social Development of the Far East and Transbaikalia 2008-2013, which entails allocating large sums of money on development of the RFE, especially on developing Vladivostok's infrastructure in the run-up to the 2012 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit there. The plan drew substantial criticism because although it implied pouring extensive funds into several grandiose projects, such as building a bridge to Russky island, it was believed to do little to promote good governance and tackle corruption and bureaucratic impediments to developing business in the region.[66] However, APEC Summit proved to be quite a success for Russia's bid to present Vladivostok as Russian gates to the Asia-Pacific and Russia's seriousness in becoming an integral part of the region, although President Putin's concept of Russia's role in the integration of Eurasian common space was not widely appreciated.[67] About 650 billion rubbles (US $ 21 billion) were spent on developing the region's infrastructure due to the summit.[68] In addition to that, a recent decision to create a state-owned corporation in charge of development in Siberia and the RFE with approximately US $60 billion in funds up to 2020[69] and the creation of Ministry for Development of Russian Far East in May, 2012 in charge of the region's development[70] raises hopes of a new strategic course for the modernisation of RFE.

Russia's official position is primarily concerned with North Korea abandoning nuclear tests, constructing a new security architecture in the region and securing a place in the North Korean talks.

As for other countries of East Asia, Russia's relations with Japan were a top priority in Russia's Asian policy in the beginning of the 1990s as Japan was considered one of the leaders of the developed world. Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Japan in 1991 was considered a breakthrough, as it inaugurated the beginning of a new era of normalisation in Russian-Japanese relations with a hope of signing a peace treaty and settling the territorial dispute, remnants from the end of the Second World War. The dispute over the Kuril Islands resulted from the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin being passed from Japan to the Soviet

Union under the terms that ended the Second World War. However, Japan does not recognise it owing to the fact that the Soviet Union was not a signatory state to the 1951 San Francisco Treaty.

Japan's ambition to settle the territorial dispute with an emerged democratic Russia promptly and on its terms turned out to be unsuccessful, as Japan failed to connect this issue with economic cooperation and financial assistance for Russian reforms.[71] The Tokyo Declaration of 1993 brought out divergent positions on the border issue and, in spite of numerous top-level meetings in 1997 and 1998, where a goal was proclaimed to sign a peace treaty by 2000, nothing has been achieved on this matter. Economic and technical cooperation stagnated despite the enormous potential of its development, reaching a new low in 2002. This was mainly due to Japan's reluctance to invest in a Russia lacking economic transparency and having numerous bureaucratic impediments. In 2003 a joint action plan was signed, aimed at a comprehensive development of political, economic and cultural relations.[72] In 2005 additional agreements were concluded, adding momentum to economic cooperation between Russia and Japan, and resulting in Japanese business entering the Russian market (especially the automobile industry). Japan also took an active part in energy cooperation in the Sakhalin-2 project, and is a major consumer of Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG). Japan is Russia's second largest trading partner in the region after China and ranks eighth as far as investment in Russia is concerned.[73]

Nevertheless, despite the fact that economic cooperation has been on the rise, no progress has been made on settling the territorial dispute so far and President Medvedev's visit to the Kuril Islands in 2010 evoked fierce criticism from Japan's leaders, exacerbating mutual perceptions of bilateral relations. The territorial dispute is constantly raised as a domestic issue in Japan, serving the goals of gaining internal support pending another forthcoming election.[74] Despite this, Russian- Japanese relations have been progressing constructively and have a huge potential for development.

The Soviet imbalance towards North Korea shifted in favour of South Korea in the 1990s. After recognising South Korea in 1990, Moscow put an emphasis on developing economic relations and technical cooperation with this country, which is currently Russia's third largest trading partner in East Asia after China and Japan, and a promising source of high technology. This had negative impact on Russian-North Korean relations as Russia became marginalised in Korean affairs despite its valid claim

of having a direct interest in the issue. Moscow was completely left out of the US-negotiated Agreed Framework in 1994, and negotiations in 1996, in which the USA, China and both Koreas took part. Despite Russian initiatives to promote multilateral talks on the North Korean issue, its earlier disengagement from North Korea mainly for economic reasons reduced its clout on the Korean peninsula. However, as Moscow supported the South Korean "sunshine policy" and took steps to improve relations with North Korea, including Putin's visit and the signing of the Russian-North Korean friendship treaty in 2000, Russia has tried to create the image of an active mediator in the nuclear issue. The friendship treaty replaced the 1961 Friendship and Mutual Assistance Treaty, although the provisions of Russia's military assistance in the case of military attack were removed from the new agreement. However, despite these successful steps and some improvements time had already been lost.[75]

The second Korean nuclear crisis (2002-2006) gave Russia an opportunity to exercise its influence over North Korea and to convene a multilateral organisation, namely the six-party talks. Russia's unofficial aim was also to prevent the breakdown or collapse of the North Korean regime as that would have unpredictable consequences for Russian security with Russia's 19- kilometer border with North Korea. Russia's participation in the six-party talks was mainly perceived as an acknowledgement of its great power status by the major northeast Asian players and that it had an ability to maintain the current balance in the region between the US alliance system and China.[76] Russia's official position is primarily concerned with North Korea abandoning nuclear tests, constructing a new security architecture in the region, and securing a place in the North Korean talks. The latter is of utmost importance for Russia, since a place in the talks is perceived as a way to wield its influence in the region and to establish itself as a reliable economic partner for both Koreas. The breakdown of the talks owing to the third nuclear crisis in 2009 is considered a major loss for Russia from this perspective, and stimulates Russia to promote the revival of the talks on North Korea.[77] Russia made efforts to improve its position on the Korean peninsula in the absence of the talks as the only available mechanism to make its words heard. In 2009-2010, Russia took steps to improve its relations with North Korea (such as debt rescheduling and food aid in 2011), and proposed a number of major trilateral economic projects including the linking of the Trans-Siberian railway to the Korean railroad infrastructure, constructing powerlines through North Korea to South Korea, and a natural

gas pipeline throughout the Korean peninsula. Given the political risks of their implementation, these projects present a real opportunity to transform South-North Korean relations into constructive ones and thus strengthen Russia's standing on the Korean peninsula.[78] In October 2011 a railway road connecting Russian Khasan with North Korean Rajin port was completed with Russia developing a container pier in Rajin.[79]

Russia's relations with East Asian states vary from strategic partnership and closer economic ties with China to developing economic cooperation with Japan, South Korea and ASEAN states.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union augmented Taiwan's interest in a new democratic country not merely as an export market but as a potential ally against China. Despite Taiwan's attempts to create a powerful lobby in favour of establishing official diplomatic relations, it seemed a desperate goal because of a history of fierce political antagonism, lack in pro-Taiwanese politicians, and Russia's objective interest in the vast potential of the Chinese market. In 1992 Taiwan successfully erected the institutional foundations for quasi-official relations with Russia: the Moscow-Taipei Economic and Cultural Coordination Commission and the Taipei-Moscow Economic and Cultural Coordination Commission, which remain the main channels. Presumably, the decision to focus on China in its East Asian policy made the Russian government reject the Taiwan Relations Act, proposed by a marginal populist Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR), and possible arms sales to Taiwan. Russia has officially expressed "firm support" for the "one China" principle since the early 1990s, and publicly adopted it in 2001 strategic partnership treaty with China. This did not prevent Russia from enjoying economic cooperation, mostly in importing Taiwanese machinery and electronics. It should also be noted that a complete resolution of the "Taiwanese issue" is not beneficial to Russia in terms of geopolitics, as it would boost China's might dramatically, and thus have an unpredictable impact on Russia's role in the region.[80]

Though Russia became a dialogue partner with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1996 and in 2004 signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. Russia's regional role was initially perceived mostly with great scepticism owing to its inability to project economic and military power in the region. It was

not until 2005 that the first ASEAN-Russia summit took place. The main problem, however, was that Russian-ASEAN relations were far from being characterised as "substantive" because of poor trade turnover as well as a low investment rate. On these grounds in 2005 Russia was rejected for both making these meetings regular and joining the East Asia Summit (EAS).[81] Above all, Vietnam is considered to be a reliable traditional friend in Southeast Asia, making it one of Russia's strategic partners in East Asia.[82] Besides joint projects on oil and gas exploration with Vietnam and other Southeast Asian states, Russia is also enjoying growing cooperation in the arms trade (for instance with Indonesia and Vietnam), biotechnologies, pharmaceuticals, information and education technologies, space exploration, natural disaster relief, tourism, civil aviation, and in implementing a number of infrastructure projects, including the construction of electric power plants (for example with Cambodia) and nuclear power stations (for example with Vietnam and Myanmar).[83]

A prior analysis of Russia's foreign policy in East Asia shows that Russia's aspirations to become a great power have been manifested through establishing the country as an indispensible and unalienable part of the region, and in strengthening existing bilateral relations while forging new ones. Russia also took steps to assure that it acceded to all regional multilateral institutions. Russia has been a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since its establishment in 1993, promoting preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution mechanisms and a multipolarity vision. In 1998 Russia joined APEC and hosted its 2012 summit, with an aim to make Vladivostok Russia's economic outpost in the Asia-Pacific region.[84] In 2010 Russia joined the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and in 2011 the newly established East Asia Summit (EAS) to integrate itself into the world economy and to take part in building the regional security architecture.

Strategic partnership with China gives Russia opportunities to influence China by means of bilateral contacts more successfully than any agreements or negotiations in the China-US relations can.

Taking all the aforesaid into consideration, Russia has worked hard on joining virtually all regional fora and has become an ASEAN dialogue partner. Russia's relations with East Asian states vary from the strategic partnership and close economic ties with China,

to developing economic cooperation with Japan, South Korea and ASEAN states. Despite various impediments, Russia is currently implementing large-scale projects with regional partners and Russia's economic relations with East Asia will undoubtedly have a huge potential.

Russia's New Role as a Balancer in East Asia: Perils and Prospects

All in all, Russia's relations with East Asia have improved steadily over the last decade, not only in political, but also in economic and industrial domains. For instance, successful joint projects, such as Sakhalin-1 and Sakhalin-2, are being implemented.[85] In the 1990s Russia's trade with East Asian countries (see Table 1) amounted to approximately one fifth of Russia's total turnover, but Russia's share in the total trade of the region was absurdly small, less than 1 %. Experts consider weak infrastructure and unfavourable legal conditions as the major reason for limited economic links. Another distinguishing feature of this period was overdependence on exporting raw materials and natural resources, labelled the "primitivisation" of trade. The late 1990s witnessed a consensus over the necessity to boost economic engagement with the region. Putin launched a more pragmatic economic policy, aimed at pursuing achievable goals reflecting the national interests of Russia. Moreover, developing economic ties were perceived as a means of matching words with deeds in Russia's foreign policy.[86]

Trade dynamics in the 2000s (See Table 2) show that Putin's course to improve investment conditions, legal protection, and developing infrastructure did have a positive effect as far as economic relations with East Asia are concerned. Japan, South Korea, China and other states initiated substantial investment projects in Russia in the late 2000s,[87] President Medvedev's modernisation agenda also contributed to advancing economic ties, as the emphasis has been put on developing high-tech production. Though Russia's trade turnover with East Asia significantly decreased in 2009 on account of the global economic crisis, it managed to restore its pre-crisis level in 2010 and achieved new heights in 2011. In the 12 years since 2000 Russia's trade figures with East Asia have grown more than tenfold, although East Asia's share still roughly equals one fifth of the total Russian trade turnover. An interesting fact is that the Russian trade with East Asia saw faster restoration rates than that with other countries. It should also be noted that during the economic crisis Western investment in Russian economy dropped by 20 %, while investment from East Asia tripled over the last two

years.[88] However, despite this favourable dynamics it should be taken into consideration that Russia still ranks low in East Asian countries' external trade and investment list.

Those pursuing pragmatic economic policies stress energy supply or energy interdependence or arms export as principal means to enhance Russia's standing in the region.

Hence, here arises a question: why has Russia been recognised as a regional actor and invited into regional institutions, such as ASEM and the EAS, despite the fact that relations with the region were not regarded as "substantive" a little more than half a decade ago, when Russia's application into the EAS was politely rejected? Apparently, enhanced economic cooperation was not a reason, because, for example, while Russia's total trade turnover with the ASEAN countries has more than doubled since 2005, from about US$5 billion dollars to about US$12.5 billion dollars in 2010 in sheer numbers, this accounts for less than 1 % of ASEAN's total trade turnover, which is not meaningful at all.[89] The answer is that the regional balance of power changed dramatically at the beginning of the 21st century. If just recently Japan was East Asia's economic leader and the main source of investment and economic trends, China's vibrant economic growth has made it the new centre of economic gravity and turned it into a regional superpower as well, especially given the fact that China has become the main trade partner of the majority of regional economies.[90] The economic rise of China has contributed to its political rise and its more assertive foreign policy in East Asia.[91] This in turn has provoked the US counter-offensive, namely the US ambition to strengthen its alliances with key partners and to remain an inherent part of the region, its self-proclaimed "back to Asia" strategy.[92]

These circumstances have created a new environment in East Asia: a need for balancing between a rising China and the US. A strategic partnership with China gives Russia opportunities to influence China by means of bilateral contacts more successfully than any agreements or negotiations in the Chinese-US relations can. Russia, whose foreign policy towards the region has always been a peaceful one due to the fact that it is a relatively weak regional player and any conflict in the region is able to downplay Russia's role in the region even more, was regarded by the ASEAN and the other countries in the region as a good power, capable of counterbalancing Chinese and the American influence. In other words, a change in the balance of power in the region brought about the need for Russia's more vigorous participation as a balancer (in other words as a counterweight).[93]

ASEAN countries find it beneficial to sustain competition among China,

the US and other major actors, since it helps them develop economically and retain political autonomy as well.[94] This trend coincides with Russia's desire to play a "balancer role": the Russian political elite believes that despite its reduced influence in the world arena, it still possesses "assets for exerting influence" as a "variable force" or "honest intermediary" when addressing regional conflicts (especially the Korean crisis), the China-Japan-US strategic triangle, and ASEAN's response to China's rise.[95] Surprisingly, at first sight Russia's options in East Asia resemble that of ASEAN: if Russia is to play a substantial role in the politics and security in East Asia and develop economic cooperation with dynamically growing economies, under no circumstances should it take sides between the US and China. If Russia or ASEAN decided to choose between these two centres, the region would be seriously polarised and would spiral into chaos.[96]

To elaborate on this point, it can be added that Russia and ASEAN are also facing the same problems of the so-called unfinished modernisation, which defines their subordinate position in the world economy. Creating a more stable regional security architecture will definitely foster economic cooperation as well.[97] Moreover, Russia is a very advantageous partner for ASEAN, because as a strong modernising military state and a weak economic one it possesses military capability but does not wield an economic influence equal to that of the Chinese or the American, and it is seriously interested in broadening its economic presence. Thus, ASEAN countries feel freer in economic relations with Russia than they do with China or the USA, which makes them natural partners.

Russia is facing many challenges in its bid for a great power status in East Asia. Some of them are quite objective: Russia has not got enough resources to alone boost the RFE in the long term. Though the MFA sees East Asian states as potential means for the development of the RFE, it remains only a future possibility and prospects remain unclear.[98] Internal challenges to Russia's policy towards East Asia also include competing schools of thought and ideological perspectives. They comprise liberal and balance-of-power approaches, Russia's identity as a European or a Eurasian country as well as many others. A challenge to Russian foreign policy has been to navigate among competing perceptions of East Asia, including a free-for-all competition among the great powers and the consequent need to play the balance of power game; East Asia as a "field of dreams", ripe for economic integration and cooperation; and misgivings that sparse population and economic deterioration in Asiatic Russia may lead to grave consequences and that the best strategy would be to shield itself behind a "fortress mentality". The latter has its manifestation in an alarmist worldview. Firstly, it is directed at the USA, which is perceived to be masterminding an

assault on Russia's great power standing and aiming at turning the Asian part of Russia into a cheap source of raw materials and energy supplies. Secondly, it is aimed at China, which is seen as scheming for a quiet expansion into Siberia and the Far East, masquerading the seizure of Russian territory with its resources and massive migration as border trade, and thirdly at Japan, which is believed to be reiterating its territorial demands in order to take control of Russian resources and venting its revived nationalism.[99]

Moreover, notwithstanding the fact that there is a consensus both within Russian society and the political elite that Russia actually is a great power and should act accordingly, there has been no consent as to what characteristics this great power should possess and what means should be employed to realise this goal. For instance, the advocates of Russia as a Eurasian power place emphasis on Russia's role as a bridge between the East and the West in both civilisational and economic aspects, though this is not clearly defined. Those pursuing pragmatic economic policies stress energy supply or energy interdependence or arms export as principal means to enhance Russia's standing in the region.[100]

The abovementioned factors present a challenge to Russia's foreign policy in East Asia. It is instructive to note that given stable political and economic development and active participation in the regional agenda, Russia's role in East Asia is likely to increase gradually, although the forms of this increase are still under discussion. In any way, it rests upon Russia's ability to foster the development of Siberia and the Far East.

Conclusion

Drawing on statistical evidence and the above analysis, we can conclude that Russia still cannot be regarded as a full-fledged great power in East Asia, though its presence in the region has stabilised and gained prominence if compared to the 1990s.[101] The reason for this is primarily economic: of all the criteria proposed by Buzan and Weaver, Russia undoubtedly satisfies all the material criteria, if taking into consideration Russia's largest territory, ample resources, considerable political stability under Putin and Medvedev, and military strength as Russia is one of the five official nuclear states. Russia also meets the criterion of formal recognition of its status, which can be seen from Russia's successful accession to ASEM in 2010 and the EAS in 2011. The Russian-Chinese strategic partnership can be considered an issue of system-level calculations in international relations, though its influence on the existing world order is still unclear. However, Russia's economic involvement in the region still leaves much to be desired. Russia fails to actively participate in banking and investment cooperation and the number of joint ventures is still relatively small. This is primarily due to the fact

that the Russian business community is relatively weak in the world and cannot boast a freedom of functioning as it is still controlled by the government in many respects. The Russian Federation accounts for 0-1 % of East Asian countries' exports and 0-3 % of their imports, except for Mongolia and North Korea.[102] Despite its economic weakness, Russia can still aspire to a great power status in East Asia since recent events have demonstrated that it is taken into consideration by the regional powers. Thus, fostering economic cooperation is the most logical way to increase Russia's influence in the region.

Consequently, it is no exaggeration to say that Russia's involvement in the region needs to be amplified and strengthened. Russia's future rests upon its standing in East Asia, both in security and economy. Its political standing in East Asia should be well secured, which implies that Russia must be a member of all prominent regional organisations and conduct a flexible policy on multiple regional fora. As contemporary Russia's economic positions in East Asia are considerably weak and Russia is far from being characterised as a systemic factor in the region, it is evident that a too strong focus on the Chinese vector in its Asian policy is a major threat to independence of Russia's relations with East Asia. In this respect developing multi-vector network diplomacy in East Asia, proposed by Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, which implies flexible and mutually beneficial interaction of different states to promote coinciding interests,[103] can be regarded as a reasonable course.

However, one has to bear in mind the fact that in order to qualify as a great power a country has to possess considerable economic might in the first place, as economic factor comes to the fore when defining core actors in world politics. There is an ongoing debate whether Russia should concentrate on relations with key partners like China, Japan, Vietnam and others, or develop economic relations with relatively new partners. Some scholars view a more vibrant economic cooperation between ASEAN and Russia as a good opportunity to improve Russia's standing in the region. Not without its problems due to geographical remoteness and often called fragile as far as trade turnover is concerned, Russian-ASEAN cooperation could be advanced through joint projects and mutual investment.[104] Others put a premium on selective partnerships with key regional actors in the most promising spheres, such as the debt problem and its historic legacy with Vietnam, military and technical cooperation with Malaysia, tourism with Thailand, high-tech cooperation with Japan and South Korea, and joint ventures with China.[105]

Table 1: Russia's Total Trade Turnover with East Asia (1996-2012) (US$ million)

Country	1996	1999	2000	2005	2012
China	5,724.5	4,495	6,335	20,664	89,008.4
Japan	3,890.7	2,564	3,336	9,581	31,220
North Korea	64.8	55.7	46	233	81
South Korea	1,984	1,142	1,330.8	6,363	24,880.4
Taiwan	568	325.3	492.6	1,931	5,338.2
Indonesia	135.6	57.3	108	551	2,871.8
Malaysia	167.3	475.2	388	823	1,745.6
Vietnam	154	183	204.7	913	3,660.6
Singapore	798.7	220	520.5	626	2,004.1
Thailand	274.8	163	170	998	3,381
Philippines	155.3	77.3	58.4	271	1,647.2
Laos	68.8	2.2	1.6	11	n/a
Cambodia	19.4	n/a	1.5	8	n/a
Myanmar	13.4	n/a	3.8	3	146
Total trade with East Asia	14,019.3	9,760.7	12,997	42,976	165,984.3
Total trade with the World	131,141	102,003	136,971	339,857	837,294.9

Source: Figures compiled from: Paradorn Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia: Perceptions and Policies from Yeltsin to Putin,* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 62 and p. 66; *Russian Federal Custom Service Statistics*, at http://www.customs.ru/index.php?option=com_newsfts&view=category&id=125&Itemid=1976 [last visited 29 April 2012]; Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, *Ekonomicheskoe sotrudnichestvo so stranami Azii i Afriki (Economic Cooperation with Asian and African Countries)*, at http://www.economy.gov.ru/minec/activity/sections/foreignEconomicActivity/cooperation/economicAA/ [last visited 30 April 2012].

*Total Trade with East Asia has to be larger in fact, as trade turnover figures with a number of countries (North Korea, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar) are currently unavailable.

Table 2: Russia's Total Trade Turnover with East Asia (2000-2012) (US$ million)

Country	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
China	6,335	7,292.7	9,432	11,875	15,180	20,664	29,108	40,744	56,344	40,251.4	60,160.6	84,560.7	89,008.4
Japan	3,336	3,219	2,783	4,296	7,345	9,581	12,244	20,094	28,913.5	14,515.6	23,120.8	29,705	31,220
North Korea	46	78.3	79.6	113.6	210	233	210	159,8	110.8	49.4	95.2	113.7	81
South Korea	1,330.8	1,593	2,201	2,650	3,989	6,363	9,515	14,986	18,383.4	10,554.3	17,694.6	24,979,6	24,880.4
Taiwan	492.6	418.6	672	1,099	2,330	1,931	1,687	2,109	2,859.5	1,712.5	3,332	4,159,5	5,338.2
Indonesia	108	125.8	193	418	366	551	607	916	1,409.7	974.2	1,912.3	2,166,5	2,871.8
Malaysia	388	424.6	577	725	537	823	1,134	1,903	2,442.6	1,632.6	1,711.5	1,935,1	1,745.6
Vietnam	204.7	241	403	433	808	913	653	1,092	1,432.9	1,561.8	2,445.1	3,061,0	3,660.6
Singapore	520.5	682.5	610	248	351	626	1,227	1,540	1,655.2	2,019.6	2,340.2	2,636,1	2,004.1
Thailand	170	177	323	431	728	998	907	1,336	2,729.5	1,369.8	2,904.5	4,117,3	3,381
Philippines	58.4	67	128.6	222.5	267	271	167	241	414.4	573	1,067.6	1,643,2	1,647.2
Laos	1.6	3.8	4.2	2.4	6.7	11	4	3.2	6.8	11.4	8.7	45.9	n/a
Cambodia	1.5	4.8	3.6	1.6	4	8	10	29	34.1	38.5	36.3	73.5	n/a
Myanmar	3.8	33.5	100.8	11	25	3	9.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	146
Total trade with East Asia	12,997	14,362	17,510.8	22,526	32,146.7	42,976	57,482	84,993.2	116,733.4	65,754.1	116,829.4	159,197.4*	165,984.3
Total trade with the World	136,971	140,725	152,885	190,713	257,232	339,857	439,051	552,181	734,681.3	469,014.5	625,395.1	821,353.1	837,294.9

Source: Figures compiled from: Paradorn Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia: Perceptions and Policies from Yeltsin to Putin*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 66; *Russian Federal Custom Service Statistics*, at http://www.customs.ru/index.php?option=com_newsfts&view=category&id=125&Itemid=1976 [last visited 29 April 2012]; Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, *Ekonomicheskoe sotrudnichestvo so stranami Azii i Afriki (Economic Cooperation with Asian and African Countries)*, at http://www.economy.gov.ru/minec/activity/sections/foreignEconomicActivity/cooperation/economicAA/ [last visited 30 April 2012].

*Total trade with East Asia has to be larger in fact, as trade turnover figures with a number of countries (Myanmar in 2011 and Laos and Cambodia in 2012) are currently unavailable.

Endnotes

1 Sergey Lavrov, "Russia's Policy in Asia Pacific: Towards Peace, Security and Sustainable Development", at http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/0783A1264F6F63FA442579D700525C04 [last visited 22 December 2012].

2 Ibid.

3 Alexei D. Voskressenski, "Istoricheskie Omuty Knigi Professora Akihiro Iwashita" (Historic Whirlpools of Professor Akihiro Iwashita's Book), in Akihiro Iwashita (ed.), *4000 Kilometrov Problem: Kitaisko-Rossiyasksya Granitsa (4000 Kilometres of Troubles: The Russia-China Border)*, Moscow, AST, 2006, pp. 15-16.

4 Vyacheslav Nikonov, "Article", *Russia as a Euro-Pacific Power: New Trends in Asian Regional Architecture and Russia's Role in Asia- Proceedings of the International Conference of the Russian National Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP)*, Moscow, Moscow University Press, 2011, pp. 85-87.

5 Vyacheslav Y. Belokrenitsky and Alexei D. Voskressenski, "Vneshnaya Politika Rossii Na Aziatskom Napravlenii" (The Asian Dimension of Russia's Foreign Policy), in Anatoly V. Torkunov (ed.), *Sovremennye Mejdunarodnye Otnosheniya i Mirovaya Politika (Contemporary International Relations and World Politics)*, Moscow, Prosveshenie, MGIMO, 2004, pp. 858-860, 881.

6 Paradorn Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia: Perceptions and Policies from Yeltsin to Putin*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 156.

7 Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, New York, Vintage Books, 1989, p. 539.

8 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 30.

9 Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York, McGraw Hill, 1979, p. 131.

10 RSCT implies a complication of leadership in world politics and offers a view of the world order with one superpower (the USA), four great powers (China, Russia, Japan and the EU), and a number of regional powers composing poles of influence in regional subsystems of international relations.

11 Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 32-35.

12 Alexei Voskressenski, "'Sterzhen' Aziatskogo Azimuta Vneshney Politiki Rossii" (The Axis of Russia's Asian Foreign Policy), *Pro et Contra*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Fall 2001), p. 75.

13 Alexei D. Voskressenski, "The Three Structural Changes of Russo-Chinese Cooperation after the Collapse of the USSR and Prospects for the Emergence of a Fourth Stage", *Eurasian Review*, Vol. 5 (November 2012),p. 3,

14 Vladimir N. Kolotov, "Main Trends of Russia's Foreign Policy in Transforming East and Southeast Asia", *Brookings Northeast Asia Commentary*, at http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/04_asia_kolotov.aspx?p=1 [last visited 18 April 2012].

15 Gilbert Rozman, Mikhail G. Nosov and Koji Watanabe (eds.), *Russia and East Asia: The 21st Century Security Environment*, New York, East West Institute, 1999, p. 5.

16 Voskressenski, "'Sterzhen' Aziatskogo Azimuta Vneshney Politiki Rossii", p. 90; Rozman, Nosov and Watanabe (eds.), *Russia and East Asia*, pp. 5-6.

17 Kolotov, *Main Trends of Russia's Foreign Policy in Transforming East and Southeast Asia.*

18 Among others, see: "Eye on Russia: Russia's Resurgence", *CNN*, at http://edition.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/europe/06/18/chance.intro/ [last visited 22 April 2012]; Alex Palmer, "Russia Rising: Moscow's Quiet Resurgence", *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Fall 2011), pp. 32-35.

19 Andrey P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Plymouth, Rowman & Littlefield, 2013, p.175.

20 "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation", at http://www.mid.ru/Bl.nsf/arh/1EC8DC08180306614325699C003B5FF0?OpenDocument [last visited 21 December 2012].

21 "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation", at http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml [last visited 21 December 2012].

22 Dmitry Medvedev, "Go Russia!", at http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2009/09/10/1534_type104017_221527.shtml [last visited 22 December 2012].

23 Fedor Lukyanov, "Article", *Russia as a Euro-Pacific Power: New Trends in Asian Regional Architecture and Russia's Role in Asia*, p. 121.

24 Alexey Borodavkin, "Article", *Russia as a Euro-Pacific Power: New Trends in Asian Regional Architecture and Russia's Role in Asia*, p. 88.

25 Vladimir N. Kotlov, *Main Trends of Russia's Foreign Policy in Transforming East and Southeast Asia*, Brookings Northeast Asia Commentary.

26 Rozman, Nosov and Watanabe (eds.), *Russia and East Asia*, pp. 6-7.

27 Ibid., p. 217.

28 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, pp. 155-156.

29 Dmitry Trenin and Bobo Lo, *The Landscape of Russian Foreign Policy Decision-Making*, Washington, DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005, p. 6.

30 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, pp. 11-12.

31 "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation".

32 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, p. 13.

33 Trenin and Lo, *The Landscape of Russian Foreign Policy Decision-Making,* p. 11.

34 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, pp. 13-14.

35 Leszek Buszynski, "Russia and Northeast Asia: Aspirations and Reality", *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2000), p. 400.

36 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, pp. 14-15.

37 Ibid., pp. 15-16.

38 Trenin and Lo, *The Landscape of Russian Foreign Policy Decision-Making,* p. 12.

39 *Rosoboroneksport* is an agency in charge of import and export of defence-related products.

40 *Rostekhnologii* is an agency in charge of high-tech development.

41 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, pp. 17-18.

42 Cited in Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, p. 19; Trenin and Lo, *The Landscape of Russian Foreign Policy Decision-Making,* p. 13.

43 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, p. 20.

44 Ibid., p. 21.

45 Ibid., pp. 153-154.

46 Alexey Vosskresenski, "'Sterzhen' aziatskogo azimuta vneshney politiki Rossii", pp. 74-75, 83.

47 Voskressenski, "The Three Structural Changes of Russo-Chinese Cooperation after the Collapse of the USSR", pp. 1-2.

48 Ibid, p.4; Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia,* p. 111-112.

49 Voskressenski, "The Three Structural Changes of Russo-Chinese Cooperation after the Collapse of the USSR", pp. 5-7.

50 Yomg Deng, "Remolding Great Power Politics: China's Strategic Partnerships with Russia, the European Union and India", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4-5 (August-October 2007), pp. 878-880.

51 Vasili Mikheev, "Russia-China: 'Reloading' the Relationship", *Russian Politics and Law*, Vol. 49, No. 6 (November-December 2011), p. 79.

52 Evgenii Verlin and Vladislav Inozemtsev, "Russia-China: Time for a Course Correction", *Russian Politics and Law*, Vol. 49, No. 6 (November-December 2011), pp. 63, 66.

53 Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus*, The Foreign Policy Centre, pp. 3-4, at http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/244.pdf [last visited 5 December 2012].

54 Voskressenski, "The Three Structural Changes of Russo-Chinese Cooperation after the Collapse of the USSR", p. 11.

55 Mikheev, "Russia-China: 'Reloading' the Relationship", pp. 79-80.

56 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, pp. 74-75.

57 Gilbert Rozman, "Strategic Thinking about the Russian Far East", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (January/February 2008), p. 37.

58 Stephen Blank, "At a Dead End: Russian Policy and the Russian Far East", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring 2009), pp. 123-124, 130.

59 Vilya G.Gelbras, "Rossiya i Kitay v Usloviyah Global'nogo Krizisa" (Russia and China Amidst the Global Crisis), *Mirovaya Ekonomika I Mejdunarodnye Otnosheniya,* No. 11 (2011), pp. 68-70.

60 Ibid., p. 67.

61 Verlin and Inozemtsev, "Russia-China: Time for a Course Correction", p. 62.

62 Ibid., p. 86; Alexey D. Vosskresenski, "Osnovnye vyzovy i riski vostochnoaziatskih regional'nyh otnosheny Rossii" (Major Challenges and Risks to Russian Regions' Relations with East Asia), in Alexey D. Vosskresenski (ed.), *Bol'shaya Vostochnaya Aziya: Mirovaya Politica i Regionalnye Transformatsii (Greater East Asia: World Politics and Regional Transformations)*, Moscow, MGIMO-University, 2011, pp. 254-258.

63 Alexei D. Voskressenski, "Perspektivy rossiyskoy vneshney politiki na vostochnoaziatskom napravlenii" (Russia's East Asia Foreign Policy Prospects), in Alexei D. Voskressenski (ed.),

Bol'shaya Vostochnaya Aziya: Mirovaya Politica i Regionalnye Transformatsii (Greater East Asia: World Politics and Regional Transformations), Moscow, MGIMO-University, 2011, pp. 312, 317; Jeffry Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, Plymoth, Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, p. 178, 209.

64 Among others, see: Voskressenski, "The Three Structural Changes of Russo-Chinese Cooperation", pp. 1-13, Mikheev, "Russia-China: 'Reloading' the Relationship," pp. 74-93, Verlin and Inozemtsev, "Russia-China: Time for a Course Correction", pp. 54-73.

65 Verlin and Inozemtsev, "Russia-China: Time for a Course Correction", p. 62.

66 Rozman, "Strategic Thinking about the Russian Far East", p. 41.

67 Alexei Fenenko, "APEC Remains an American Project", at http://valdaiclub.com/asia/48800.html [last visited 28 February 2013].

68 Expert Journal, at http://expert.ru/2012/09/10/sammit-na-vyirost/ [last visited 6 March 2013].

69 Ria-novosti News Agency, at http://www.ria.ru/economy/20120428/637185553.html [last visited 1 May 2012].

70 Ministry for Development of Russian Far East, at http://minvostokrazvitia.ru/ [last visited 28 February 2013].

71 Alexandr Panov, *Rossiya i Yaponiya: Stanovlenie i Razvitie Otnosheniy v Kontse XX – Nachale XXI Veka* (*Russia and Japan: The Establishment and Development of Bilateral Relations at the end of the 20th – beginning of the 21st century*), Moscow, Izvestiya, 2007, p. 76.

72 Ibid., p. 144.

73 Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, *Ekonomicheskoe Sotrudnichestvo so Stranami Azii i Afriki (Economic Cooperation with Asian and African countries)*, at http://www.economy.gov.ru/minec/activity/sections/foreignEconomicActivity/cooperation/economicAA/ [last visited 30 November 2012].

74 Dmitry Streltsov, "Moskva I Tokio: vyiti iz spyachki" (Moscow and Tokyo: how to end hibernation), *Rossiya v Global'noi Politike (Russia in Global Politics)*, at http://www.globalaffairs.ru/number/Moskva-i-Tokio-vyiti-iz-spyachki-15365 [last visited 28 February 2013].

75 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, pp. 125-128.

76 Younkyoo Kim and Stephen Blank, "Russia and the Six-Party Process in Korea: Moscow's Quest for Great Power Status", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (July/August 2010), pp. 38-39.

77 Ibid., pp. 41-42.

78 Georgy Toloraya, "The Security Crisis in Korea and its International Context: Sources and Lessons from a Russian Perspective", *The Korean Journal of Defence Analysis*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (September 2011), pp. 347-348.

79 "Rail Link Between Russia and North Korea Repaired", at ajw.asahi.com/article/asia/korean_peninsula/AJ2011101414514 [last visited 8 December 2012].

80 Czeslaw Tubilewicz, "The Little Dragon and the Bear: Russian-Taiwanese Relations in the Post-Cold War Period", *The Russian Review*, Vol. 61 (April 2002), pp. 296-297.

81 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, p. 111.

82 Kolotov, *Main Trends of Russia's Foreign Policy in Transforming East and Southeast Asia.*

83 Evgeny Kanaev, "Fenomen 'Driver's Seat'", *Mejdunarodnaya Jizn (International Affairs)*, No.10 (October 2010), pp. 33-34.

84 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, p. 157.

85 Ekaterina Koldunova, "Post-Crisis Regional Cooperation in East Asia: New Trends and Developments", in Lorenzo Fioramonti (ed.), *Regions and Crises: New Challenges to Contemporary Regionalisms*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2012, p. 205.

86 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, pp. 62-65.

87 Ibid., p. 67.

88 Vyacheslav Nikonov, "Article", *Russia as a Euro-Pacific Power: New Trends in Asian Regional Architecture and Russia's Role in Asia*, p. 86.

89 Victor Sumsky, "The Enlargement of the East Asia Summit: the Reasons and Implications of Bringing Russia in", in Victor Sumsky, Mark Hong, and Amy Hugg (eds.), *ASEAN-Russia: Foundations and Future Prospects*, Singapore, ISEAS, 2012, pp. 68-69.

90 Koldunova, "Post-Crisis Regional Cooperation in East Asia", pp. 202-204.

91 Ekaterina Koldunova, "Defitsit Liderstva v Vostochnoy Azii: Shansy Dlya Maluh I Srednih Stran" (Leadership Deficit in East Asia: Chances for Small and Middle States), *Mezhdunarodnye Protsessy (International Trends)*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (May-August 2011).

92 Sumsky, "The Enlargement of the East Asia Summit", p. 71-72.

93 Ibid., p. 75-76.

94 Koldunova, "Defitsit liderstva v Vostochnoy Azii".

95 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, p. 109.

96 Viktor Sumskiy, "Article", *Russia as a Euro-Pacific Power: New Trends in Asian Regional Architecture and Russia's Role in Asia*, pp. 124-125.

97 Ekaterina Koldinova, "Article", *Russia as a Euro-Pacific Power: New Trends in Asian Regional Architecture and Russia's Role in Asia*, p. 109.

98 Rozman, "Strategic Thinking about the Russian Far East", p. 36.

99 Rozman, Nosov and Watanabe (eds.), *Russia and East Asia*, p. 5.

100 Rangsimaporn, *Russia as an Aspiring Great Power in East Asia*, p. 156.

101 Koldunova, "Defitsit liderstva v Vostochnoy Azii".

102 Voskressenski, "Perspektivy Rossiyskoy Vneshney Politiki Na Vostochnoaziatskom Napravlenii", p. 314.

103 For more details, see, Sergey Lavrov, "O Predmete I Metode Sovremennoi Diplomatii" (About the Subject and Method of Contemporary Diplomacy), at http://interaffairs.ru/print.php?item=377 [last visited 10 November 2012].

104 Koldinova, "Article", pp. 109-110.

105 Voskressenski, "Perspektivy Rossiyskoy Vneshney Politiki Na Vostochnoaziatskom Napravlenii", pp. 316-317.