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RUSSIA AND ASIA-PACIFIC SECURITY: THE MARITIME DIMENSION

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RUSSIA AND ASIA-PACIFIC SECURITY: THE MARITIME DIMENSION³

Russia is shifting its foreign policy focus to the Asia-Pacific region because of internal (the necessity to develop Siberia and the Far East) and external (a deepening crisis in relations with the West) factors. For this policy to be a success, Russia needs a stable and predictable regional milieu while confrontation in Asia-Pacific security is on the rise.

Evidence for this assessment is provided by the current state of regional maritime security challenges. They are evolving at a faster pace than the regional mechanisms and institutions aimed to keep them within manageable bounds. The simultaneous rise of the global dimension in the main challenges to Asia-Pacific maritime security—primarily the set of issues related to the South China Sea—call for the increased involvement of an established global actor with significant economic potential, independent foreign policy and genuine interest in preserving peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. In the current circumstances, this role cannot but be assumed by Russia.

The paper discusses the specificity of current Asia-Pacific maritime security trends, Russia's regional priorities and policy instruments which could be used to decrease tensions in the key regional maritime security challenges.

JEL Classification: Z

Key words: Maritime security in Asia-Pacific, territorial disputes, freedom of navigation, Russian policy, multilateral cooperation.

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INTRODUCTION

The present crisis in Russia's relations with the West makes its pivot to Asia-Pacific a steady and irreversible trend. Asia-Pacific countries welcome Russia's turn to the East, which is exemplified by the participation of Asian countries in Eastern Economic Forum and other Russian initiatives aimed to foster the development of Siberia and the Far East. During the power shift to Asia-Pacific, the contradictions between different actors are growing, so the region needs the stabilizing influence of an actor interested in and capable of preserving peace and stability. Russia is interested in a comprehensive and multidimensional participation in Asia-Pacific economic, political and socio-cultural developments which could raise its regional profile⁴.

Asia-Pacific is a maritime region, and its prosperity depends to a considerable extent on maritime security. At the same time, many maritime security challenges are becoming difficult to tackle owing to both the changing nature of these problems and the decreasing capabilities of regional regulatory institutions. While the agenda of key pan-regional multilateral institutions where security issues are discussed—ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Eight and East Asia Summit—is set by ASEAN, its position as the “driving force” of these forums are undermined by China's policy in the South China Sea. As C. Thayer put it, “China is slowly and deliberately excising the maritime heart out of Southeast Asia”⁵. Other Asia-Pacific actors, mainly the United States, also have their own interests in the South China Sea, which are nearly impossible to reconcile. Russia as an actor and sea power is becoming more and more involved in Asia-Pacific region processes, so there is a need to have a clear idea about Russian strategy on maritime security issues in the region. Despite this, Russia's quest for a new role in shaping the regional maritime security landscape and the possibilities to resolve the existing challenges are rarely covered in academic writings and debates.

At these analytical crossroads, the research provides a nuanced analysis of the current trends in Russia's policy towards Asia-Pacific maritime security issues and Russia's special possibilities to keep the existing contradictions manageable. The paper argues that Russia's contribution to strengthening cooperative trends in relations between the main Asia-Pacific actors has positive repercussions for regional maritime security.

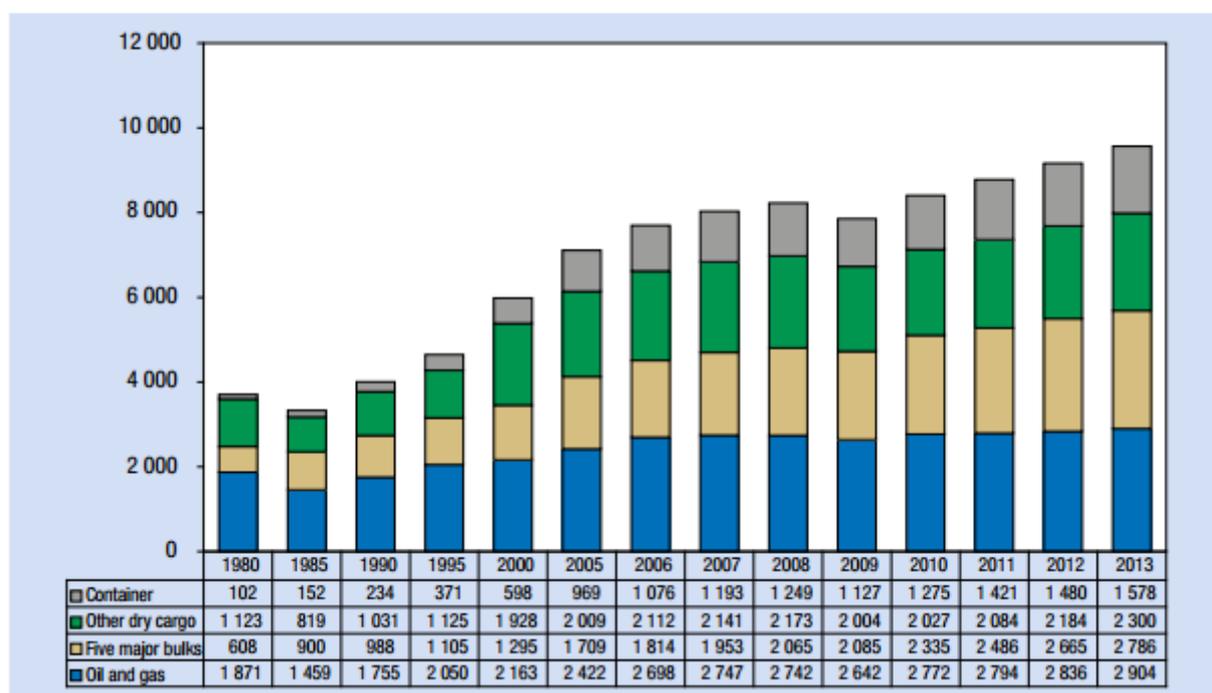
⁴ Kuhrt N.C. Russia and Asia-Pacific: From 'Competing' to 'Complementary' Regionalisms // Political Studies Association, vol. 34, issue 2, 2014. P. 138.

⁵ Thayer C. No, China Is Not Reclaiming Land in the South China Sea // The Diplomat - <http://thediplomat.com/2015/06/no-china-is-not-reclaiming-land-in-the-south-china-sea/>

ASIA-PACIFIC MARITIME SECURITY: GOING GLOBAL

The argument that Asia-Pacific is to shape the future global economic and strategic landscape is substantiated by the rise of global dimension of many Asia-Pacific maritime developments. Asia-Pacific waterways play an increasingly important role in global seaborne trade.

Table 1. International seaborne trade, selected years (millions of tons loaded)⁶



The Trans-Pacific and Euro-Asian directions of container shipments are significantly bigger than the corresponding volumes of Trans-Atlantic sea lanes.

Table 2. Estimated Containerized Cargo Flows on Major East-West Container Trade Routes, 2009-2012 (millions of TEUs and percentage change)⁷

	<i>Asia – North America</i>	<i>North America – Asia</i>	<i>Asia-Europe</i>	<i>Europe – Asia</i>	<i>Europe – North America</i>	<i>North America – Europe</i>
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⁶ Review of Maritime Transport 2013. – New York, Geneva: United Nations, 2013. – P. 7.

⁷ Ibid. – P. 24.

2009	<i>10.6</i>	<i>6.1</i>	<i>11.5</i>	<i>5.5</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>2.5</i>
2010	<i>12.3</i>	<i>6.5</i>	<i>13.3</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>2.7</i>
2011	<i>12.4</i>	<i>6.6</i>	<i>14.1</i>	<i>6.2</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>2.8</i>
2012	<i>13.3</i>	<i>6.9</i>	<i>13.7</i>	<i>6.3</i>	<i>3.6</i>	<i>2.7</i>
Percentage Change, 2011-2012	<i>7.4</i>	<i>5.2</i>	<i>-2.6</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>5.9</i>	<i>-6.9</i>

There is a clear link between Asia-Pacific maritime developments and regional and global food. The latter is currently rising to prominence for both the region and the whole world. According to Asian Development Bank figures, in 2010 more than 60% (733,0 million) of the 1,2 billion people who live on less than 1,25 dollars a day (PPP estimates, 2005) were in the countries of Asia and the Pacific. In 2010–2050, these countries are expected to account for 583,2 million of the 2,6 billion estimated population increase⁸. In these circumstances, the measures to tackle food security problem undertaken by Asia-Pacific states will shape the socio-economic and environmental situation not only in Asia-Pacific but to a significant extent on the global scale. Given that Asia-Pacific is a maritime region, the possibility to strengthen food security depends upon unimpeded fishing. At the same time, in the South China Sea, which gives one tenth of global catch⁹, the exploitation of biological resources is hampered by unresolved territorial disputes.

The rise of the global component of Asia-Pacific maritime issues is also exemplified by the transformation of key regional maritime security challenges. The developments in the South China Sea, the East China Sea and the Japan Sea are cases in point.

Regarding the South China Sea issue, since the US has been “back to Asia”, the essence of the disagreements has shifted from the Sino-ASEAN level to the Sino-American level. At present, they have little relevance to negotiations conducted between China and ASEAN states about the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (COC). Furthermore, China is

⁸ Food Security in Asia and the Pacific. – Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asia Development Bank, 2013. – P. 8,14.

⁹ Hiebert M. Mitigating Fishing Conflicts in the Disputed East Sea. // Proceedings of International Conference on East Sea Disputes (ICESDI 2014, July 25-26). – Ho Chi Minh City: Ton Duc Thang University, 2014. – P. 245.

mostly trying to solve all the problems on the bilateral level.¹⁰ Instead, Sino-American disagreements are unfolding (not only because the USA has its own interest in the region but also because other countries cannot act as equal partners to China and seek US back-up to counterbalance China). In this context, rising tensions in the South China sea question the efficiency of China-ASEAN cooperation on maritime security issues and to some extent devalue previous agreements.¹¹

In specific terms, there are three disagreements between Beijing and Washington. Firstly, they differ in understanding whether it is permissible to violate the provisions of the pro-Chinese Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). Article 4 of DOC states that “The Parties concerned undertake to resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes ... by sovereign states directly concerned”¹². Beijing stresses that the US is not “a party directly concerned” because it does not have territorial claims in the South China Sea. If so, while Washington tries to define the parameters of conflict resolution in legal terms, it is not permitted to do so. The US responds that DOC should be seen as an interim but by no means the final document. The latter will have to be elaborated on with active contributions from the international community given the dependence of global economy upon the sea lanes through the South China Sea.

The second disagreement between China and the US is about “freedom of navigation”. In China’s view, this means freedom of trade navigation while the US is of the opinion that this presupposes freedom of military navigation. This difference of the approaches generate tensions on whether or not it is permissible for the US naval ships to conduct military activities covered by China’s Law on Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone adopted by Beijing in 1992. As a result, incidents like those over the US ships *Impeccable* and *Cowpens* which took place in March 2009 and December 2013 respectively might well become a common occurrence in future Sino-American relations.

The third difference between the parties relates to the exploitation of South China Sea resources. China stresses that the predominant part of this maritime area is China’s internal waters according to their Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone. In the US view, the South China Sea and its resources cannot belong to any state or a group of states. These

¹⁰ O’Rourke R. Maritime Territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Disputes Involving China: Issues for Congress // Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, 2012 - http://clashofarms.com/files/China_Maritime_EEZ_Disputes_CRS_2012Oct.pdf

¹¹ Shen H. South China Sea Issue in China-ASEAN Relations: An Alternative Approach to Ease the Tension // International Journal of China Studies, Vol. 2, №3, December 2011, pp. 585-600

¹² Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. – <http://www.asean.org/asean/external-relations/china/item/declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea>

resources are part of the global commons and can be exploited by any interested party—oil companies, fishermen etc.—without restriction.

At present, the South China Sea is an area of dispute between Sino-American strategic planning—China’s Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) doctrine and the US Air-Sea Battle concept. The former means hampering the US freedom of action within the territory of “first island chain”, seen by Beijing as its natural sphere of influence in maritime Asia-Pacific. For its part, the US is taking steps to integrate “operations across all five domains (air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace) to create an advantage”.¹³ Given China’s global geostrategic aspirations, this means a further increase of the global component in the South China Sea issue. Patrick Cronin and Robert Caplan even go as far as to claim that “the South China Sea will be *the strategic bellwether* (emphasis added by the authors) for determining the future of US leadership in the Asia-Pacific region”.¹⁴

This scenario seems all the more likely taking into account the current political debates on the Indo-Pacific region¹⁵. Although its geographical and institutional formats are not yet defined, China has few doubts that calls to develop trade between Indo-Pacific countries will be sooner or later followed by efforts taken by the US and its allies to protect key seaborne trade routes. Consequently, should Sino-American relations deteriorate, China’s oil tankers which pass via the Malacca Strait can be easily blocked. Attempts made by Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs M.Nagalegawa to develop a Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Indo-Pacific coupled with statements to cover this region by ASEAN-centric multilateral dialogue platforms¹⁶ add to China’s apprehensions.

The steps taken by the US in 2015 have further fuelled Sino-American difficulties. Among the points mentioned in “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower” issued by Washington in March¹⁷, several are especially salient. The document outlines the Indo-Asia-Pacific region instead of the Asia-Pacific region as the geographical domain of US maritime rebalance in Asia. In the document, “strengthening [US-led] alliances through improved interoperability, more integrated operations, and increasingly complex exercises and training” is

¹³ Air-Sea Battle Concept. 2013. Air-Sea Battle Office. May. – <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/ASB-ConceptImplementation-Summary-May-2013.pdf>

¹⁴ Cronin P.M., Caplan R.D. Cooperation from Strength: U.S. Strategy and the South China Sea, January 2012. P.7 - http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_CooperationFromStrength_Cronin_1.pdf

¹⁵ Indo-Pacific Region (as opposed to Asia-Pacific) is currently a hot topic in political and expert debates. For details, see: Indo-Pacific Region: Political and Strategic Prospects. Ed. By R.Bhatia, V.Sakhuja. New Delhi, ICWA, 2014.

¹⁶ An Indonesian Perspective on Indo-Pacific. Keynote Address by H.E. Dr. R.M. Marty M.Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, at the Conference on Indonesia. Washington D.C., 16 May 2013. – http://csis.org/files/attachments/130516_MartyNatalegawa_Speech.pdf

¹⁷ A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower. March 2015. – <http://www.navy.mil/local/maritime/150227-CS21R-Final.pdf>

prioritized. But most importantly, US capabilities are linked with multilateral cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, which further solidifies the US strategic interests in the Indian and Pacific oceans. Viewed from China's perspective, Beijing has all sorts of reasons to be worried.

China's apprehensions were further exacerbated after "The New Guidelines for Defence Cooperation" were adopted by US and Japan in April 2015. The document outlines the cooperation as "seamless" and stipulates that the parties "will cooperate closely with each other on measures to maintain maritime order *based upon international law, including freedom of navigation*"¹⁸ (emphasis added by the authors). From the South China Sea perspective, this has two repercussions. First, this provides Japan with a stronger institutional foundation to join US criticism on China's alleged disregard for international maritime law.¹⁹ Second, Japan can be involved in US intelligence gathering activities in this maritime area. All this strongly intensifies the divergences in Sino-American threat perceptions in the South China Sea.

These trends clearly suggest that in the years to come the South China Sea will remain the key Asia-Pacific security challenge. If the situation deteriorates, a profound transformation of the overall security system in Asia-Pacific may be generated, strengthening US alliances and marginalizing ASEAN-led frameworks of cooperative security dialogue.

The rise of the global dimension mirrors the present evolution of maritime security issues in Northeast Asia. Regular escalations of disputes over the Senkaku and the Dokdo islands hamper economic exchanges between China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. As a result, the three countries postponed the establishment of trilateral FTA initially scheduled for 2012. This decision has profound repercussions for economic regionalism not only in Northeast Asia, but also in East and South Asia. The project Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership aims to unify the terms of trade exchanges not only between ASEAN, but also between its EAS partners. Given the degree of influence Northeast countries exert on the global economy, the dynamics of their cooperation significantly influence worldwide trade developments.

The East China Sea dispute is another salient example. Over time, the US factor becomes more and more evident in the evolution of the issue. Motivated by an intention to inject new energies in the cooperation between the US and Japan, the Obama administration has

¹⁸ The Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation. April 27, 2015. // [http://www.defense.gov/pubs/20150427 -- GUIDELINES FOR US-JAPAN DEFENSE COOPERATION.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/20150427_-_GUIDELINES_FOR_US-JAPAN_DEFENSE_COOPERATION.pdf)

¹⁹ Since the Obama administration took office, the US' pronouncements that China's actions in the South China Sea are against international law have been in overabundance. Nevertheless, for one of the latest see: AS tuntutan Cina 'menghentikan' reklamasi di Laut Cina selatan. BBC Indonesia. 30 Mei 2015.(US Demands China to Stop Reclamations in the South China Sea. BBC Indonesia. 30 May 2015). // http://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia/2015/05/150529_dunia_as_cina

repeatedly emphasized that the Senkaku islands are covered by the US-Japan Alliance²⁰. Given that the East China Sea forms the northeast part of the already mentioned “first islands chain”, the argument that contradictions over the Senkaku islands issue will be increasingly shaped by relations between China and the United States rather than China and Japan seems convincing.

Last but not least, Russo-Japanese territorial dispute are relevant. The Kuril islands, together with Sakhalin island, form the natural defence infrastructure of the Russian Far East and for Russia’s Pacific Fleet. The Pacific Fleet moves from the Okhotsk Sea to the Pacific Ocean via the Friz and Catherine straits which are open all year round. If the present situation changes, the consequences will be felt far beyond Russo-Japanese relations because of the security cooperation between Japan and the US, deteriorating Russo-American relations, prospects for the modernization of the Pacific Fleet and Russo-Chinese naval cooperation, both in Asia-Pacific and beyond.

Along with the rise of global instability, the developments described above suggest that Asia-Pacific maritime security has become more fragile. The problem is exacerbated by the limited ability of regional regulatory institutions to effectively tackle security challenges. As things are, those discussions have not brought tangible progress.

There is a key reason which accounts for the stagnation of these institutions in practical and conceptual terms. In spite of their rise in number—as exemplified by the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Eight and the East Asia Summit—the activity of these dialogue platforms is undermined by the ASEAN principles of cooperation, mainly, a consensus on a pace comfortable to all participants. More than that, the theoretical foundation of their activity remains unclear, as exemplified by the inability of ASEAN to distinguish between confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy in 2001 and 2011 respectively.²¹

With specific regard to tackling maritime security challenges these limitations are clearly seen in the South China Sea issue. While the difficulties have shifted to the Sino-American level, the negotiations on COC are conducted at the Sino-ASEAN level. At the same time, the association, which initially favoured moving from the pro-Chinese Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea to a fully-fledged Code of Conduct, still seems unable

²⁰ See, for instance: Quinn A. Clinton Assures Japan on Islands, Invites Abe to U.S. in February. Reuters. 18.01.2013. // <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/18/us-japan-usa-idUSBRE90H1AX20130118>; Panda A. Obama: Senkakus Covered Under US-Japan Security Treaty. The Diplomat. 24 April 2014. – <http://thediplomat.com/2014/04/obama-senkakus-covered-under-us-japan-security-treaty/>

²¹ ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy. Adopted at the 8th ARF. 25.07. 2001. // <http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/library/arf-chairmans-statements-and-reports/159.html>; ASEAN Regional Forum Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan. Approved by ARF SOM. 10.06.2011. – <http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/files/library/ARF%20Chairman's%20Statements%20and%20Reports/The%20Eighteenth%20ASEAN%20Regional%20Forum,%202010-2011/2%20-%20ARF%20Work%20Plan%20on%20Preventive%20Diplomacy.pdf>

to elaborate on a unified approach to the existing problems.²² With these factors in mind, the negotiations are doomed to be prolonged and any solution will be of limited effectiveness as it will not catch the essence of the present reality. As a result, the contradictions over the South China Sea set of issues are unlikely to be resolved.

In sum, an imbalance between the rise of the global component of regional maritime security issues, coupled with the increasing influence of the present global confrontation in Asia-Pacific, means the limited abilities of regional regulatory institutions are becoming more and more evident. Even so, the regional maritime security challenges can be kept manageable if influenced by an actor who has global status and can offer the region a cooperative agenda with a strong consolidating component. This actor has to underpin its offer by considerable economic potential, independent foreign policy, and an interest in fostering cooperation. Russia seems to meet these requirements. More than that, Russia itself demonstrates both increased ambitions in terms of shaping the Asia-Pacific economic, political and security landscape and growing capabilities to add substance to these efforts.

RUSSIA IN ASIA-PACIFIC: FOSTERING WIN-WIN COOPERATION

For Russia an active and diversified policy in Asia-Pacific is a key strategic task.²³ The most salient reasons are presented below.

One of them is a growing need to expand access to external resources for implementing internal socio-economic modernization. As Russia's relations with the West are deteriorating, Russia can obtain investment, expertise and technology from Asia-Pacific countries. The modernization strategies implemented by East Asian 'tigers' and 'dragons', and the development of economic growth zones, are nearly identical to Russian plans to establish Territories of Advanced Development in the Far East.

Further, Russia has to improve its international image, and Asia-Pacific seems to be an appropriate place to start. Except for Japan, Russia does not have territorial disputes and other serious political problems with Asia-Pacific countries. In spite of sanctions after the Crimea referendum and the incident with the Malaysian Boeing in Donetsk in March and July 2014 respectively, Russia is looked at mostly in positive terms from East-Asian nations. This perception is fuelled by the expected positive results from the Sino-Russian integration of Economic Belt Silk Road and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) with favourable

²² Bonasir R. ASEAN masih 'terpecah' soal sengketa Laut Cina Selatan. BBC Indonesia. 27 April 2015. (Bonasir R. ASEAN Is Still "Split" over the South China Sea Issue. (BBC Indonesia. 27 April 2015). // http://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia/2015/04/150427_asean_laut_cina_selatan

²³ For more details, for example, see: Makarov I., Barabanov O., Bordachev T., Kanaev E., Larin V., Ryzhkov V. Op.cit.

repercussions outside China and Russia. If further developed, this regional perception can be translated into long-term and sustainable reputational benefits and can be an appropriate foundation for soft power.

Lastly, but most importantly, a successful Asia-Pacific policy will contribute to strengthening Russia's positions at the global level. This policy will add substance to Eurasian integration projects given that Vietnam and the EEU have already concluded a free trade agreement and India and EEU are studying possibilities to conclude a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement. With time, these can form a link between the Eurasian and Asia-Pacific directions of Russia's foreign policy, compensating losses in the Euro-Atlantic direction. In overall terms, given that the political and economic processes in Asia-Pacific more and more influence global developments, for Russia to maintain the status of an established global power is closely connected with raising its profile in Asia-Pacific.

With these factors in mind, Russia is developing an Asia-Pacific strategy which is based on cooperation with all regional actors and has a strong consolidating component. In conceptual terms, its essence was outlined in a statement made by S.Lavrov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, during his visit to Chile: "It's wrong to think that if someone is an ally of the United States he cannot be a partner of Russia and vice versa"²⁴. This shows that Russia offers its Asia-Pacific partners prospects for multilateral and bilateral cooperation.

The former is exemplified, first and foremost, by Russia's chairmanship of APEC in 2012.²⁵ The choice of Russia's APEC priorities such as food security, reliable transport and logistics, and fostering innovation generated interest from other Forum members. The more so since before and after the Vladivostok Summit, Russian experts endorsed and substantiated a Eurasian-Transpacific connectivity initiative. Emphasis was placed upon building multi-level and multi-directional links between Russia and its Asia-Pacific neighbours simultaneously with an accelerated development of Russia's Siberia and Far East.²⁶ Many components of this initiative have much in common with the agendas of Indonesian and Chinese APEC chairmanship in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Points of convergence relate to regional connectivity.

²⁴ US Allies Can Be Partners of Russia and Vice Versa – Lavrov. ITAR-TASS News Agency. 30 April 2014. – <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/730123>

²⁵ Sumsky V.V., Kanaev E.A., Koldunova E.V., Zavadsky M.S., Zinovyeva E.S., Iontsev V.A., Kireeva A.A., Likhachev V.L., Lukonin S.A., Menzhulin G.V., Novikov A.V., Prokhorova Yu.A., Sevastyanov S.V., Stapan N.V. Russia's Guiding Landmarks in the Asia-Pacific after the APEC Summit in Vladivostok /Ed. by Ivanov I.S. – M.: Spetskniga, 2013. // http://russiancouncil.ru/common/upload/AsiaPacific2_En.pdf

²⁶ For details, see: Sumsky V., Kanaev E., Koldunova E. Russia's Interests in the Context of Asia-Pacific Region Security and Development / Ed. by Ivanov I. – M.: Izdatelstvo Prospect, 2012. – <http://russiancouncil.ru/common/upload/riacapren.pdf>;

In other multilateral dialogue platforms where Russia participates—ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Eight and East Asia Summit—Russia develops the concept of “indivisible security”. This means dismissing any zero-sum games in favour of mutually beneficial cooperation. This position was reiterated at the Brunei session of ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Eight in August 2013. Speaking there, Russian Deputy Defense Minister A. Antonov stressed Russia’s intention to develop cooperation in such spheres as maritime security, military medicine.²⁷ In the ASEAN Regional Forum, Russia’s paid special attention to human assistance and disaster relief, search and rescue operations, multilateral monitoring of pandemics. Russia views these dialogue mechanisms through the prism of its global priorities in line with activities taken by G-20 concerning sustainable growth, strengthening food security, and fostering cooperation in humanitarian assistance. Russia’s activities in ASEAN-led multilateral dialogue platforms will produce positive repercussions for both regional and, by implication, global security.

Russia has expanded its policy leverage to deal with the overall spectrum of Asia-Pacific security challenges. North Korean nuclear and missile developments are a good example.²⁸ At present, the prospects for the resumption of the Six-Party Talks are bleak, but to maintain dialogue with Pyongyang on nuclear issues remains an urgent necessity. North Korea develops its nuclear weapons outside the monitoring and control of the international community, and hardly anyone can predict what North Korea’s next move will be. In these circumstances, Russia may serve as a bridge between DPRK and the international community in dialogue on nuclear issues. Given the improving relations between Moscow and Pyongyang, this scenario is not unrealistic.

Russia has the potential to strengthen Asia-Pacific food security, which is among the key priorities of regional actors. In many of those countries, the population is growing while arable lands and the possibilities to cultivate them are reducing. The problem is aggravated by climate change and the spread of agricultural pests. The growth of the middle class has changed the food basket of many people, with bread and bread products being in increasing demand. Plans implemented by many Asia-Pacific economies to produce bio-fuel require taking arable lands from food production. Owing to the fact that Asia-Pacific is a seismic-prone region, where earthquakes, tsunamis and other natural disasters are of common occurrence, to support people

²⁷ Speech of I.A. Antonov, Minister of Defense (RF), 2013 - http://function.mil.ru/news_page/person/more.htm?id=11830387@egNews&print=true

²⁸ See: Ivashentsov G.A., Vorontsov A.V., Larin V.L., Samsonova V.G., Suslina S.S., Toloraya G.D., Fedorovsky A.N. Russia—Republic of Korea Relations: Revising the Bilateral Agenda – Russian International Affairs Council - http://russiancouncil.ru/common/upload/WP_Russia-Korea_En.pdf

with food in emergency situations is a key task for regional governments. All these factors call for creating substantial regional food reserves.

Despite the fact that Russia imports some amount of food, it has a strong potential in developing joint agricultural projects on its territory: Russia can offer Asia-Pacific partners vast arable lands and substantial reserves of fresh water. At present, around 50% of arable lands in Eastern Siberia and the Far East are not cultivated²⁹. Ingredients used for bio-fuel production include sugar, beef, barley, potato, wheat—traditional agricultural crops in Russia. In cooperation with EAS partners, Russia could create an East Asia Emergency Grain Reserve, similar to the East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve established by ASEAN Plus Three countries.

Russia can respond to the concerns of Asia-Pacific countries relating to energy security. The demand for energy in these countries is rising in parallel with the population increase and high rates of economic growth. According to available estimates, by 2035 Asia Pacific energy consumption will grow by 60%.³⁰ China's share in global energy demand will rise from 22% to 26%.³¹ Energy demand in Southeast Asia will grow by 80%.³² At the same time, most Asia-Pacific countries have insignificant energy reserves. Japan's and South Korea's demand for coal, oil and natural gas are almost completely satisfied with imports. The rise of natural gas instead of coal in China's energy balance along with high technological and financial costs of extracting shale makes it all the more necessary for China to increase natural gas purchases in the years to come. All this generates interest from Asia-Pacific states as Russia has abundant energy resources, developed infrastructure, and experience as an energy supplier and in building nuclear energy facilities. Russia is ready to deliver more energy to Asia-Pacific, especially as the crisis in its relations with the West is deepening. The concluded and discussed contracts with Asia-Pacific states, mainly China and Vietnam, amply substantiate this argument.

Bilaterally, the progress made by Moscow is also encouraging. Russia's cooperative agenda is met positively by regional countries as cooperation with Russia corresponds to their key developmental priorities.

²⁹ For more details, see: Kanaev E. Developing Russia's Far East and Siberia: the Interplay of National, Regional and Global Implications. // International Cooperation in the Development of Russia's Far East and Siberia./Ed.by Huang and Korolev A. Palgrave McMillan, 2015. P. 19-37.

³⁰ BP: China, India to lead energy demand. Asian Oil and Gas. 11 March 2015. <http://www.aogdigital.com/engineering/item/4681-bp-china-india-to-lead-energy-demand>

³¹ BP Energy Outlook 2035. Country Insights: China // <http://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/about-bp/energy-economics/energy-outlook/country-and-regional-insights/china-insights.html>

³² Southeast Asia Energy Outlook // IEA, World Energy Outlook Special Report, September 2013. P. 11. https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/SoutheastAsiaEnergyOutlook_WEO2013SpecialReport.pdf

Relations between Russia and China might be the best example. The visit made by President Putin to China in May 2014 marked a new page in cooperation between Moscow and Beijing. During the visit, important contracts were signed. Gazprom and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) agreed to supply pipeline gas from Russia to China. The 30-year contract stipulates that 38 billion cubic meters of Russian gas will be annually delivered to China. According to A. Miller, the head of Gazprom, “Russia and China have signed the biggest contract in the entire history of the USSR and Gazprom—over 1 trillion cubic metres of gas will be supplied during a whole contractual period. The arrangement of Russian pipeline gas supplies is the biggest investment project on a global scale. USD 55 billion will be invested in the construction of production and transmission facilities in Russia. An extensive gas infrastructure network will be set up in Russia’s East, which will drive the local economy forward. Great impetus will be given to entire economic sectors, namely metallurgy, pipe and machine building.”³³ Prospects for supplies of Russian gas to north-western China through the Altai gas pipeline with an expected capacity of 30 billion cubic metres per year will further strengthen Russo-Chinese rapprochement. The framework agreement was signed in November 2014.

No less important are other agreements reached by Moscow and Beijing, for instance, the memo of cooperation between Russian United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) and Chinese Comac corporation on developing a long-range passenger plane. According to UAC President Pogosyan, the market prospects for such a plane are bright, and by 2032, it will have up to 10% of the wide-body aircraft market.³⁴ Taking into account that Russia has already mastered the manufacturing of short-range Superjet-100 and is planning to make operational middle-range MC-21, cooperation with China on the long-range plane will allow Russia to develop a whole line of passenger planes.

A new breakthrough in relations between Russia and China took place in May 2015, when an agreement to integrate the EEU and Chinese Economic Belt Silk Road project was signed. As a result, a consolidated Eurasia with increased financial and infrastructural potential is emerging. According to Russian experts, this will recalibrate the future global order making it more polycentric and, by implication, stable, democratic and equal. In the “new Vienna Congress of the 21st century”, the Russian-Chinese nexus is likely to play one of main roles.³⁵

³³ Alexey Miller: Russia and China signed the biggest contract in the entire history of Gazprom. May 21, 2014. – <http://www.gazprom.com/press/news/2014/may/article191451/>

³⁴ Russia, China strive for 10% of wide-body plane market. ITAR-TASS News Agency. May 21, 2014. – <http://en.itar-tass.com/economy/732510>

³⁵ Караганов С. Венский концерт XXI века. Российская газета. 02. 06. 2015. (Karaganov S. The Vienna Concert of the XXI Century. Rossiyskaya Gazeta. 02.06.2015). – <http://www.rg.ru/2015/06/03/karaganov.html>

Apart from China, Russia is developing relations with its other Asia-Pacific neighbours. In dialogue with Japan and South Korea—US allies—a conspicuous trend is the separation of politics and economics. This generates sentiments in those countries that cooperation with Russia should be developed regardless any political or circumstantial, factors. For instance, in South Korea expert community a widely-spread opinion is against the Russian sanctions. Korean experts advocate the view that the interests of the US and South Korea should be separated. Ukraine and the Crimea are in all respects far from Korea while Russia is near, and the Russian factor will be key in realizing the Eurasian Initiative, the central priority of the Park administration. More than that, Moscow has significantly expanded its leverage in influencing Pyongyang whose leadership is currently much more attentive to Russia's expectations than it was even a short time ago.

Cooperation between Russia and ASEAN is also on the rise. The association sees Russia as an important factor in preserving the geo-strategic stability in Asia-Pacific. In specific terms, Russia is perceived as a power able to contribute to preventing Sino-American geopolitical rivalry in the region. ASEAN is ready to coordinate its developmental plans with Russia, for instance, by linking the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity with the ASEAN-Russia Trade and Investment Cooperation Roadmap. More than that, ASEAN tends to coordinate its food and energy security priorities by fostering cooperation with Russia. The free trade agreement recently signed between Vietnam and the EEU paves the way for a Russia-ASEAN FTA and Russia's entry into negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the flagship of economic regionalism in Northeast, Southeast and South Asia.

Last but not least, the Russian factor looms large in India's foreign policy priorities. In 2009–2013, Russia accounted for approximately 70% of India's military imports.³⁶ Currently, military-technical cooperation between Russia and India is energized by the prospects for the joint production of arms and military hardware. Apart from this, the priorities of the new Indian leadership to develop national and trans-national transport infrastructure are congruent with Russia's elaborations on how to strengthen regional connectivity. India has been showing interest in advancing cooperation with Russia in LNG projects and extending the proposed gas pipeline from Russia to China to India. No less significant are prospects for concluding Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between India and the EEU currently being studied by both parties. If implemented, this step could give an additional impetus to cooperation

³⁶ Wezeman P.D., Wezeman S.T. Trends in International Arms Transfers. Table 2. The 10 largest importers of major weapons and their main suppliers, 2010–14. // SIPRI Fact Sheet 2015. – <http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1503.pdf>

between Russia and India in many sectors with a special emphasis on innovation, energy, aircraft and agricultural machinery, pharmaceuticals, transport and logistics, as well as on professional and academic exchanges.

The positive trends outlined above in the relations between Russia and its Asia-Pacific neighbours are reinforced by Russia's efforts to develop its Siberian and Far Eastern territories. The Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East emphasises developing export industries focused on Asia-Pacific with prospects for attracting investment, technologies and expertise from neighbouring states. Russia's success in developing these territories and integrating them into the Asia-Pacific geo-economic space will have positive repercussions not only for Russia but also for the region and, possibly, the whole world.³⁷

These measures combined will not only increase Russia's credentials in Asia-Pacific, but also make it a new regional power centre—non-aggressive, responsible and eager to strengthen the cooperative paradigm between regional actors. More than that, it will to a considerable extent prevent the transmission of global instability on Asia-Pacific.

ASIA-PACIFIC MARITIME DIMENSION: RUSSIA'S SPECTRUM OF INSTRUMENTS

At the conceptual level, Russia's orientation towards fostering cooperation in the Asia-Pacific maritime domain was outlined in the new Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation.³⁸ In the practical realm, it can be seen in Russia's efforts to elaborate on a practically-oriented approach to regional maritime security challenges.

Russia is perfectly aware that a number of obstacles hamper the bilateral vector of this approach. The first accounts for the immense significance attached by East Asians to sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russian experts follow the evolution of the South China Sea issue and know that attempts taken by Japan to act as a liaison in the Sino-Philippine dispute over the Mischief Reef in mid-1990s generated nothing but their escalation. Russia also knows that the US proposal to play the role of a mediator in the South China Sea issue has added to its complexity. Consequently, any kind of mediation, even with best intentions, is out of the question.

The second limitation is contradictions between Russia and Japan over the South Kuril

³⁷ Kanaev E. Op. Cit. P. 19-37.

³⁸ Морская доктрина Российской Федерации. Президент России. 26 июля 2015 года. (Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation. President of Russia. 26 July 2015.) // <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50060>

islands. With no prospects for resolution in sight, Russia might face severe criticism for interfering in disputes between Asia-Pacific states while being unable to resolve its own. The more so since after the revision of the US-Japan Guidelines for Defence Cooperation any compromise decisions between Russia and Japan have become more difficult than before.

The third and possibly the most important hindrance is that many of such disputes are between Russia's key Asia-Pacific partners. The best example is provided by the Sino-Vietnamese disagreements in the South China Sea. Both Beijing and Hanoi are among the main buyers of Russian arms in Asia-Pacific. In case of escalation of this conflict Russia would be in a difficult position as a party genuinely interested in keeping good relations with both sides and acting for regional peace.

These factors suggest that Russia's 'competitive advantages' are within multilateral cooperation. Along with rise of the global dimension in many of Asia-Pacific maritime security contradictions, Russia's contribution in making them less intensive can be significant.

The South China Sea issue is to a considerable extent generated by energy issues—the oil and gas resources in the contested areas of the South China Sea. According to the available data, the disputed Spratly islands territory may contain between 0.8 and 5.4 billion barrels of oil and between 7.6 and 55.1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas of undiscovered resources.³⁹ Taking this into account, Russian energy diplomacy could subdue an important part of the South China Sea dispute. An important step can be seen in Russo-Chinese gas contracts which can partially satisfy China's growing demand for energy resources. No less important is the energy cooperation between Russia and Vietnam with prospects for increases in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

Sino-American disagreements on freedom of navigation could be lessened by Russia developing transportation routes via its territory, mainly, the Trans-Siberian railway and the Northern Sea Route. This task cannot be solved overnight, but a Russian contribution by even a moderate increase of goods transported through its territory could have a significant symbolic impact on the freedom of navigation discourse and demonstrate Asia-Pacific states that transportation routes alternative to the present sea lanes are in place and being further developed. The more so since a trend to transit traffic increase via the Northern Sea Route can be expected to continue—in 2011, 2012 and 2013 there were 41, 46 and 71 voyages respectively. On the other hand, there were only 54 in 2014.⁴⁰

³⁹ South China Sea. US Energy Information Administration. Updated 7.02.2013. – <http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=scs>

⁴⁰ Transit Statistics. Northern Sea Route Information Office. – http://www.arctic-lia.com/nsr_transits

Russia could suggest its partners within the ASEAN Regional Forum or the East Asia Summit adopt a document, similar to USSR-US Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas signed in 1972. In this document, detailed information on what is—and what is not—permitted in cases of bumping, threatening movements and other actions which may represent a danger to navigation or to aircraft in flight should be specified. The necessity to adopt such an agreement is all the more urgent since in real-life situations, captains and crews are provided with no recommendation on how to behave, which generates misunderstanding and inadvertent steps. The aforementioned document can be of both sub-regional and pan-regional dimension.

In the former case, it could be elaborated on within Northeast Asia, the region where Russia has a territorial dispute with Japan. The platform on which this can be done might be Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism, a Working group established by the participants of the Six-Party Talks and chaired by Russia. Although the Six-Party Talks have been suspended since 2009, the working group can function on its own. Its agenda may include Northeast Asian maritime issues without touching upon their sovereignty dimension.

Such a document could be titled “Code of Conduct for Parties in Northeast Asian Seas”. Based on the 1972 Soviet-American agreement, its provisions should concentrate on how to most effectively freeze the present disagreements and launch cooperative projects on the win-win basis. At the initial approximation, a rise of confidence between parties with stakes in maritime security in Northeast Asia, primarily, China and Japan, could be expected.

The Soviet-American agreement could form the basis for a document embracing the pan-Pacific space, the participants of East Asia Summit or, to a lesser extent, ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Eight or the ASEAN Regional Forum. The tentative title of this document could be an Agreement on Asia-Pacific Maritime Commons. This undertaking could be much more promising than the on-going COC. The key obstacle the COC is encountering has to do with the absence of the US among the discussants. An Agreement on East Asia Maritime Commons would remove this shortcoming.

If this idea is translated into reality, under any scenario positive repercussions for regional maritime security will be in place. At the same time, serious modifications of the Agreement 1972 will be necessary. The Agreement was concluded in different historical realities—during the Cold-War and between the global superpowers. No less important is that it related to the high seas while in Northeast and Southeast Asian the high seas this may not exist at all owing to the overlap of territorial claims. Nevertheless, the elements of positive experience that was gained in previous times can and should be used in the current circumstances.

For Russia expert analysis of this idea becomes an urgent necessity. The next step should be increased support of analytical centres whose area of research focuses on international relations in Asia-Pacific. This can be combined with information campaign presenting Russia's efforts to preserve peace and security in Asia-Pacific in general and its maritime domain in particular.

Apart from making the Asia-Pacific maritime area more cooperative, these measures, coupled with raising Russia's maritime capabilities and intentions to shape regional maritime security landscape, will discourage other parties from dragging Russia into a conflict which could destabilize Asia-Pacific security with negative consequences for global security. Although in the short-term perspective these measures may not make a dramatic and immediate breakthrough in resolving maritime security challenges, in the long run, they might be among very few mechanisms to maintain stability in Asia-Pacific and, by implication, the whole world.

CONCLUSION

The rise of Asia-Pacific in global economy, politics and security is taking place simultaneously with the advent of the new global geopolitical confrontation. As a result, the global dimension of Asia-Pacific security challenges, including those related to maritime security, is strengthening. The simultaneous rise of overall instability in Asia-Pacific generates negative cumulative repercussions for the regional maritime security. At the same time, regional regulatory institutions are encountering inherent limitations in grasping the essence of these contradictions and, by implication, finding long-term and sustainable solutions.

Global issues need solutions provided by global powers. In this light, Asia-Pacific needs a stabilizing influence from an actor whose significant global potential is supplemented by non-assertive and cooperative regional policy. This gives a new meaning to Russia's role in Asia-Pacific maritime security.

Coupled with overabundant natural resources and its strategy to develop its Far Eastern and Siberian territories, Russia's naval modernization is not aimed to change the existing geostrategic status-quo. In Russia's new Marine Doctrine, no traces of assertiveness or exclusiveness can be found. Russia's unwillingness to project its naval power stems primarily from understanding that in present international circumstances, there are better ways to strengthen global maritime security including in Asia-Pacific. In the current highly volatile international situation, any minor conflict in which Russia, with its size, potential and influence, can be drawn, will inevitably acquire a global dimension—with grave consequences for global

security.

With respect to Asia-Pacific maritime security, Russia can expand incentives to cooperate, both by developing its resource and transit potential and adopting positive elements of the Cold War experience to the present realities.

These factors considerably increase the significance of the Russian factor in keeping the situation in Asia-Pacific waters manageable. The more so since Russia, which was on the forefront of two world wars, perhaps like no one else wants to keep its external milieu peaceful. The task that Asia-Pacific might well have to deal with in the near future.

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