



**CERC WORKING  
PAPERS SERIES**

**No. 2 / 2003**

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**RUSSIAN POLICY  
TOWARD  
NORTHEAST ASIA:**

**In Search of a  
New Approach**

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**ISSN 1447-0071**

*Published by the Contemporary Europe Research Centre in September 2003.*



## **Introduction**

During the last decade Russia's 'Eastern' policy has developed in a spiral. It has recently returned to the point of enthusiastic expectations by the Russian political elite of new prospects of cooperation with the West and the concomitant decline of interest in Asian affairs. However, this enthusiasm for cooperating with the West is not as great as in the Gorbachev period, when it was widely believed that the competition between the two superpowers could be transformed into a mutually beneficial partnership. While this now appears naïve, it still seems more reasonable than the current hasty concessions Putin's administration has made in seeking improved relations with the USA and trying to utilise the post-September 11 situation.

This convolution in the development of Russia's foreign policy went through several stages, from an extreme anti-Western approach to a so-called pro-Western 'romanticism'. While Yeltsin and his circle inherited a pro-Western stance, which became the basis for the 'Kozyrev doctrine', a progressive disillusionment with relations with the West, particularly with the USA, pushed Russian foreign policy towards a new anti-Western posture. This peaked with President Boris Yeltsin's decision to leave the OSCE's (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) Istanbul meeting in 1999 without signing the basic documents.<sup>1</sup> The period of increased tension in relations with the West coincided with a period of increased Russian activity in East Asia.

A reorientation towards Asian nations became a discernable trend in the mid-1990s, and since 2000 it has become one of the major features of Russian foreign policy. Political and security considerations that determine Russia's policy formulation in the

changed national and international environment, and the logic, motives and strategies behind Russia's efforts to increase its North-East Asian involvement often seem rooted in attempts to counterbalance the global Western influence. This new political course was reflected in three important policy documents published by the Russian government in the first half of 2000: the new National Security Concept (January)<sup>2</sup>, the new Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (April)<sup>3</sup> and the new Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (June).<sup>4</sup> In these documents, Russia's leadership announced its major goal as seeking the establishment and reestablishment of Russia's relations with non-Western countries, particularly the North-East Asian nations. This last goal can be seen as a counterbalance to the current unchallenged dominance by the USA and its allies.

It is easy to see in the three documents a desire to respond to the current Western, above all US, domination in international affairs by reminding readers that Russia is still a mighty military power. This fact alone is seen as justifying Russia's inclusion in the world's 'club' of leading nations. However, there is also an understanding that in order to be 'one of the influential centres in the multipolar world'.<sup>5</sup> Russia needs support from allies. Consequently, the adoption of the new policy documents was followed by a series of practical steps aimed at fostering Russia's relations with Northeast Asian countries.

In July 2000 Russian President Vladimir Putin made an unprecedented visit to North Korea.<sup>6</sup> The positive and constructive tone of his negotiations with North Korea's leaders was in direct contrast to the inflexible position he adopted later in his discussions with the Japanese leadership, particularly on the issue of the disputed Kuril Islands.<sup>7</sup> The newly-elected President publicly

rejected the possibility of returning the so-called Northern Territories to Japan, ensuring the regression of Russian-Japanese dialogue on the issue back to the early 1990s. Of even more strategic importance to Asian developments was the rapidly developing Sino-Russian alliance.<sup>8</sup> In addition to an unprecedented number of top-level political consultations, Russia and China have significantly broadened their economic and military cooperation in the new millennium. And in September 2000 it was announced that after a 30-year break the two countries were preparing to sign a new bilateral Friendship Treaty.

Observers noted that Putin's visit to Pyongyang was an international sensation, since the North Korean capital does not regularly host international high-ranking visitors. Even Soviet officials rarely visited North Korea. Putin's visit was the first by a Soviet or Russian leader to the DPRK during the entire history of their bilateral ties. It was designed to demonstrate that Moscow is eager to enhance its eastern connections within the framework of so-called 'positive' diplomacy. Putin undertook an 'eastern campaign' to gain certain foreign policy benefits. The visit to the 'G7' Okinawa summit that followed in July 2000 was designed to cause a strong impression: Putin was to arrive at the summit after touring the surviving communist strongholds in Beijing and Pyongyang. This schedule was expected to reveal the existence of a counter to the 'G7', with an emphasis on the differences between the groupings: one an alliance of 'old' powers, the other of growing 'new' regional powers.<sup>9</sup> Putin's administration tried to play an uninvited role as representative of the Third world to the group of leading Western countries, the 'G7'.

Similar events continued in 2001. For nearly four weeks during July-August, Russia and North Korea staged a re-enactment

of Kim Il Sung's visit to the USSR in 1986. Protected by unprecedented security measures, disrupting normal timetables as it moved along the Trans-Siberian railway, being met with Soviet-style (and, indeed, Korean-style) slogans, Kim Jung Il's armoured train seemed to turn the clock back fifteen years. In Moscow, Putin and Kim Jung Il signed the Moscow Declaration, in which they declared their intention to support global stability.<sup>10</sup> They also agreed to grant first priority to projects for the reconstruction of enterprises built by 'joint efforts'. The Moscow Declaration was another official paper that supported Russia's claim for the active role in international relations. Meanwhile, there was no practical basis to discussions on reconstructing North Korean enterprises built with Soviet financial aid and equipped with Soviet machinery, as well as North Korean hints about resuming military supplies. North Korea cannot afford to pay for supplies, nor can Russia afford to provide heavy Soviet-style subsidies.

The attempt to revitalise Soviet-DPRK friendship – or at least the appearance of revitalisation – followed another visit to Moscow by China's President. On 16 July 2001, Jiang Zemin and Putin signed a joint declaration that the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) pact between Moscow and Washington should be preserved unchanged, as a basis of international stability.<sup>11</sup> The declaration also called for further reductions in strategic arms and for the creation of a global nuclear non-proliferation mechanism. However, the main point of the visit was the signing on the same day of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. The Treaty is described as an important landmark in the history of the development of bilateral ties indicating that relations between the two countries have entered a new stage.<sup>12</sup> As a framework for Sino-Russian relations in the new century, the Treaty established the main principles, essence and achievements in the development of

Sino-Russian ties. It also fixes in legal form the concept of the two countries and their peoples boosting friendship from generation to generation, and never targeting each other as enemies. The Treaty again confirmed that the ties between the two countries are a new type of friendly relations between nations, built on the basis of non-alignment, non-confrontation and not targeting a third country. However, what is of utmost importance about the Treaty is the fact that it resembles the treaty signed by the two nations fifty years earlier, when the two communist countries were openly hostile to the West.

### **The background of Russia's current 'Eastern' policy**

Putin's 'Eastern' policy seems rather controversial. On the one hand, it contradicts the common political vision of the Russian political elite. Dmitri Trenin argues that for centuries the Russian authorities have regarded their Far Eastern neighbours with a sense of superiority and a pinch of contempt. At the same time, all factions of the Russian political elite, irrespective of their attitude toward the US, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the European Union (EU), market economy, democracy, human rights, etc., are fixated on the West.<sup>13</sup> This view seems correct. For example, the prognosis for 2002 offered by Russian economic guru Yevgeny Yasin suggested that Russia would expand its cooperation with NATO, while steps could be taken to transform NATO from an anti-Communist alliance to a security tool to protect the 'Northern Ring', including Russia and Japan.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, the Eastern reorientation was prepared by Russia's foreign policy development during the last decade. The origin of the initial changes in Soviet/Russian policy towards the Asia Pacific in general and Northeast Asia in particular may be found

in the Gorbachev period of the late 1980s. To meet his two major objectives of attracting foreign investment (Japanese, and later South Korean) to his ambiguous programme for economic development in Siberia and the Russian Far East and of historic reconciliation with China, Gorbachev prepared the basis for Moscow's new Asian policy by disengaging from most regional conflicts (Afghanistan and Indochina), normalising relations with China, and recognising the Republic of Korea. He also succeeded in initiating dialogue on a wide range of issues with Japan. However, the concentration of efforts on China, Japan, and Korea resulted in narrowing the sphere of Soviet policy in the Asia-Pacific to the Northeast Asian sub-region. There was no comprehensive strategy towards the region as a whole, however, evidenced by the predominant orientation towards a bilateral basis in developing Russian contacts in Northeast Asia, and the low level of cohesion between its actions in the region.

A complicated combination of diverse factors and trends made for inconsistencies in the evolution of Russian policy-making towards Northeast Asia after the USSR's collapse in December 1991. Initially, policy-making was seriously affected by the Atlantic-oriented line. This entailed the pursuit of the goal of joining the club of Western democracies and becoming integrated into the democratic international community (the so-called 'Kozyrev doctrine'). In this context, East Asia looked less important and less promising. Gorbachev's major partners in the region, the Republic of Korea and mainland China, were very circumspect toward the new Russia. Seoul had already achieved its basic political goals of recognition and establishing diplomatic relations. Besides, South Korea shared with the West a common admiration of Gorbachev and a skepticism towards Yeltsin, and the feeling that the world owed much to Gorbachev's Soviet Union, but nothing to Yeltsin's

postcommunist Russia. Korea did not participate in the international campaign to relieve Russia's economic hardships in early 1992, and was the first to stress the uncertain status of loans to the Soviet Union inherited by Russia (Soviet debt to Korea was US\$1.5 billion) and froze the undisbursed part of its US\$3 billion loan.

China looked even more problematic. It was among the nations which recognised the State Emergency Committee in the attempted coup d'état of August 1991. It was deeply suspicious of the new Russian reformism and possible effects of the demise of Soviet socialism on its own future. In addition, Russia's efforts to integrate into the democratic community coincided with a strong campaign in the West to protect human rights in China after the Tiananmen incident. Russia's participation in the crusade aggravated relations with Beijing.

In these circumstances, only Japan was perceived as an attractive partner. It was a member of the Western community with an influential voice in international financial institutions, an ally badly needed by Russia. Initially, Russia had a vision of quickly settling bilateral relations with an alternative to Gorbachev's policy. Yeltsin's advisors on Japanese issues promised success. Therefore the initial attention paid to Japan reflected not a regional policy, but a bilateral approach influenced by Atlanticism. Nevertheless, in a sense, early 1992 offered an opportunity for elaborating a radically new Russian approach to Northeast Asia, with an emphasis on relations with Japan integrated into the Atlantic-oriented 'Kozyrev doctrine'.

However, this met fierce domestic political opposition, first of all from the Communists and Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal-Democratic Party, who tried to play the card of 'patriotism' to

attract more voters. From the very beginning, this foreign policy line was attacked by opposition groups, which insisted on a more versatile Asian dimension, as opposed to then foreign minister Kozyrev's emphasis on cooperation with the West. The Asian partners favoured were China and India, rather than Japan. The Kurile Islands dispute complicating Russo-Japanese relations enabled the opposition to identify it as the most important area for an assault on the foreign policy of the presidential administration. It should be noted that Japan's inflexible position at the time meant that the solution of the Northern territories problem was a prerequisite for any other discussions. These moves deprived President Yeltsin of any space for domestic political manoeuvre to secure economic advantages by settling the dispute. In the end, afraid to add to the territorial debate, and thereby intensify confrontation with the opposition in general and the Supreme Soviet in particular over a wide range of issues, Yeltsin's administration removed Japan from the list of Russia's top priorities by 1993.

From late 1992 to early 1993, the Yeltsin administration's major attention in the Asia-Pacific turned to broader regional problems. It particularly concentrated on participation in regional institutions. Russia's formal entry to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), with its concern with arms control and confidence-building measures - traditionally high priorities for Moscow combined with increased tension over North Korea's nuclear build-up, enabled Russia to initiate proposal of a 6+2 conference on the Korean Peninsula in order to upgrade its role as mediator in a conflict situation. At the same time, the activation of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) presented a chance to promote an intensive regional policy, irrespective of complications in bilateral relations. This new potential guideline for Russia's Asia Pacific policy seemed appropriately timed.

1993 revealed strong domestic nostalgia for Russia's 'great power' role. There was also disillusion over the earlier unquestioning enthusiasm about cooperation with the West and disappointment with the level of the West's economic support. The 'Oriental alternative' in foreign policy grew increasingly popular. Expectations for Russia's increased activity in the Asia-Pacific region, based on independent Russian initiatives, though not confronting the West, and aimed at mutually acceptable solutions, can be regarded an important landmark in Russian foreign policy. These efforts to change from unquestioning support for American strategic initiatives, without challenging the general orientation towards close cooperation with the West, were a significant development.

This broader approach was undermined by the inability to obtain rapid admission to the forum of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.<sup>15</sup> This delay isolated Russia from general trends towards regional economic cooperation and, perhaps even more detrimental to national ambitions, prevented its participation in Asia-Pacific summits, thereby restricting Moscow to a low political profile in Asian affairs.

Russia's new policy in the Asia Pacific encountered yet another obstacle – the lack of support for Russia's 6+2 formula for the international conference on Korean nuclear issues. Though never flatly rejected, the idea did not succeed in winning support even from ROK president Kim Young Sam, whom Russia regarded as a real supporter. The formation of the Korean Energy Development Organisation (KEDO), which opted for US nuclear reactors and proposed only a minor role for Russia, became the obstacle to establishing an active profile in the Asia-Pacific.

Despite efforts to revive its strong influence in international affairs, Russia was unable to secure a leading position in shaping Asian politics. One of its basic shortcomings was its lack of resources, primarily financial, for exerting a strong influence. A second, and no less important, point was that Russia lacked a network of potential partners in Asia. This is a result of the former Soviet Union's alienation within the region, and the loss of former allies, or cooling of relations with them. No new paradigm for bilateral Russian relations with Asian nations was yet elaborated, nor were sufficient efforts being made to build them. Moscow's Euro-centric vision and efforts to transplant European solutions onto Asian soil only added to the problems.

As noted above, Russia's Asian policy is largely viewed as a function of its Western line. On this point, Vladimir Baranovsky is right to argue that Russia views as potential assets its perceived commonality of interests with some of its Asian neighbours, and the possibility of forging short- and long-term alliances on specific issues, especially in view of its present weakness and the disappointment of its expectations of rapprochement with the West.<sup>16</sup>

### **Reassessment of Russia's approach to the West**

The mid-1990s saw the growing gap in perceptions and Russia's alienation from the West. After 1993, the tendency in Russian foreign policy to move away from the 'romanticism' of Atlantic cooperation to a new self-assertiveness gradually increased. Together with the feeling of isolation in world affairs, unclear prospects for the CIS and failure to solve the Chechen crisis, came an intention to distance itself from the West and reject the model of an American-led international community. Russia's leadership also

insisted on the need for a multipolar post-cold war international system.

The 1999 Yugoslavia crisis signalled a new era in post-Cold War international development, and eventually in Russian foreign policy. It clearly demonstrated the USA's resolve to establish political control all over the world, including over those 'pariah nations' that rejected cooperation with the USA. Unexpectedly, Serbia and Iraq did not give up in the face of American might. As a result, what initially seemed to be a virtual war of the 'tail wagging-the-dog' turned into a real war with real victims and real destruction. It was Russia that opened the way for anti-American resistance, by asserting an independent line in foreign affairs.

After Andrei Kozyrev's resignation as Foreign Minister in January 1996, there were attempts to reassess Russia's position in the world and to build its foreign policy around specific Russian national interests, even if this created conflict with the USA. This new course was associated with Yevgeny Primakov, who succeeded Kozyrev as Foreign Minister. Unlike his predecessor, Primakov enjoyed support from the majority of Russia's political elite. This mirrored a growing consensus, which he shared but did not initiate, that neither in Bosnia nor Iraq, nor in Kosovo, should the American 'sheriff' enjoy too broad authority.<sup>17</sup> Primakov demonstrated an interesting achievement - Russia can assume an anti-US stance on certain questions, but does not become the West's enemy. For example, Russia criticised US strikes against alleged terrorist bases in Sudan and Afghanistan as well as the joint Anglo-American operation against Iraq. On the other hand, Primakov's gesture in turning his aircraft back while en route to Washington received massive domestic support. The Balkan war revealed a high level of anti-US sentiment in Russia.

Richard Pipes has suggested that emotions prevailed over common sense when Boris Yeltsin identified the United States as the bully responsible for the bombing of Serbia, and even threatened a general war as a result<sup>18</sup>. Indeed, the first Russian reaction to the Yugoslav crisis was hysterical. Some politicians proposed arms sales to Belgrade, putting nuclear missiles on alert, and other sabre-rattling measures. Moreover, a group of ships with cargoes of S-300PMU-1, Russia's most advanced air defence system, were despatched to the Mediterranean.<sup>19</sup> Since NATO would do its best to prevent their delivery to Yugoslavia, a military clash seemed inevitable. The order was cancelled the day before the ships were scheduled to leave. All these actions constituted a hectic search for an appropriate answer. Russia later confined itself to political measures, with increasingly strong denunciations of NATO's actions.

It is difficult to agree that Russia's tough stance on Yugoslavia was purely emotional. It was more substantial than this, a result of the different vision of the world and a different manner of assessing international events. The overwhelming majority of Russians did not see the Serbs as 'tyrannizing a minority within their own borders', as Pipes put it, nor did they believe that the USA initiated aggression against Yugoslavia solely for humanitarian reasons. They saw it as a dress rehearsal before establishing US world domination and dismantling the entire post-WWII system of international relations.<sup>20</sup>

What was perceived to be NATO's aggression against Yugoslavia coincided with the emergence in Russia of a refutation of America as a way of life. It was possibly the deepest hostile feeling for decades. An article titled 'Goodbye, AMERICA'<sup>21</sup> published in

*Ogonyok*, a magazine oriented towards intellectuals, was representative of this trend. It received a broad response, and clearly reflected feelings dominant among Russians. The author argued that the 'romance' with America, half fiction, half blind adoration, was over. While the two governments fought the Cold War, the average Russian did not care about it, remembering that America was an ally during WWII, later learning about jazz, Marilyn Monroe and Coca-Cola. American fashion and fiction became more and more popular, and when the 'iron curtain' lifted slightly, movies gave the impression that there was indeed a heaven on earth. After Gorbachev's reforms, little by little the realisation came that this image of America was false, and that the USA really had been a rival in the undeclared forty-year war. America won that war, and became easy to access. However, now more and more people find America dull, do not believe in it, its way of life and ideas, and are suspicious of everything coming from it. It is no longer seen as a country of truth and freedom.<sup>22</sup> They loved America when the two countries were enemies, but now are awaiting America's demise.

This attitude was a result of the reform difficulties, debt crisis, general post-imperial shock, and growing cultural inconsistency. However, it might have been less bitter. As Maxim Sokolov, a popular Russian commentator, put it, the major result of the peacekeeping operation launched by the USA and NATO in the Balkans was achieved with the first bomb.<sup>23</sup> Before that, only radical patriots claimed that the West, especially the USA, was a bitter enemy seeking to weaken Russia, but after the attack, broad social groups in Russia came to share this opinion. The USA and the 'aggressive NATO bloc' again became 'potential rivals', and regained the place they had occupied in Russian military doctrine during the Cold War. If Western strategists wanted to raise anti-Western sentiments in Russia to the highest pitch they could not do it better

than President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had, Sokolov argued.<sup>24</sup> He did not hesitate to call this policy a demonstration of US's absolute inadequacy to meet the conditions of the post-Cold War world.

It is not surprising that the air attacks against Yugoslavia appeared to be the first event that drove all political forces, from leftists to liberals, to similar conclusions. The bombing was denounced across the political spectrum. The popular view was that, in casting away the UN mechanism, the USA and its NATO allies were creating a new system of international relations, which could be dangerous for all nations, including NATO members themselves. Russia's Defence Minister Igor Sergeev stated that Moscow assessed NATO's new strategy as a threat to its security. According to the Russian military, a threat could result from NATO's intention of exceeding the bounds of self-defence and expanding its operational zone to the entire world. NATO's plans to deal not only with aggression against its members, but with any crisis that might affect their interests, and the fact that NATO does not consider it obligatory to receive a mandate from the UN or OSCE is seen as the most dangerous factor. The war NATO launched in Europe confirmed these suspicions. The core of the Russian defence concept, - that Russia will not be involved in a major military conflict in the foreseeable future, - was no more axiomatic.

Despite losing key elements of the military-industrial complex, such as the Nikolaev shipyards, and the diminishing finance available for spending on weapons, Russia tries to keep its military-industrial complex in competition with the West (and the military-industrial complex, lacking serious attempts by the government to reform it, forms a strong anti-Western line in Russian society). In early 1999 Russia began to deploy regiments of highly sophisticated

TOPOL-M intercontinental ballistic missiles, two years ahead of schedule.<sup>25</sup>

In October 1998 President Yeltsin commissioned 'Peter the Great', the largest atomic missile cruiser ever built.<sup>26</sup> The defence industry also turned out a new stealth bomber, and it is estimated that Russia continues to build new submarines at rates equal to the days of the Cold War.<sup>27</sup>

In another development, in May 1999 Yeltsin signed special documents, which gave the green light to a new generation of nuclear weapons.<sup>28</sup> Together with later changes to the military doctrine, the envisaged radical modernisation of Russia's entire nuclear arsenal made it clear that the goal behind that was to make a limited nuclear war possible.

The plan aimed to create the capability to strike 'non-strategic' nuclear blows anywhere in the world in the same way as the USA use cruise missiles and precision bombs. Some ten thousand tactical low-power nuclear units were expected to become leverage against 'NATO expansion in Europe', as it will close the gap in conventional arms between Russia and NATO member countries.

The existence of low-power nuclear units makes the threat of using nuclear weapons even more real, because it provides the opportunity to avoid global nuclear confrontation with total destruction. While the plan was proposed several years before, it was the Yugoslavia crisis which promoted its implementation.<sup>29</sup>

The United States, believing that the events of 1989-1992 had permanently transformed the world so that only the American geopolitical understanding was viable, resisted Russia's attempts to

secure a sphere of influence even at a regional level. As a result Russia became more uneasy and aggressive. The renewal of the Chechen war in 1999, to a large degree prompted by Russia's internal political crisis, brought new tensions in Russian-Western relations. At the same time, on the eve of parliamentary elections, Russian politicians of all ideological persuasions resorted to anti-Western rhetoric, understanding that it was the most popular stance among all strata of the Russian population. Observers even started to talk about a new Cold War.<sup>30</sup>

With major changes in Russia's leadership and the transfer of presidential power to Vladimir Putin, self-assertiveness in foreign policy became even stronger. During the first half-year of his presidency, Putin strongly pushed for the adoption of major documents regarding national security, military development and foreign policy. The documents – the National Security Concept, the Military Doctrine, and the Foreign Policy Concept – mirrored earlier perceptions that the West/USA does not consider Russia a full-scale partner in foreign affairs. These documents were a response to perceived Western attempts to isolate Russia from decision-making on major international issues and to create a potential threat to Russia's national security by expanding military infrastructures.

The National Security Concept describes the current system of international relations as under rapid transformation.<sup>31</sup> According to the Concept, Russia supports the ideology of a multipolar world established on this basis of comprehensive mechanisms for the multilateral management of international issues. At the same time the document criticises attempts to create a structure of international relations based on the dominance of the international community by the developed Western nations led by the USA. This is designed to impose unilateral, primarily military, solutions to

international problems, in violation of the basic norms of international law.

The Military Doctrine, which followed the adoption of the National Security Concept, declares Russia's military structure to be defensive in nature.<sup>32</sup> However, for the first time in the post-Gorbachev years, it upholds Russia's right to first use of its nuclear capabilities. Among other things, the Doctrine considers attempts to prevent Russia from participating in solving international problems and in multilateral actions to be intended to prevent it growing stronger and developing into one of the influential centres of the multipolar world. It sees the expansion of existing military blocs and alliances as serious external threats to Russia's security. The Doctrine proclaims Russia's readiness to protect its security by all means, including the use of nuclear weapons, to guarantee a high level of destruction to any aggressors, whether a nation or an international coalition. Russia views its nuclear arsenal as a tool for deterring aggression, enhancing its military security, and supporting international stability and peace. Thus, Russia maintains its right to use nuclear weapons in critical situations.

It was not by chance that the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (June 2000) claimed it necessary to review the general situation, since the expectations of equal, mutually advantageous, relations between Russia and the world, envisaged by the Substantive Provisions of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (authorised by President Yeltsin on 23 April 1993) appeared groundless.<sup>33</sup> The concept seeks to preserve the Russian Federation's status as a great power and one of the influential centres in the modern world. It confirms the priority of 'the conventional norms of international law', above all, the goals and principles of the United Nations Charter, and speaks about

equality and partnership relations between states as a basis of international relations. According to the Concept, Russia sees itself as an active player in the process of fundamental and dynamic changes in the modern world, and wants to be a key influence on the formation of a new world order.

In fact, with Putin coming into office, Russian foreign policy came a full circle, returning to the level of anti-Westernism present as before Gorbachev's *perestroika*. This is a result of Russia's failure to determine its place in international affairs. At the same time, Putin's unexpected popularity was created by depicting him as a hardliner and a 'strong arm', able to protect Russia's national interests, both domestically and internationally. Under such circumstances, an anti-American and anti-Western trend was a logical development in Russian foreign policy.

On the whole, from the point of view of accommodating to new realities, perceptions and demands, Russia's Northeast Asian policy since the failure of the 1991 coup d'état may be roughly divided into three periods:

1991-1993 - a period characterised by uncertainty and attempts to find an adequate place under the general paradigm of cooperation with the West;

1994-1998 - a period characterised by an emerging Russo-Chinese 'strategic partnership' with the major paradigm in coping with challenges from the West, but lacking an active Russian position toward the Asia Pacific.

1999- 2001 - a period characterised by attempts to re-establish Russia's status as a great power, and to demonstrate an independent foreign policy, with moves to re-establish Soviet-type relations with China and North Korea.

After September 11, there were significant attempts to change the paradigm of Russia's relations with the West. Though Putin's administration pretends that they highly evaluate the achievements of 2000 and 2001 in 'Eastern' policy, it is still unclear how they will make compatible 'Eastern' and 'Western' lines in Russia's foreign policy.

The trends of 1996-98 demonstrated that the 'Chinese option', which seemed overwhelming in Russia's Asian policy, appeared neither comprehensive, nor ideal for the future evolution of Russian foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific or Northeast Asia. It was assumed with little dissent that cooperation with the PRC would be better complemented by more productive relations with Japan and the Republic of Korea, primarily in economic fields, but also for the sake of a more balanced regional policy. Though the option of an 'Oriental riposte' to NATO's eastward expansion was much discussed in Moscow, in the form of a kind of 'Russia-China+' axis to meet Western challenges, Russia also did not want to take the risk of further alienation and isolation from the world within the framework of a pseudo-alliance with China. Therefore even conservative political forces, notorious for their anti-Westernism and anti-NATO stance, began to debate the possibility of more cooperative overtures to Japan and both Koreas to counterbalance the new constraints in Europe by further cooperation with Asia.

On the surface, the changes in Russian policy towards East Asia appear inconsistent, especially in comparison with its rigid stance of the past. However, one can begin from the premise that the underlying motive in foreign policy, which became even more evident after Putin's accession, is that Russia, while accepting that it would be unrealistic to aspire to superpower status in the foreseeable future, wants to be recognised once more as a great

power. Once this constant is recognised, the initial changes and 'zigzags' in foreign policy make far more sense.

An article in the 'Economist' identified three objectives in Russia's approach to the outside world.<sup>34</sup> The first is to seek good ties with the West. The second is to play geopolitical games aimed at undermining American world 'hegemony'. The third is to consolidate Russian influence in the former Soviet empire. In practice this means that the Russian leadership has tried to secure the former USSR's territory as the zone of its foremost interests; that would mean a free hand in solving not only internal conflicts, like Chechnya, but also external disputes such as those with Georgia or Ukraine. Outside the former Soviet bloc, Russia would like to see the West seeking its opinion and advice as proof of the recognition of its great power status. In order to achieve this, and counteract US dominance in world affairs, Russia is experimenting with different policies, including a new approach towards East Asia that would support its aspiration to retain such a status.

### **China: Strategic partnership of outsiders**

Russia's approach towards East Asia does not have a sufficiently comprehensive vision of this difficult region as a whole. Basically, Russian policy in the region is simply a sum of bilateral ties, mainly with China, Japan and the Koreas. Russia's rapprochement with China appears to be one of its most significant foreign policy achievements.

For at least three decades relations between Moscow and Beijing were based on the triangular interdependent logic of a balance of power between the USSR, the United States and China. The level of confrontation between the participants and their power

potential largely determined the functions of the triangle. The logic assumed that the two weaker and/or more passive sides would cooperate to meet the challenge of the one stronger and/or more active. In the 1970s, despite a supposed detente, the USSR was on the offensive, but in the late 1980s the United States gradually took a more active stance. Under these conditions, and within the logic of triangular relations, China then emphasised enhancing relations with the 'weaker' side - the USSR.

With the collapse of the USSR the triangle also seemed to vanish. However, tensions between Russia and the West, confusion over relations among countries within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Russia's weak position in the Asia-Pacific region (aggravated by the unsettled territorial dispute with Japan) subsequently led the Russian leadership to return to triangular logic in its foreign policy course.

Thus, by the mid-1990s, a 'triangular' political motivation resurfaced in Russo-Chinese relations. During his visit to Beijing in January 1994, Foreign Minister Kozyrev proposed to elevate bilateral cooperation to the level of strategic partnership, an idea accepted by China after a period of hesitation.<sup>35</sup> The Joint Declaration signed during President Jiang Zemin's visit to Moscow in September 1994 assessed Russo-Chinese ties as 'new relations of cooperative partnership'.<sup>36</sup>

Russia's path to rapprochement with China was smoothed by the fact that the two countries could easily and with minimal effort support each other on two issues that were vital for them, i.e. NATO expansion and the Taiwan issue. The Joint Declaration signed during Yeltsin's visit to Beijing in April 1996 proved a new step forward, formulating 'partnership relations of equality and confidence

oriented towards strategic interaction in the 21st century'.<sup>37</sup> In the document China stated its understanding of Russia's position against NATO's eastward movement, and supported Russia's actions to preserve the federation, assessing the Chechen issue as a domestic one. Russia in turn reiterated that the PRC government is the only legal administration to represent all of China, and Taiwan is an integral part of Chinese territory. Russia undertook not to establish official relations or develop official contacts with Taiwan. Russia also recognised Tibet as an integral part of China.

In general, during 1991-1996 Russo-Chinese relations furthered the debate on 'partnership relations of equality and confidence oriented towards strategic interaction in the 21st century' as a major issue. Besides, 1996 was marked by Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng's visit to Moscow with an agreement to intensify top-level contacts, to meet not less than once a year, and to establish a business cooperation structure similar to the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission in US-Russian relations,<sup>38</sup> to meet not less than twice a year. In June 1997 the two governments signed a ten-year agreement to establish a 'mechanism of regular meetings between the heads of the Russian and Chinese governments'.<sup>39</sup> The 'mechanism' is aimed at developing bilateral cooperation in the following fields: trade and economic ties, military exchanges, scientific cooperation, energy and nuclear energy production, and transportation. Within the framework of the 'mechanism' relevant commissions were established.

The April 1997 summit highlighted the desire to demonstrate to the international community (primarily the United States) the correlation of the geopolitical postures of the two nations, as represented in the Joint Declaration on the Multipolar World and Emerging New International Order (23 April 1997).<sup>40</sup> The document

was unique for post-Soviet Russia as nothing of the kind was ever agreed with any other nation. Both sides highly praised the Declaration declaring it 'a result of serious analysis of international relations in the post-confrontation period', demonstrating common views and approaches towards the post-Cold war international situation.<sup>41</sup>

The Sino-Russian rapprochement is a reaction to the changing balance of power in world politics, enabling the two nations to act in parallel rather than declared or overt allies. Efforts to develop a strategic partnership seek to counter the US line of preserving a unipolar international system, and seek to establish multipolarity, with both countries playing independent roles. Hence the final objective of joint actions by Moscow and Beijing are concurrent self-determination, independent influence and separate bargaining positions rather than a close military and political alliance. It is not by chance that the search for terms defining stages of their bilateral cooperation is primarily a search for labels designed to attract the attention of third parties (specifically the United States and Japan). At the same time the absence of an alliance relationship between Russia and China is constantly stressed by both sides.<sup>42</sup>

China and Russia have successfully used the triangular relationship with the USA for their own interests. The verbal support Russia received from China on the question of NATO enlargement made it easier for Russia to bargain with the West and receive compensation in the form of participation in the Group of Seven leading industrial nations, to be admitted to the Paris Club of creditor countries,<sup>43</sup> and to restructure its debts with the London Club of private lenders.<sup>44</sup> The Krasnoyarsk meeting between Yeltsin and Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto was the result of Russian efforts to obtain an alternative partner in Asia, and avoid

being oriented exclusively toward China. Likewise, one of Tokyo's main concerns was to balance stable relations with Russia against China's growing power.

China seems to know better than Russia what to do with the possibilities open to it. In its turn, it was given an opportunity for constructive dialogue with the United States. As Li Fenglin, China's Ambassador to Russia put it, 'the Chinese-Russian strategic partnership ... does not rule out relations of partnership between other countries. Moreover, if the world's major powers establish relations of partnership; this would benefit global peace and stability'.<sup>45</sup> In practical terms, China seeks to balance its relations with Russia by promoting ties with the USA. The formula of 'strategic partnership' that in 1996-1997 was to characterise the Sino-Russian relationship was discussed by Washington and Beijing as well.<sup>46</sup> Significantly, in 1996 China and Russia agreed to establish a 'hot line' between their two presidents, but actual implementation was postponed until a similar agreement came into force between China and the USA in 1998. Li Fenglin cited the following opinion on cooperative ties between the three parties: Beijing and Washington - cooperation without sentimentality; Beijing and Moscow - sentimentality without cooperation.<sup>47</sup> This appears apt.

China's current assessment of the structure of international relations is based on the premise that power in the international arena is dispersing. Currently the USA is the only superpower in the world, but the Chinese believe its ability to influence international affairs will gradually diminish in the near future. In this assessment, the world is becoming a multipolar structure, in which the various powers are balanced, and large-scale military conflicts are unlikely.

In the new international situation China is to continue its

policy of 'maintaining independence and keeping initiative in their hands'. That means China intends to independently determine its position on the world stage, refuses to participate in any alliance and arms race, and develops cooperative relations with all nations of the world on the basis of the 'five principles of peaceful coexistence'.<sup>48</sup> Essentially, Beijing is being pragmatic, and does not want any ideological community or dispute to determine its international relations. It has removed most ideological constraints on its foreign policy to avoid ideological and geopolitical factors prevailing over economic expediency.

China, while striving for economic cooperation with the USA and being extremely interested in hi-tech US products, absolutely rejects the current thrust of US foreign policy, which seeks to prevent the country's unification. Reunification with Taiwan is an ultimate goal of the PRC's leadership. It is under these circumstances that China is interested in counterbalancing US domination in the world. While this was apparent years ago, recent events have made this trend dominant. To this end, strengthening an alliance with Russia seems to be a good option. Russia is weak, but can offer resources and advanced weapons. From Russia's perspective, perceived US attempts to block Russia all around the world, including the CIS,<sup>49</sup> have made it even more desperate to acquire reliable allies in the world.

By signing two agreements on border delimitation in 1991 and 1995, Russia and China have settled their territorial dispute. In 1992 they signed a memorandum that provided for radical cuts in forces and weapons along their shared border. In 1994 they adopted a declaration on mutual non-targeting of strategic nuclear missiles, and reinforced their undertakings not to be first to use nuclear weapons against each other. In 1996 China and four CIS

nations (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) signed an agreement on border confidence-building measures (CBMs), supplemented in April 1997 by an agreement on mutual reduction of armed forces along their borders.<sup>50</sup> Despite their importance, these agreements ensure nothing more than stabilisation of the current balance of forces along the Russo-Chinese border, and are essentially symbolic in support of broader political declarations.

More significantly, in late 1997 the two nations completed six years of work between government bodies on demarcating the Sino-Russian border. The final demarcation agreement undoubtedly has a deep influence on relations between the two countries. It curbs a strong irritant for both sides and eliminates possible territorial claims, above all Chinese claims to the Primorye region of Russia.

The year 2001 brought a new peak in bilateral relations, with the signing of the Sino-Russian good-neighbourly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation (16 July 2001).<sup>51</sup> Though the document was praised as heralding a new era in bilateral relationships, in fact the Treaty merely endorsed agreements previously reached on issues of common interest, confirming the importance of all documents signed by the two nations in 1992-2000. The treaty also confirmed their vision of the UN and the system of international law as the bases for a new fair and rational world order. The major issue agreed upon in the Treaty is the long-term development of Sino-Russian relationships of good neighborliness and friendship, equal partnership, and strategic cooperation. The two nations promised to transfer friendship from generation to generation.

Each again expressed support for the other over issues of territorial integrity and national unity, and both declared that there

were no territorial disputes between them. Each rejected actions or participation in alliances or agreements directed against the other's security, and they agreed to consult immediately if either perceived a threat to peace and security.

Equal partnership and strategic cooperation is to be conducted through regular bilateral summits and meetings, regular exchanges of opinions and consolidation of positions on bilateral ties and important international issues. Both pledged to make every effort to uphold the global strategic balance and stability, and to strengthen cooperation within the UN and its Security Council.

Although on the eve of signing the Friendship Treaty there were plentiful rumors about a special agreement on military cooperation between the two countries, the emergence of a Russo-Chinese military and political alliance seems unlikely, as their geopolitical and strategic national interests do not coincide. China would rather avoid the prospect of taking part in a conflict in remote Europe in the event of a strain in NATO-Russian relations. Likewise, Russia also would not wish to endanger its relations with the United Nations, Japan and other Asia-Pacific nations in the event of a conflict in the Taiwan Strait or a serious confrontation over territorial claims on islands in the South China or East China seas. At the same time both nations are ready to develop military-technical cooperation, a major driving force for their current ties.

At the moment, despite further attempts to strengthen political cooperation between the two nations, and shared dissatisfaction over the increasingly aggressive US stance in international affairs, it does not appear that the new Treaty will lead to the creation of an anti-US alliance.<sup>52</sup> Neither China nor Russia is interested in worsening its relations with the USA, though, as the

crisis over the US surveillance aircraft showed, they might be prepared to take steps to prevent the USA going too far in pursuing its unique self-appointed role of 'policing' the contemporary world. Russia and China seek each other's support and try to coordinate their political efforts to ensure the role of the UN Security Council (and consequently their own role) in international affairs, to prevent NATO from gaining control over the UN Security Council. Both countries opposed the deployment of Theatre Missile Defense and abandonment of the 1971 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The two nations also voice objections to interference on allegedly humanitarian grounds in internal affairs. This is actually a continuation of old discussions on human rights and separatist movements, which in their view apparently include Chechnya, Kosovo and Taiwan. However, none of this implies outright hostility to the USA.

Economic interaction in civil areas is not yet important enough to influence political cooperation. Nevertheless, the leadership of both nations understands the importance of a stable economic basis for an effective bilateral political relationship, and tries to stimulate economic ties through administrative bodies. In other words, the political motivations in Russo-Chinese relations heavily outweigh economic considerations, unlike Chinese cooperation with the United States and Japan, where economic interests help to soften political contradictions.

It should be noted that Russia does not have a unified vision of prospects for its relationship with China. It is obvious that the reforms promote an increase in China's status, from regional power to global superpower. Currently, both nations use each other to counterbalance American or Japanese regional dominance. Yet the emergence of China as a global superpower may conflict with

Russia's strategic interests, particularly if China succeeds in becoming an active and important partner of the Asia-Pacific nations, her ultimate regional goal. Simultaneously China would compete with the United States and Japan for the leading role in the Pacific Rim.

A number of different evaluations of favourable and unfavourable factors in Chinese social development, and differing assessments of the problems confronting China and of its leadership's abilities to cope with them, provoke conflicting forecasts. There exists a pessimistic vision of Chinese prospects, which stresses the probability of isolationism, regionalisation with only a formal feeling of national identity and unity, and fluctuations and hesitations in political options. At the same time there are also quite positive forecasts of the China's complete integration into the world economy without its posing a military or political threat to neighboring nations. Judging by economic factors alone, a negative scenario seems highly improbable in the next two decades. However, the social and economic transformation of China creates the conditions for a deep crisis of social institutions, i.e. contradictions between central government and provinces as well as between provinces, growing social strain, increasing discrepancy between an archaic political system and a modernising economy, and deepening ethnic problems. Hence any prognosis of the nature of the post-Deng Xiaoping regime is hard to evaluate, whether it be authoritarian, the return of an old ideologically indoctrinated elite, the ascendancy of radical reformers, or the persistence of the existing symbiotic regime.

Taking these hypothetical scenarios, pessimists assess China as a potential threat to Russia, either as an authoritarian state with growing military might, or as a nation doomed to repeat the fate of

the USSR with unforeseen consequences. Therefore they advise avoidance of measures strengthening China, especially any involving weapons and weapons technologies.<sup>53</sup> Optimists believe that the Chinese leadership is able to manage the nation, a scenario corresponding to Russian interests. This vision assesses China's military build-up as modernisation of a backward army, without possible threats to the region, except, perhaps, Taiwan, which in any case is viewed as China's domestic affair. The optimistic vision has recently prevailed among Russia's leadership.

However, the 'Economist' made a reasonable observation,<sup>54</sup> arguing that the Sino-Russian 'strategic partnership' - not a military alliance but a paradigm for a new international order, in which Russia and China are to be forever friends, never foes - partly supported Russia in its activities at the G8 summits. The partnership envisaged by the new Treaty is meant to be an eye-ful for the real power in the post-cold-war world, America. However, the 'Economist' argued that there is something else, both more and less, behind the vows of Sino-Russian friendship than an anti-American huddle. Russia and China still worry about each other, not just about America.

Nevertheless, the future of Russo-Chinese relations largely depends on American foreign policy, i.e. the results of US engagement policy towards China, and the level of trust in Russian-American cooperation. Apparently, ideological considerations complicate the improvement of US-Chinese relations. The American aversion for any kind of totalitarianism and its periodic campaigns on human rights in China preserve mutual distrust. Unless the United States plays down these tendencies in its approach to China, Beijing will always have a strong motivation for closer ties with Moscow. For its part, Russia's perception of being duped, isolated

and neglected by the West pushes her to find a key partner in China.

Therefore, the Russian-Chinese 'strategic partnership' is motivated by a mutual desire for rapprochement (within the logic of triangular relations), the key factor in their cooperation being determined by a shared pressure to meet real or perceived challenges from the West. The two sides are seeking opportunities to overcome possible isolation in international affairs and improve their capacity to promote specific national interests vis-à-vis uncooperative Western nations. Such cooperation was facilitated by an absence of overlapping or conflicting national priorities, enabling them to provide each other with mutual verbal support without essential expenditures or sacrifices. On the other hand, all this has made for vague sloganising and insufficient practical understanding of the essence of the proclaimed partnership in the context of bilateral cooperation. This can be also seen in the low level of political coordination over Asia-Pacific regional issues.

Recently the two nations have started to develop political consultation. Looking back to the Yugoslav crisis, one will see that in the wake of the Chinese Embassy bombing, Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Russian President's Special Envoy to Yugoslavia, arrived in Beijing on 11 May 1999. Agreement for the visit was reached in a phone conversation between President Yeltsin and his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin, in which they discussed the situation in Yugoslavia and condemned NATO's action as barbaric.<sup>55</sup> On his arrival, Chernomyrdin held talks with President Jiang and Premier Zhu, at which the two sides agreed that the only way to solve the Kosovo crisis was politically.<sup>56</sup> They also shared the opinion that the solution to the crisis elaborated at the Group of Eight (the G7 plus Russia) could be implemented only after termination of air strikes.

Preparation of an appropriate resolution for adoption by the UN Security Council was also discussed. China and Russia shared the view of the USA as using NATO to put under its command not only European structures (OSCE, EU), but also the UN.

There was nothing new in the political postures of the two sides. The most significant thing was that the two countries began to adjust their stances on foreign policy issues through political consultations. Moreover, 1998 witnessed the creation of a group for such consultations. Russia and China have been holding bilateral consultations since late 1998 on how to cope with the US proposal to develop an antimissile system to shield itself and its allies. China proposed working-level talks, and security experts from the foreign and defence ministries of the two countries have been meeting every two months to exchange information about the theatre missile defence (TMD) system. The two countries were even expected to come to a decision on a united approach, which could take the form of a joint request to the USA and Japan<sup>57</sup> to terminate development of the TMD program, or even on joint deployment of a weapons system to counter the US missile shield. Russia was initially cool to China's proposal for talks, but eventually relented in the wake of mounting disappointment with the USA, when Washington ignored Moscow's calls to stop the bombing of Iraq in December 1998.

Russia expressed concern that the proposed missile shield would violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, signed by Russia and the USA in 1972. Increasing its criticism, Russia signed a protocol with the US in September 1997 approving TMD research as long as it does not infringe the conditions of the ABM Treaty. When the United States notified Russia that it intended to pull out of the 1972 Treaty, starting a six-month timetable for withdrawal and

opening the way for creation of an anti-missile defence system,<sup>58</sup> this development could have been taken by Russia as a further humiliation. However, the Russian response was mild, and Putin tried to downgrade the importance of this step, simply calling it a 'mistake' that did not threaten Russia's national security.<sup>59</sup>

For its part, China opposed the TMD, as Taiwan wanted to come under its umbrella, and China's Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan even stated that China could not rule out the use of force in pursuit of its claim of sovereignty over Taiwan, should the island come under the TMD. Following the US decision to pull out of the ABM Treaty, and Russia's receipt of some benefits in exchange (such as the US-Russian nuclear arms reduction agreement, and a pact with NATO that made Russia a limited partner of the alliance, thus further improving Russia's relationship with the West), 'Renmin Ribao' published a comment to the effect that the basic nature of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership allowed China and Russia to cooperate with third countries if this did not harm the national interests of either.<sup>60</sup> The US-Russian nuclear arms reduction agreement, for example, also corresponded with China's nuclear security interests. The newspaper pointed out that the Sino-Russian strategic co-operation agreement was based on the two nations' common interests, and China had played an active role in supporting Russia's diplomatic struggle in the area of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty because it believed that disrupting strategic stability would hurt both countries. At the same time, the comment contained a reminder: any unilateral action by either that harms the two countries' strategic co-operation may harm the national interests of the country initiating such action.

'Renmin Ribao' also argued that a certain change in Sino-Russian strategic co-operation had been caused by the Russian

government's policy adjustment, and also by the change in the international situation. The Russian Government had stopped talking about the creation of a multi-polar world and opposition to unilateralism, the former theoretical base of the Sino-Russian strategic co-operation. The US withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty had also changed the parameters of cooperation between Russia and China over maintaining strategic stability. The US military deployment in Central Asia for operations in Afghanistan after September 11 2001 had undermined the functioning of the Shanghai Co-operation Organization, and complicated regional security cooperation between China and Russia.

This perception of alienation between the two 'strategic partners' is obvious not only on the Chinese side. The first half of 2002 unexpectedly saw the growth of anti-Chinese sentiments among representatives of the Russian political elite.<sup>61</sup> On this basis, there are signs of growing deterioration in bilateral relations. Russia stopped paying attention to military contacts with China, its Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov avoided meeting Chinese generals visiting Moscow, and the channel for Sino-Russian consultations and opinion exchanges on enhancing world strategic stability was frozen.<sup>62</sup>

At this point, Russo-Chinese friendship based on 'equal partnership and strategic cooperation' appears to lack adequate internal motivation, and to be highly determined by the international environment. Narrow isolationism and increasing tension with the West does not meet the optimal preferences of either, and both would prefer to diversify their international connections. Their kind of quasi-alliance would appear to be nothing more than elaborate tactics for meeting a worst-case

scenario imposed from outside.

**Japan: 'John Foster Dulles must be rejoicing in his grave'<sup>63</sup>**

The potential for Russo-Japanese relations in all areas greatly exceeds the present reality. However, to develop this potential demands a new ideology of relations, and its reflection in appropriate policies by both countries. What is preventing the development of this new ideology is Japan's insistence on solving the territorial problem on Japanese terms, a formula that psychologically Russia cannot accept. Thus, there is no radical improvement of relations, as both sides beat about the bush, moving slowly and going nowhere.<sup>64</sup> It is clear that the territorial problem cannot be solved by the old system of approaches, for any outcome will mean that one of the two sides has 'lost'. That is why, despite all Yeltsin's public and private promises, no islands could be given up and, hence, the object in view - signing the peace treaty before the end of 2000 – could not be achieved. There are even fewer reasons for Putin to make concessions.

Resolution lies within the framework of a new ideology. This ideology presumes that in the face of new geopolitical and domestic challenges Russia and Japan would become natural strategic partners or even allies in Northeast Asia. From this point of view, the problem of the islands would be transformed from a strategic obstacle in development of Russo-Japanese relations to a small tactical handicap. The two nations require a cooperative arrangement, broader and more comprehensive than a peace treaty.

The basic strategic challenge for Russia is not only the shortage of financial and demographic resources for economic

development of Siberia and the Far East, but the prospect of losing this gigantic region to more dynamic neighbours. To preserve control over these territories Russia will have to invite outside 'developers' on an ad-hoc basis, and Japan appears to be one option. Moreover, such cooperation might become the basis of a new pattern of relations in the Asia-Pacific. At the same time Russia and Japan share other common concerns: reunification of Korea, a strengthening China, the US role in the region, and Japan's prospects for becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Indeed, Russia's and Japan's interests in foreign affairs coincide to a high degree. With recognition of these common interests, the problem of the South Kuriles/Northern Territories could easily be resolved. This is how many politicians in Russia perceive the situation.<sup>65</sup>

Actually, this is a traditional approach, which formed the basis of Russia's Japanese policy under Gorbachev. Approaches to Japan by the Yeltsin administration were more realistic than in the Gorbachev period, even in the initial period of pro-Western romanticism. The major difference is that Yeltsin's administration had no illusions about Japanese interest in Siberian economic development allegedly outweighing the political significance of the peace treaty and solution of the territorial dispute. For the team of experts on Northeast Asia under Yeltsin it was obvious that the model of mutually complementary Russian and Japanese economies in vogue in the 1970s had become past history. Therefore Yeltsin was ready to face the territorial issue as the biggest obstacle to the normalisation of Russo-Japanese ties, evident even from his earlier five-stage plan to improve Soviet-Japanese relations, initially presented in January 1989.

At the same time, a realistic understanding of the situation

did not mean that final mutually acceptable solutions were ready to be implemented. A common feature of both Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's approaches was the recognition that the problem really existed, while evading practical solutions and postponing them for future generations to devise. Yeltsin's early five-stage plan assumed final settlement in the twenty-first<sup>t</sup> century.

However, the Yeltsin administration's early realism was largely misunderstood by the Japanese government as readiness to return the four disputed islands. Euphoria after the failure of the coup d'état encouraged wishful thinking in Japan. In practice Russia's new vision assumed a wish for compromise on both sides rather than unilateral Russian concessions under a face-saving scheme, as proposed by Japan. Though on the eve of the delayed presidential visit to Tokyo in 1992 several options were debated, none of them assumed 'the return of the Northern territories'; even those words were rather unacceptable to the Russian side. Under the most radical option, Moscow was prepared to discuss 'territorial delimitation' on the basis of earlier agreements assuming the validity of the 1956 Joint Declaration, which envisaged the transfer to Japan of Shikotan and the Habomai islands after conclusion of the peace treaty. This was supplemented by the Gromyko-Matsumoto exchange of letters declaring that the issues of Iturup (Etorofu) and Kunashir (Kunashiri) islands should be the subject of further negotiations. Therefore a '2+2' option was the maximum possible, a Russian concession assuming there were strong legal arguments for Russia to retain sovereignty over Kunashir and Iturup.

Although Japan finally recognised Russia's uneasiness over the negative attitudes of domestic public opinion, an even greater obstacle was the fact that the so-called 'iriguchi ron' ('input vision',

which makes solution of the territorial dispute a precondition for any other cooperation) advocated by the Japanese Foreign Ministry since the 1980s promised little to the Russian leadership, and domestic political risks seemed too high an outcome for the Japanese approach.<sup>66</sup> The Japanese position effectively deprived the Russian administration of space for political manoeuvre both in bilateral negotiations and in changing domestic public opinion. Two basic features of the Japanese stand proved unacceptable for Russia:<sup>67</sup>

First, the claim for all four islands under dispute was uncompromising, the maximum Japanese concession being acceptance of the term of 'residual sovereignty', as in the case of Okinawa when under American control, and extending the preparatory period for handover. Obviously Japan expected that after the demise of the USSR and the loss of largely Russian-populated territories in Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova and the Baltic nations, Russia would not be interested in keeping small remote islands.

Second, the above mentioned principle of 'iriguchi ron' stating that the territorial dispute should be settled first, and only then would other subjects, including large scale economic cooperation, be discussed.

In 1992-1993, despite narrowing the gap between them, the two sides failed to reach a common approach to the territorial problem, and had not prepared any valid economic projects. Russian public opinion's rejection of a territorial deal was much discussed domestically in the early 1990s, and served as a major argument for Russian officials in their debates with the Japanese. When Russia understood that no satisfactory compromise might be

found in the near future, politicians began losing interest in Japanese affairs, and eventually debates over new strategic approaches to Japan began to subside. Japan, on the other hand, realised that the territorial dispute could not be solved by a frontal assault, and concentrated its efforts on changing Russian public opinion. Indeed, the period 1993-1997 was marked by a high level of activity in the Russian mass media by the Japanese embassy in Moscow.

The two nations cooperated to ensure that Yeltsin's visit to Tokyo in November 1993 was untroubled. Although the Tokyo Declaration signed by Yeltsin and Prime Minister Hosokawa<sup>68</sup> was described as opening a new stage in bilateral relations, the visit demonstrated the lack of significant progress. The Tokyo Declaration in reality appeared nothing more than new words defining the same state of affairs that resulted from Gorbachev's visit in 1989. Again both nations recognised the existence of a territorial dispute over four islands, stressing the importance of observing previous international agreements. Like Gorbachev, Yeltsin carefully avoided even mentioning the 1956 Joint Declaration. What was evaluated as a great step forward was a promise to find a solution based on 'justice and international law'. This principle soon proved a new disguise for old disagreements. Anecdotally, the stress on international law enabled Russia and Japan to change nothing in their initial stands and arguments, appealing to mutually contradictory international documents of 1944-1956. The formula of 'justice' only provided space for a wide range of interpretations - from the Japanese right to claim the entire Kurile chain to endorsement of the legacy of the post-war status quo.

In practice, with the 1993 Tokyo Declaration the two nations

again agreed to disagree. This time Japan needed space to prepare new overtures, and Russia, deprived of its earlier expectations, was satisfied with the status-quo. Meanwhile, insistent Japanese references to the 1956 Joint Declaration actually validated the existing situation, as the Declaration stipulated that the islands of Shikotan and Habomai, to say nothing of Kunashir and Iturup, would be ceded to Japan only after signature of the peace treaty. The disappearance of ungrounded expectations from relations with Japan opened a way for Russia to 'freeze' the situation by simply abandoning concessions over issues crucial for the peace treaty, albeit at the expense of extensive cooperation with Japan in other areas.

On the other hand, Russia demonstrated its de facto approach to the territorial dispute by authorising its marine border guards to fire on Japanese fishing boats in the vicinity of the disputed islands as part of the so-called 'Putina' (Summer Fishery) annual campaign to protect the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone, including the disputed islands, from illegal fishing (until 1994 firing was prohibited, and that allowed high-speed Japanese boats to escape in most cases). It became obvious that the Russian administration preferred its own interpretation of the status quo, leaving full administrative control over the islands and adjacent waters in its hands. The major area of disagreement in negotiations is the issue of administration, i.e. which side may have a right to control fishery in the region. Russia states that territories under its control are subject to Russian law, and therefore to its marine border and administrative measures. Japan cannot accept this stand, which assumes Russian sovereignty over the disputed area.

In 1996 Japan initiated a new round of reconciliatory actions. An extensive exchange of visits by foreign ministers - five times

within a year - encouraged a new Russian initiative for the joint economic development of the disputed islands presented by foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov in December. The new Russian move may certainly be assessed as a retreat from options under discussion in 1992 and a return to the earlier ideas of the Gorbachev administration in 1989. The concessionary mood of the new Japanese approach to Russia was clearly demonstrated by its rather unexpected readiness to consider not only the plan in detail, but also fishery problems around the islands and compensation payments to the population as well. Japan also agreed to cooperate in the security field, and to exchanges of visits by top officials from the two countries' defense departments. Contacts between the Russian Defense Ministry and the Japanese National Security Agency followed, and there was an exchange of visits by their heads, Usui and Rodionov, in 1996-1997 to expand bilateral contacts.

A very important feature in this context is preservation of the territorial dispute as the major theme for Japanese policy towards Russia, irrespective of other areas of dialogue. Though important by themselves, they represent lower political value for Japan, and strategically are used as an instrument to meet Russian requirements for broader contacts and induce Moscow to find a more favourable solution to the protracted territorial dispute. Russia also discovered a strong interest in expanding dialogue with Japan in the same years. The most important factor may be associated with its growing feeling of isolation and containment, fostered by NATO's eastward expansion.

A real breakthrough in the negotiations was created by the so-called 'Hashimoto doctrine'. In July 1997 then Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto formulated three principles for relations

with Russia: mutual trust, mutual benefit and a long-term perspective to 'create a solid foundation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century'. The doctrine opened the road for two semi-formal Russo-Japanese summits, in November 1997 at Krasnoyarsk, and in April 1998 at Kawana. In Krasnoyarsk Hashimoto managed to avoid the territorial dispute and concentrate on the peace treaty; this fully coincided with Russian priorities. Russia received a signal that Japan could be more flexible in the dispute, and was ready to expand cooperation in other areas.

However, the Japanese agreement to sign a peace treaty (Yeltsin and Hashimoto agreed to sign it by the year 2000<sup>69</sup>) was based on the presumption that this would ensure Japan acquired at least nominal sovereignty over the disputed islands, and a framework agreement on economic cooperation reached in Krasnoyarsk could not substitute for the dispute itself. In Kawana Russia tried to continue maintaining silence over the dispute, but Hashimoto issued a new initiative, suggesting replacing the formula 'returning the Northern Territories' with the notion of 'border delimitation'. The move was apparently designed to soften the language and to make the issue more acceptable to the Russian public.<sup>70</sup> Hashimoto's initiative did not meet a positive response, since Russia favoured introduction of a special regime, which would preserve Russian sovereignty over the islands in one form or another.

Following the Kawana pattern, Russia and Japan signed the 1998 Moscow Declaration<sup>71</sup> on establishing a so-called Creative Partnership between the two nations. But the real outcome of the document, which provided yet another promise to sign the peace treaty, and again avoided the territorial dispute as such, was the decision to create two subcommissions – on economic cooperation,

and on border delimitation. In fact, it was difficult to expect new initiatives to be advanced during Prime Minister Obuchi's visit to Moscow (November 1998), following Russia's August 1998 economic crisis. One of the first oral messages from the newly-elected Russian President Vladimir Putin was the rejection of the idea that Russia might transfer the islands to Japan. During Putin's official visit to Japan in September 2000, Russia and Japan signed a Program for Cooperative Exploration of the South Kuriles. This was designed to become a framework for other contracts and projects of cooperation in the South Kuriles.<sup>72</sup> However, the peace treaty, which Boris Yeltsin had promised would be signed by the end of 2000, was postponed yet again. Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori tried to appeal to the 'Kawana initiative', but Putin responded with a statement that the initiative did not fully mirror Russian understanding of the problem. However, he recognised the existence of the territorial dispute, and promised to work towards its solution.

Disappointed over failed expectations for Japanese financial aid and investment in the region, Russia does not value further dialogue on the territorial problem. Japan's economic difficulties, which have resulted in reduced purchases of Russia's traditional exports, likewise have done nothing to stimulate Russia's interest in bilateral cooperation, and, unlike for Japan, the territorial dispute is not among Russia's first priorities. Thus it easily broke its promise to sign the peace treaty by the year 2000, and without serious stimuli can actually postpone the settlement for a long time.

The situation again came to deadlock, described by Gregory Clark, president of Tama University, as follows: '...most Japanese, even progressives, have now forgotten what happened back in the 1950s and are convinced that Japan's position is completely valid.

Tokyo is urged to continue to negotiate strenuously and persistently and to ignore Moscow's frequent hints that it is still prepared to return Shikotan and the Habomais. The dispute is bound to continue indefinitely. John Foster Dulles must be rejoicing in his grave.<sup>73</sup>

### **Two Koreas: Reestablishing positions**

After the collapse of the communist regime in Russia the ideological basis for Russian-North Korean cooperation vanished. Some Russian politicians even started calling for a boycott of the DPRK. Bilateral relations virtually dropped to the level of consultations by experts. What, perhaps, is most serious for Pyongyang is Russia's refusal to further subsidise North Korea's economy. The problem of greatest importance for Russia was that North Korea's debts amounted to 3.3-3.7 billion roubles (over \$US 5 billion) at 1990 prices, approximately 80% of North Korea's total debts. It had been incurred for technical assistance in the construction of industrial enterprises, and piled up as North Korea had been reducing its repayments, which dropped dramatically from 68% in 1986 to 38% of the scheduled repayments due in 1990.

The former Soviet Union provided enormous support to North Korea. In 1992 facilities built with Soviet assistance produced 30% of all steel, 40% of rolled steel, more than 60% of electrical energy and oil products, 90% of car batteries, and 100% of aluminium. Nowadays North Korea badly needs Russian assistance in restructuring, repairing and upgrading its plants. However, in 1993-1995 the two countries' trade turnover gradually declined, to 67%, 31% and 81% of each previous year. The main reason was North Korea's severe shortage of hard currency. The scaling down of barter trade between the two countries and Russia's decision to

continue assistance on a commercial basis only meant North Korea could not pay for Russian goods and services.

On the whole, three major factors impede Russian-North Korean trade ties and ultimately the whole structure of relations. The North Korean regime appears insolvent, and suffers from a severe deficit of hard currency. Thus, North Korean companies strive to delay payments, and try for special high prices on North Korean goods and low prices on Russian goods (in previous times this was a form of hidden subsidy for the DPRK's regime). Secondly, there are problems of transportation: constantly rising transportation charges, increasingly high risks of damage and non-delivery of goods, and failure to deliver on time. Thirdly, Soviet companies previously conducted trade and developed economic cooperation under inter-governmental agreements. Nowadays such companies have been turned into joint stock companies, and both they and newly-created commercial undertakings think it unprofitable to do business with the DPRK.

Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that some Russian experts argue that today North Korea cannot be regarded as a serious economic partner, especially taking into consideration its deep socio-economic crisis. Only if the DPRK could participate in large subregional projects, like the exploitation of natural gas in Siberia and Yakutia and its export by pipeline to China and Korea and through to other countries, might the situation change in the sphere of Russian-North Korean economic relations.

The demise of the USSR has apparently had strong implications for Russo-Korean affairs. After the normalisation of Soviet relations with South Korea two features became characteristic of Soviet goals on the Korean peninsula: first, a wish

to attract South Korean loans and investment as a partial substitute for Japan, and second, aspiration to achieve a mediatory role in inter-Korean affairs for the Soviet Union, the only major power with embassies in both Seoul and Pyongyang. However, neither of these aims were pursued in Russian foreign policy following the USSR's demise. Attempts to ameliorate relations with Japan, and a more realistic view of South Korea's financial and economic potential, demoted the ROK to a much lower position in Russia's priorities. An independent posture in inter-Korean affairs was also beyond immediate goals.

Korea's low position in Russia's foreign priorities was demonstrated in 1992, when President Yeltsin's visit to Seoul was planned only as an addendum to his trip to Japan, and was easily canceled along with the Japanese project. It was only Seoul's harsh reaction that made Russia finally plan a separate visit. Besides, like Gorbachev's experience, failure with Japan forced Russia to reconsider its approach to Seoul, though in different terms. If Gorbachev's administration viewed the ROK as an important substitute for unsuccessful economic overtures to Japan, Yeltsin's did not.

It may be noted that Russian-Korean summits in 1992-1994 were predominantly marked with important but symbolic actions demonstrating Russia's new approaches to inherited historic incidents. Measures like the disclosure of Russian archives on the origins of the Korean war and the release of the documents to Seoul, intensive investigation of the shooting-down of flight KAL 007 by a Soviet pilot in 1983 and release of its flight recorders to Korea were effective steps to appeal to Korean national feelings and improve the image of the new Russia. Russian assistance in obtaining UN membership for both Koreas, and later in South

Korea's election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council was very important in raising the level of understanding and cohesion between Moscow and Seoul.

On the other hand, the ROK saw the South Korean – Russian relationship mostly from the angle of North-South confrontation and tried to influence Russia's policy towards the DPRK's nuclear and missile programs, demanding it criticise other aspects of North Korea's foreign and domestic policy. These attempts succeeded to the extent that South Korea claimed to have brought about a 'freeze' in North Korean-Russian relations.<sup>74</sup>

At the same time bilateral economic cooperation failed to meet expectations. The 1997 financial crisis reduced South Korea's activities in the Russian economy, where earlier experience had already demonstrated a divergence of views between the Korean conglomerates and Russian authorities on the forms economic cooperation should take. To Korea, Russia was a source of raw materials and a growing market for Korean industry, but it needed to overcome the increased protectionism. Russia, on the other hand, preserved former Soviet priorities for value-adding processing of its raw materials, and expanding high-technology production on its own soil with assistance from foreign capital investment. Russian domestic problems, such as political and economic uncertainties, inconsistent taxation policy, corruption, crime, and the lack of real efforts to attract foreign investment added to both countries' early disillusionment with the prospects for economic cooperation. The aggravation of North Korea's nuclear and missile crisis opened a new opportunity for Moscow to find new lines of involvement in the Korean peninsula, reviving earlier expectations of assuming a mediator's role. Two basic factors had to be overcome to implement the new priorities.

The first major problem was that Russia lost - in fact, partially abandoned - almost all its leverage on Pyongyang, with bilateral relations remaining strained and deteriorating after Moscow's formal recognition of Seoul. Russia's economic situation certainly prevented restoration of the former model of assistance to the DPRK, and Russia opted instead for diplomatic effort. Russia undertook a series of visits to Pyongyang to elaborate a new treaty to replace that of 1961, which expired in 1996. It also tried to present a new image of a nation suitable for the role of unprejudiced arbiter - especially important for isolated North Korea in advocating its interests before the international community. Strong Russian opposition to UN sanctions was to reinforce these arguments.

It should be stressed that it was Russia that first found a formula for reviewing North Korea's nuclear problems without impinging upon the interests of any nations affected. This was a proposed 6+2 international conference (two Koreas, United States, China, Japan, Russia plus United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency), where the basic problem was that the formula for a forum was proposed without indicating any precise measures that should be taken. They were supposed to be prepared by the conference, a rather long and not very effective process, especially when nations without much experience in multilateral negotiations were included. A practical approach easily combined with the proposed international mechanism was later found at talks between former US President Carter and the North Korean leadership, assuming the abandonment of North Korea's independent nuclear efforts and IAEA control over its nuclear facilities traded for building a light water nuclear power station under international financing, later developing into Korean Energy

Development Organisation (KEDO).

Several factors determined Russia's initial enthusiasm for the idea. The international nature of the proposed program corresponded with Russia's desired list of probable participants, thereby giving Moscow a valuable opportunity to express its views on the issue. Russia's expectations of becoming a provider of nuclear reactors were even more significant. Indeed, Russia had rather strong grounds for this expectation. South Korean reactors were unacceptable to Pyongyang for ideological reasons, and American-made reactors considered undesirable on the same grounds; North Korea clearly stated that it would opt for Russian or European nuclear plants. Besides, Russia already had experience of North Korea's nuclear programme. Investigations into a civil nuclear energy program had been conducted in the late 1980s, and on-the-spot preparatory work had been fulfilled, before Russia declined further participation in 1992 due to North Korea's lack of funds. In the meantime Russia had seriously evaluated the possibilities of providing nuclear plants to North Korea under international financing as an important source of international assistance in settling not only the North Korean issue, but also problems in Russia's nuclear industry, by giving the latter a chance to earn money instead of borrowing. Taking all these circumstances into account, Russian reactors would be less expensive than any competing project, a fact important to KEDO's finances.

The major obstacle turned out to be Seoul's insistence on providing South Korean-made products, irrespective of North Korean objections. This resulted in adoption of a compromise solution: disguising South Korean products as American. Discussion on this issue protracted the negotiations and made the agreement more vulnerable to possible obstruction, as had former inter-Korean

agreements, most notably that on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula (1992). The only role left open for Russia was the highly unacceptable one of forcing North Korea to accept the plan elaborated in Washington and Seoul in opposition to priorities clearly defined by Moscow and Pyongyang.

The final decision to proceed with the KEDO scheme was taken under strong pressure from South Korea, within the logic of its strategic line. While an outside power can make a clear distinction between the problems of security on the Korean peninsula, on the one hand, and the reunification of Korea, on the other, giving priority to the former, for the ROK the two issues tend to be conflated and agreements on security enhancement are usually transformed into an instrument to serve the goal of reunification with great importance attached to the 'demonstration effect' and direct access to North Korean territory. Hence for both Russia and South Korea the proposed KEDO scheme implied additional political problems, finally leading to feelings of dissatisfaction on both sides.

Russia's sense of isolation in Korean affairs grew much stronger in 1996 after the U.S.-ROK initiative by Presidents Clinton and Kim Young Sam on four-party talks to prepare arrangements to replace the cease-fire agreement of 1953, abrogated by Pyongyang and then by China under North Korean pressure. Certainly, the new proposal maintained the logic of the cease-fire, with only four parties involved (in fact ROK President Syngman Rhee had refused to accept it in 1953), and was urgently demanded as no legal framework existed to regulate the situation in the demilitarised zone after North Korea's unexpected move. Yet Moscow was irritated by the proposal that only two outside powers, the USA and China, should be international guarantors of the status-quo on the Korean

peninsula, a proposal about which neither the ROK nor the USA consulted or even informed Russia, intensifying the impression made by the rejection of its plans for KEDO that Russia was being marginalised.<sup>75</sup>

A further sense of declining influence on the situation on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia as a whole, derived from Seoul's indifference to all Russia's efforts to improve its image in South Korea and establish productive political cooperation. This further clouded South Korean-Russian relations. Russia's initial reaction was moderated by the fact that the four-party talks initiative made no progress as it was silenced by Pyongyang, and by new ROK initiatives presented by the former ambassador to Moscow, Kim Sok Kyu. The new South Korean proposal has revived the idea presented by then president Roh Tae Woo to the UN General Assembly in 1991, calling for the establishment of a security cooperation system in Northeast Asia with participation of both Koreas, the United States, China, Russia, Japan, and possibly Canada and Mongolia.

This idea clearly overlapped with previous Russian initiatives, and certainly coincided with Moscow's vision of a potential role in the region through participation in regional institutions. Besides, it certainly met Russia's general line of 1996-97, of speeding up confidence-building arrangements and troop reductions on its border with China, and its overtures to Japan aimed at promoting cooperation in security areas. In that context the ROK idea, with its primary stress on Korean affairs, could assist Russia to expand her recent approaches towards China and Japan to Korea, thereby covering the whole Northeast Asian region and creating an institutional framework of sub-regional security enhancement systems, one of its current key objectives.

It would appear that the idea of multilateral security cooperation, aimed at reducing tensions and increasing confidence, is creating a new basis for Russian political cooperation with ROK. This coincides with efforts to revive dialogue with Japan and overcome a narrow orientation towards the 'strategic partnership' with China, without disrupting it.

The attempt to revive North Korean–Russian ties should be considered in the same context. In April 1996 a high-ranking Russian official delegation was sent to Pyongyang. Though the head of the delegation, Vitaly Ignatenko, then vice-premier, ranked only seventh among the deputies to then prime-minister Chernomyrdin, and was not in charge of foreign political or economic relations, the mere fact that a member of the government was overseeing ties between the two countries demonstrated Russia's resolve to restore at least economic relations with North Korea.

Here an observer can see implementation of the 'new policy' adopted by the Russian Federation on the eve of the 1996 presidential election. Major components of this policy, as stated by then Foreign Minister Evgeny Primakov, included shifting from following US policy and reestablishing ties with such countries as Iraq, Libya, North Korea, which should not be turned into international pariahs. An attempt to avoid the communist opposition's accusation of betraying old friends, was perhaps the most important incentive.

As has so often been the case, Russian foreign policy moves were not connected with the international situation, but appeared to be an annex to domestic policy, based on certain ideological dogmas. From this point of view, there was nothing surprising in the

fact that a Russian-North Korean meeting opened just after North Korea unilaterally rejected its obligations over the DMZ. Taking into consideration that 60-70% of North Korean troops are deployed close to the line of demarcation, this decision naturally increased tension on the Peninsula. Still the Russian administration showed that it was none of its business, and that political and economic issues were much more important in its relations with its former client.

The Russian delegation arrived in Pyongyang in April 1996 for the first session of the inter-governmental commission for trade, economic and scientific cooperation. It had two major points on its agenda: discussing North Korea's debt problems, and reviewing the Treaty on friendship relations between the Russian Federation and DPRK. Russia had suggested a new treaty in late 1995, and the fact that it proposed one implied that the level of bilateral relations had been officially downgraded. The new treaty was drafted to replace the alliance treaty of 1961, which was effectively abandoned in 1991, as it did not match the new geopolitical reality. Despite its lower level of commitment, the new treaty was a response to Russian perceptions that South Korea, having achieved its aim of establishing political relations with Russia, did not want to develop bilateral ties further, and was collaborating with the USA in attempts to block any Russian moves in the region. It was also an attempt to implement the new principle of 'political symmetry' on the Korean Peninsula. In September 1996 North Korea submitted its variant of the Treaty.

The 'new' policy towards North Korea, claimed to be more balanced, more delicate, based exclusively on Russian national interests, independent of the South Korean policy was recognition of the new reality: after several years of coolness between the two

countries Russia discovered that its influence on the Korean Peninsula had been drastically reduced. Pyongyang had opened a dialogue of its own with Washington. Moreover, Russia found itself left out of the frame of the quadrilateral meeting on Korea (ROK, DPRK, USA and PRC).

Russia had never accepted the idea of a quadrilateral meeting on Korea, and responded by suggesting a multilateral conference with participants including the DPRK, Russia, China, South Korea, the USA, Japan, the IAEA and United Nations. However, some groups in Russia lobbied for the quadrilateral meeting, as they thought it an important measure towards normalising the situation on the Korean Peninsula, and expected it to lead to replacement of the 1953 armistice agreement by a peace treaty. However, the Russian government's position is that the armistice agreement should remain in force until a new peace structure is established on the Korean Peninsula.

In trying to establish a new legal basis for Russian-North Korean relations through a new Treaty, Russia was out to show that it still had some influence on the Peninsula, and was conducting independent policies towards both Korean states. At the same time it tried to ignore scandalous incidents in the DMZ and coastal waters, dismissing them as an internal affair between the Korean states. But North Korea kept a watchful eye on the development of Russian-South Korean ties. For example, in September 1996 it expressed dissatisfaction with Russia's agreement to supply South Korea with armoured cars and T-80 tanks as part of a deal for partial repayment of loans totalling US\$ 1.47 billion (450.7 million. was to be repaid in military equipment).<sup>76</sup> Russia nevertheless continued its efforts to enter the South Korean arms market. Among them was the Sukhoi corporation's competition with American

Boeing and French Dasseau to supply a modern multi-purpose fighter for the South Korean Air Force.<sup>77</sup> The Russian bidder offered its advanced Su-35 fighter,<sup>78</sup> but its bid was unsuccessful. This added to the overall disappointment over the cooperation with South Korea.

North Korea reacted favourably to changes in Russia's approach towards Korean Peninsula issues. In February 2000 the Russian Foreign Minister visited Pyongyang where the two nations signed a new Friendship Treaty. In response, North Korea's Foreign Minister visited Moscow in April 2000. The background to these meetings was a recognition that Moscow had erred in rejecting Russian-North Korean cooperation. Russia proclaimed restoration of bilateral ties with the DPRK alongside developing 'mutually beneficial' cooperation with the Republic of Korea.

In developing this line, Russia and North Korea exchanged visits by their national leaders. After Putin's visit to Pyongyang (July 2000), where he tried to persuade Kim Jong Il to end his missile program, Kim undertook a nine-day train trip across Russia, and on 4 August 2001 arrived in Moscow for a five-day official visit. While some observers claim that Putin's frequent trips abroad are less for official purposes than opportunities for tourism, the North Korean leader, on the contrary, does not habitually go abroad, except to Beijing. This greatly increased the significance of his visit in the eyes of Russian officials. Kim's father - Communist North Korea's founder, the late Kim Il Sung - made the same extended train journey on an official visit to the Soviet Union in 1986. The younger Kim followed the same route, but in a different country.

## **Conclusions**

Russia's foreign policy, fluctuating between ambitions to form a strategic partnership with the USA and other Western countries, and protest against certain Western foreign policies, including NATO's expansion and bombing of Yugoslavia, was not entirely realistic given Russia's abilities and goals. Russia's leadership often participated in international affairs just for the sake of participation, without considering the consequences. As Viktor Kremenyuk argues, Putin's administration has now decided to differentiate four foreign policy directions – West, East, South, and the 'near abroad'.<sup>79</sup> Behind this new approach is an old idea – while Russia lacks serious achievements in its Western policy, it should compensate for these shortcomings by developing relations with countries that would welcome such development. The years 2000 and 2001 demonstrated that to realise this ambition the current Russian government attempts to restore Soviet-type relations with North Korea and the People's Republic of China, as a reaction to its impotence during and after the Yugoslavia crisis.

Despite the widespread perception of Russia's Eurasian nature, and a common description of it as simultaneously belonging to two continents, Russia's ruling elite and most Russians do not see themselves as part of Asia. By tradition still involved in Central Asian politics, they usually tend to neglect processes taking place in the Asia-Pacific. The attempt to develop a Eurasian dimension that would integrate European and Asian priorities is rather a novelty for Russia. L. Titarenko and V. Mikheev, Russian experts on Chinese and Korean politics, argue that Russian society, at least its politically active part, has already started reconsidering Russia's place in the Asia-Pacific and pays increasing interest to cooperation with East Asian nations.<sup>80</sup> However, Russian foreign policy continues to be Western-oriented, the Asian approach often playing a supporting role to the European dimension.

Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that another switch in focus emerged in Russia after September 11, with a new attempt to emphasise its European direction. It is obvious that the September 11 terrorist attacks against the USA were unexpected events. Nevertheless, Vladimir Putin for the second time tried to use a catastrophe and a war to his advantage. The 1999 Moscow blasts that killed several hundred people, together with the strange failure of the government and secret services to respond in time to the Chechen invasion of Dagestan, provided fertile soil for renewal of the Chechen war. That war became a cornerstone of Putin's career, and opened the door to the presidency. The current anti-terrorist war again appeared beneficial for Putin. Moscow's unconditional support of the US-led military operation in Afghanistan made Putin a key partner to world leaders.

Yelena Tregubova argues that this move has cost Putin nothing<sup>81</sup> - he simply made the right choice from among the options presented by President Bush - 'Are you with us or with the terrorists?'. In fact, many politicians in the West and in Russia expected that Putin would yield to pressure from the military industrial lobby and secret service, and choose cooperation with the so-called 'pariah-nations'. These expectations made Putin's pro-Western choice even more significant. Russia's leadership apparently decided that turning into America's best friend would eliminate all Western criticism of its domestic policy, allowing it to concentrate on internal power struggles and take Chechnya off the international agenda.

However, the situation is not so simple. In 2001, which was so sensational in terms of contacts with Northeast Asian nations, there appeared to be a series of failures and reluctant concessions

in Russian foreign policy. The USA withdrew from the ABM Treaty, which Moscow had considered the cornerstone of the global security system. Russian officials had discussed the problem with their Chinese counterparts, and the two nations even formed a special group to coordinate their policies, to try to prevent the USA from withdrawing and launching a new missile defense program. After September 11 these discussions were abandoned. At the same time Russia agreed that the US military can use former Soviet military bases in Central Asia for the antiterrorist war (this move was not met with delight in Beijing). Besides, Moscow decided to close its last two bases in Cuba and Vietnam, and made it clear that it would no longer object to the Baltic states' joining NATO, meaning that NATO will now cross the former Soviet border.

These Gorbachev-style unilateral concessions were used as a tool to achieve a real status of partnership with Western nations. Moscow recognised its weakness, and tried to exchange its last bargaining chips for a higher status in international relations and a free hand in its domestic policy. Some observers called this a 'realistic' policy.<sup>82</sup> However, in the past several months Russia acted in contradiction to its basic foreign policy and national security documents. The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation of June 2000<sup>83</sup> is oriented towards preserving Russia's status as a great power, as one of the influential centres of the modern world. It confirms the priority of 'the conventional norms of international law', the goals and principles of the UN Charter, and speaks of equal and partnership relations between states as a basis of international relations. According to the concept, Russia sees itself as an active player in the process of fundamental and dynamic changes in the modern world, and wants to exercise a primary influence on the formation of a new world order.

Instead of protecting its position as one of the influential centres in the modern world, Moscow for the first time tried to drop its aspirations to preserve superpower status. Unfortunately, for Putin's administration, the USA, despite all the concessions offered by Russia, does not seem eager to bargain on the topics of human rights and democracy, and very quickly resumed its criticism of the war in Chechnya.<sup>84</sup> Moscow also failed with its expectations of US non-interference into the Georgian-Russian conflict. On the other hand, it has made serious efforts to prevent a US attack against Iraq.

Under such conditions one can expect further Russian attempts to intensify cooperation with the Northeast Asian nations, which is still dependant on the Western component of Russia's foreign policy. If so, such cooperation will continue to be manifestation of a kind of self-sufficiency. But, in fact, it will still be based on negative premises, on the desire to make the US at least uncomfortable about Russian foreign ties. A real self-sufficient and long-term basis for the strong 'Eastern' policy can be created with Russia's economic integration in East Asia. Such integration can provide a set of mutual interests that would 'cement' Russian ties in Asia and establish a new model of Russia's presence in the region. There are real possibilities for such development, which at present could embrace energy and infrastructure projects. Apparently, only mutually beneficial cooperation can provide Russia's dialogue with Asian nations with a continuous logic and sustainability.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> D. Gornostaev, Stambulskii Miting OBSE Na Grani Provala (OCSE's Istanbul Meeting on Verge of Failure), *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 19 November 1999, p.1

<sup>2</sup> <<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/Documents/Decree/2000/24-1.html>>, [10 December 2002]

<sup>3</sup> *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 25 April 2000, p.4

<sup>4</sup> *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 11 July 2000, p.5

<sup>5</sup> The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (June 2000), *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 11 July 2000, p.5

<sup>6</sup> *Monitor: A Daily Briefing on Post-Soviet States*, Vol.6, No.142, 21 July 2000.

<sup>7</sup> See reports on Putin's visit to Japan in early September 2000: e.g. F. Weir, 'Putin's Quest for a Global Niche', *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 September 2000; P. Bowring, 'For Russia and Japan, an Old Agenda of Unfinished Business', *International Herald Tribune*, 6 September 2000; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 6 September 2000.

<sup>8</sup> C. Bluth, 'Russia and China Consolidate their New Strategic Partnership', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1998, pp.18-22; R Menon, 'The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China', *Survival*, Vol.39, No.2, Summer 1997, pp.101-125; Yu. Tsyganov, 'Kosovo War: A New Impetus for Sino-Russian Alliance?', *Russian and Euro-Asian Bulletin*, Vol.8, No.5, May 1999, pp.1-14; A. Lukin, 'Russia's Image of China and Russian-Chinese Relations', *East Asia: An International Quarterly*, Vol.17, No.1, Spring 1999, pp.5-39.

<sup>9</sup> Yu. Alekseev, D. Kosyrev, 'Vostochnaya' Diplomatiya Putina Nachinaetsya S Sensatsii (Putin's 'Eastern' Diplomacy Starts with a Sensation), *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 10 June 2000, p.1

<sup>10</sup> Strana.ru, <<http://www.strana.ru>>, 18 August 2001

<sup>11</sup> Missile treaty must stay, say summit leaders, *South China Morning Post*, 17 July 2001

<sup>12</sup> Jiang, Putin Issue Joint Statement in Moscow, Xinhua, *China Daily*, 17 July 2001; Vladimir Putin Otmechaet Znachenie Podpisannogo Rossisko-Kitaiskogo Dogovora (Vladimir Putin Emphasizes the Significance of Newly Signed Sino-Russian Treaty), *RIA-Novosti*, <<http://www.rian.ru>>, 17 July 2001

<sup>13</sup> D. Trenin. *Russia's China Problem*, Moscow Carnegie Center: May 1999, pp.9-10

<sup>14</sup> Ye. Yasin, I. Artemiev. *Russia in 2002*, <<http://www.polit.ru/documents/464096.html>> [28 December 2001]

<sup>15</sup> I would agree with the following conclusion by Anna V. Shkuropat: 'In many ways, the decision to seek entry into APEC was essentially a political one, without any particularly detailed assessment of prospective benefits or how best to take advantage of APEC membership. The acceptance of Russia's bid for membership by other APEC members, including the important factor of Japanese support, should also be seen as largely political, since there were factors which could have

argued that more effective or earlier results in APEC might have been achieved without enlarging the membership group and that Russia did not necessarily meet some of the membership criteria. In the case of Japan, an important view seems to have been that there was a global need to engage Russia more actively in the international economic system. At least some of APEC's leaders saw accepting Russia into the APEC community as a means of supporting Russia in its economic reforms and its move to a more open economy, and of increasing security through greater interaction and increasing trade.' (Anna V. Shkuropat , Assessing Russia's Entry into APEC, prepared for Apec Study Centre Consortium 1999 Conference 'Towards Apec's Second Decade: Challenges, Opportunities And Priorities' (31 May – 2 June 1999, Auckland, New Zealand)), <<http://www2.auckland.ac.nz/apec/papers/Shkuropat.html>>, [15 December 2002]

<sup>16</sup> V. Baranovsky, Russia and Asia: challenges and opportunities for national and international security, In: G Chufrin (ed.), Russia and Asia: The Emerging Security Agenda, SIPRI, Oxford University Press, 1999, p.16

<sup>17</sup> D. Trenin. What is the Inner Sense of Primakov's Policy/ *Intellectual Capital*, <<http://www.intellectualcapital.ru>>, Vol.2, No.8, February 1998, [21 October 2001]

<sup>18</sup> He wrote: 'It is true that Russians have had close emotional ties with the Serbs going back centuries, based on shared religion and Slavic ancestry. On a number of previous occasions, when the Serbs revolted against the Turks and then again notably in the summer of 1914, they had come to their defense. But in these instances, the Serbs were either tyrannized or threatened by foreign powers. In 1999, by contrast, they are tyrannizing a minority within their own borders.' (R. Pipes. Boris Gets Angry, *Intellectual Capital*, <<http://www.intellectualcapital.ru>>, Vol. 4, No. 14, 8-15 April 1999)

<sup>19</sup> S. Petukhov. Polundra! (High Alert!), *Ogonyok*, <<http://www.ropnet.ru/ogonyok>>, No.17, 17 May 1999.

<sup>20</sup> In February 1999 *Izvestia* discussed the possibility of the USA launching a war in the Far East. It claimed that the 'OR-5027' plan for air strikes against North Korea - in the US' favourite style - was designed not only to teach Kim Jong Il a lesson, but to show Russia 'who is the boss' (V. Golovnin. Budet li Voina na Dalnem Vostoke? (Will There Be a War in the Far East?), *Izvestia*, 10 February 1999, p.1). Serbia looked only like a more suitable option to demonstrate US superiority.

<sup>21</sup> V. Golovanov. Goodbye, America, *Ogonyok*, <<http://www.ropnet.ru/ogonyok>>, No.7, 15 February 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> M Sokolov. Having Decisive Force, There is No Need for Brains, *Intellectual Capital*, <<http://www.intellectualcapital.ru>>, Vol.3, No.13, March 1999.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Two regiments of TOPOL-M were deployed in 1999 (Rossiiskii Yadernyi Schit Stal Tolsche (Russia's Nuclear Shield Became Stronger), *Lenta.ru*, <<http://www.lenta.ru>>, 12 November 1999). Each regiment consists of 10 launchers. TOPOL-M missile can be converted unto a multi-head carrier or into a 'Euromissile'.

<sup>26</sup> Certainly, it is not so important how large the ship is. What is important is its strategic usage. One cruiser of this type can change the entire situation in large areas like the Mediterranean Sea. Obviously, the necessity for this can be dictated only by attempts to compete against the US Navy. That is what Russian experts often call an 'asymmetric response'.

<sup>27</sup> In 1992-1997 the Russian Navy received more than ten nuclear submarines (*Newsru.com*, <<http://www.temadnya.ru/spravka/26aug2002/1577.html>>, 26 August 2002). In November 1996 Russia started the construction of 'Yuri Dolgoruky', which is a new type of strategic submarines.

<sup>28</sup> P. Felgengauer. Ogranichennaya Yadernaya Voina? Pochemu Net! (A Limited Nuclear War? Why Not!), *Segodnya*, 6 May 1999, p.2

<sup>29</sup> The nuclear discussion was frozen in April 2002, when President Putin during his visit to Germany criticized the US alleged intention to develop 'nuclear charges of low power and an opportunity of their use in regional conflicts. It puts down to a very low rod, lowers to a dangerous level a threshold of possible application of the nuclear weapon. The approach to this problem can change and then it will be possible to speak about changes in strategy. In this case the nuclear weapon falls from the weapon of nuclear restraint to a level of the weapon of operative application, and, in my opinion, it is very dangerous.' (Nakanune Sammita v Weimare (Before the Weimar) Summit, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, <<http://www.russianstory.com>>, 9 April 2002)

<sup>30</sup> For example see A. Golts, D. Pinsker, Predchuvstvie Kholodnoi Voyny (Presentiment of the Cold War), *Itogi*, 23 November 1999, pp.21-23

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/Documents/Decree/2000/24-1.html>, 11 December 2002, [15 December 2002]

<sup>32</sup> *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 25 April 2000, p.4

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- <sup>33</sup> The Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 11 July 2000, p.5
- <sup>34</sup> A survey of Russia: Putin's Choice, *Economist*, 21-27 July 2001, p.15
- <sup>35</sup> V. Skosyrev, K Eggert. Ministry Inostrannykh Del Rossii I Kitaya Navodyat Poryadok Na Granitse (Russia's and China's Foreign Ministers Put the Border into Order), *Izvestia*, 29 January 1994, p.4
- <sup>36</sup> Yu. Savenkov. 'Risuesh Derevo - Pochuvstvui, Kak Ono Rastet' (Drawing a Tree Feel How It Grows), *Izvestia*, 2 September 1994. p.3
- <sup>37</sup> A. Platkovsky. Politichesky Duet v Pekine Zvuchal Na Redkost Slazhenno (The Political Duet in Peking Sounded Uncommonly Harmonious), *Izvestia*, 26 April 1996, p.3
- <sup>38</sup> The US-Russian Joint Commission on Technological Cooperation, set up in 1993 as a joint initiative of then Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and US Vice-President Gore to promote cooperation on a wide range of issues related to energy, the environment, science and technology, space exploration and defense conversion.
- <sup>39</sup> *Far Eastern Affairs*, Moscow, No.4 (1997), pp.95-96 (Russian Edition)
- <sup>40</sup> Yu. Savenkov. Moskva I Pekin Prizyvayut Zhit Druzhno (Moscow and Beijing Call to Live in Friendship), *Izvestia*, 24 April 1997, p.3
- <sup>41</sup> G. Karasin. Rossia I Kitai Na Poroge Tysyacheletiya (Russia and China on the millenium's threshold), *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, No.6 (1997), pp.13-18; Zhan Deguang. Strategicheskoye Partnerstvo Orientirovannoye na 21 Stoletiyе (Strategic partnership oriented towards the 21st century), *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, No.6 (1997), pp.19-22
- <sup>42</sup> See for example *Renmin Ribao*, 16 July 2001
- <sup>43</sup> Full membership since September 1997.
- <sup>44</sup> Yu. Kovalenko. Chubais Prevratil Parizhsky Klub v Agenta Kremlya (Chubais Turned Paris Club into Kremlin's Agent), *Izvestia*, 19 Sept. 1997, p.3
- <sup>45</sup> Li Fenglin. Chinese-Russian Relations After the Fifth Summit in Beijing/ *Far Eastern Affairs*, Moscow, No.1 (1998), p.4 (English edition)
- <sup>46</sup> A joint statement released following the US-China summit in October 1997 stated that 'the two Presidents are determined to build toward a constructive strategic partnership between the United States and China through increasing cooperation to meet international challenges and promote peace and development in the world'. (USIA: The United States and China. June 27, 1998).
- <sup>47</sup> Li Fenglin, p.6

<sup>48</sup> In his report to the XV congress of the Chinese Communist Party, Jiang Zemin again stressed the five basic principles of the PRC's foreign policy: 'We shall not yield to any outside pressure or enter into alliance with any big power or group of countries, nor shall we establish any military bloc, join in the arms race or seek military expansion.' ('Hold High the Great Banner of Deng Xiaoping Theory for an All-round Advancement of the Cause of Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics to the 21st Century' (General Secretary Jiang Zemin's Report to the 15th Party Congress). *Renmin Ribao [People's Daily]*, 22 September 1997, p.6)

<sup>49</sup> Russia did not participate in the celebration of NATO's 50th anniversary. But five CIS members – Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova – were there. The five countries have formed an alternative bloc GUUAM, oriented towards the USA (*Obschaya Gazeta*, 29 April – 12 May 1999, p.1)

<sup>50</sup> Z. Lachowski. Conventional arms control/ *SIPRI Yearbook 1998: Armaments, Disarmament and International Relations*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1998, pp.526-27

<sup>51</sup> Polnyi Tekst Dogovora o Dobrososedstve, Druzhbe i Sotrudnichestve (Full Text of the [Sino-Russian] Treaty of Good-neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation),

<[http://www.asiapacific.narod.ru/countries/china/treaty\\_about\\_peace.htm](http://www.asiapacific.narod.ru/countries/china/treaty_about_peace.htm)>, [21 January 2003]

<sup>52</sup> A. Lukin. Rossia-Kitai (Russia-China), *International Affairs*, No.12, 2001, p78-79

<sup>53</sup> Yu. Tsyganov (ed.), *Russia and Northeast Asia: Economic and Security Interdependence*, Part 1, Moscow: IMEMO-NIRA joint project, 1997, p.55

<sup>54</sup> Russia and China: Remaking history, *Economist*, July 21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> 2001, p.24

<sup>55</sup> *ITAR-TASS*, <<http://www.itartass.ru>>, 10 May 1999.

<sup>56</sup> *Gazeta.ru* <<http://www.gazeta.ru>>, 12 May 1999.

<sup>57</sup> Japan approved a plan in December 1998 to start a joint study in 1999 of TMD, proposed by the USA to defend itself and its allies through a web of satellites and missiles designed to shoot down shorter-range enemy missiles.

<sup>58</sup> U.S. quits ABM Treaty, CNN, <<http://www.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/12/13/rec.bush.abm/>> 14 December 2001

<sup>59</sup> Putin: U.S. ABM move 'a mistake', CNN, <<http://www.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/12/13/russia.abm/index.html>> [13 December 2001]

<sup>60</sup> Sino-Russian Ties Curb US Pressures, *Renmin Ribao*, 10 June 2002

<sup>61</sup> D. Kosyrev, O Kitae Vserioz (Seriously About China), *Eurasia Today*, <<http://www.GazetaSNG.ru>>, 22 April 2002

<sup>62</sup> A. Savitsky, I. Korotchenko, Failure of Visit By Minister Ivanov to Beijing, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 3 June 2002, p.1

<sup>63</sup> Citation from Gregory Clark, Japan's other big Year 2000 problem, *The Japan Times*, 3 March 1999. It is a reminder of the role played in Russo-Japanese relations by Secretary of State Dulles. In response to possible Soviet-Japanese rapprochement in 1956, and solving the dispute on the basis of the USSR transferring Shikotan and the Habomais to Japan in exchange for the peace treaty, Dulles warned that if Japan did not maintain its full demand for all the Northern Territories, the U.S. might never return Okinawa to Japan. Tokyo broke off its talks with Moscow.

<sup>64</sup> V. Tretiakov, Rossia – Yaponia: Novaya Epokha? (Russia-Japan: A New Epoch?), *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 21 June 2001, p.3

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> A. Zagorsky, Russian-Japanese Relations: Back to Deadlock, In: G. Chufrin (ed.), *Russia and Asia: the Emerging Security Agenda*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: Oxford University Press, 1999, p.338

<sup>67</sup> Yu. Tsyganov (ed.), *Russia and Northeast Asia...*, p.18

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.embjapan.ru/jrr/tokyodec.html>, [25 November 2002]

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.smi.ru/2000/04/21/956336322.html>, [27 November 2002]

<sup>70</sup> Zagorsky, loc. cit., p.349

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.embjapan.ru/jrr/moscowdec.html>, [22 November 2002]

<sup>72</sup> *Rossia i Yaponia Podpisali Programmu Sotrudnichestva v Razrabotke Yuzhnykh Kuril* (Russia and Japan Signed a Program of Cooperative Exploration of the South Kurils), *LENТА.RU*, <<http://lenta.ru/russia/2000/09/04/islands/program.htm>>, 4 September 2000

<sup>73</sup> G. Clark, Japan's other big Year 2000 problem, *The Japan Times*, <<http://www.japantimes.co.jp>>, 3 March 1999

<sup>74</sup> G. Bulychev, D. Kulkin, Rossiia I Yuzhnaya Korea: Nekotorye Razmyshlenia, (Russia and South Korea: Some Considerations), *Far Eastern Affairs*, Moscow, No.5 (2000), p.37 (Russian Edition)

<sup>75</sup> Russian experts later advanced an explanation that KEDO was not so important for Russia, since political goals ('engagement') were not significant for it, while the project's economic viability was questionable. In the event of a fiasco, Russia would be free of responsibility for the project. (See: G.Toloraya, *Novyi Staryi Partner na Dalnem Vostoke (New Old Partner in the Far East)*, *Far Eastern Affairs*, Moscow, No.5 (2000), p.25 (Russian Edition)). However, this is 'a wisdom after the event'. Now we know that the 1997 Asian crisis undermined South Korea's economic capabilities. In 1996-1997 the approach was absolutely different.

<sup>76</sup> The Korean Central News Agency called Russia's arms export to South Korea 'a reckless act fanning the flame (of war) ... Encouragement to [commit] crime is a double crime'. KCNA rejected the argument that the arrival of the first load of equipment in South Korea in September 1996 was simply a commercial transaction, calling it 'a grave political and military issue endangering peace and security'. (*The Moscow Tribune*, October 1, 1996, p.4)

<sup>77</sup> G. Charodeev. *Su-35 Nad Poluostrovom (SU-35 Over the Peninsula)*, *Izvestia*, 15 January 2002, p.2

<sup>78</sup> The Su-35 is a multi-purpose all-weather interceptor, capable of attacking airborne or ground targets. It is claimed to be more manoeuvrable than any other comparable aircraft, especially for eluding missiles fired at it.

<sup>79</sup> V. Kremenyuk, *Vneshniaya Politika Moskvyy v Poickakh Suti (Moscow's Foreign Policy in Search of Essence)*/ *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, No.4 (2001), p.16

<sup>80</sup> M. Titarenko, V. Mikheev. *Strategiya Sorazvitiya Rossii I ATR (The Strategy of Co-Development of Russia and the Asia-Pacific)*/ *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, No.4 (2001), p.77

<sup>81</sup>Ye. Tregubova, *God Posle Gimna (The Year after the Anthem)*/ *Vlast*, No.51 (2001)

<sup>82</sup> A. Sborov, *Diplomatiya po raschetu (Calculated Diplomacy)*/ *Vlast*, No.51 (2001)

<sup>83</sup> *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 11 July 2000, p.5

<sup>84</sup> *Izvestia* responded to State Department's statement on disproportionate use of force and infringement of human rights in Chechnya with an article criticising the USA for continuing to make disapproving statements about the military campaign in the rebel republic. The article explicitly shows that Russia expected dividends for its support of US anti-terrorist operations. (M. Usin, A. Shumilin, *Amerika Narushila Moratorii na Kritiku Chechenskoi Kampanii (America Breached the moratorium on criticising the Chechen Campaign)*, *Izvestia*, 11 January 2002, p.3)

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**Yuri Tsyganov** is a Fellow at the Contemporary Europe Research Centre, The University of Melbourne. Dr Tsyganov's main areas of research include Chinese and Russian political economy and North-East Asian regional developments. He has an extensive publications record in the areas of Chinese, North Asian, and Russian studies.

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