

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

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Russia and ASEAN in the Early 1990s

Debate over National Interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Russia's Debut in Southeast Asia

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁴ *Krasnaia zvezda*, July 25, 1992.

¹⁵ *Krasnaia zvezda*, July 25, 1992.

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

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

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

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

¹⁷ *Krasnaia zvezda*, July 25, 1992.

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

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

²⁰ *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, July 31, 1992.

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

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

²¹ *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, July 31, 1992.

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

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

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

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

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

Russia's Participation in Asia-Pacific Regionalism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Russia and the ASEAN Regional Forum

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Emerging Partnership between Russia and ASEAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Russia's Entry into APEC

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁵² *Izvestiia*, November 13, 1991.

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁵⁵ *Izvestiia*, November 27, 1997.

⁵⁶ *Izvestiia*, November 27, 1997.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Putin's Policy toward Asia-Pacific Regional Cooperation

ASEAN in Putin's Asia-Pacific Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁶⁶ *Asahi Shimbun*, November 17, 2005.

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

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

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

Russia in the New Dimension of the Asia-Pacific Regionalism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The country

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁸⁰ *Asahi Shimbun*, December 10, 2005.

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

⁸² Nathan, "Malaysia and Russia," 25.

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

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

Conclusion

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

⁸³ *Asia Pulse*, October 17, 2005.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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