

JAPAN-RUSSIA-US TRILATERAL CONFERENCE ON THE SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NORTHEAST ASIA

The Trilateral Conference on security challenges in Northeast Asia is organized jointly by the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Science (IMEMO), the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). The conference has met three times: March 2010 in Washington; January 2011 in Tokyo; and June 2012 in Moscow. This document summarizes key points of consensus amongst conference participants and a proposal to transition in the future from a Track 2 dialogue to a Track 1.5 format to more directly promote efforts to develop greater cooperation between Japan, Russia, and the United States.

Assessment of the Security Environment in the Northeast Asia

There is general consensus among experts that while the Northeast Asia is a rapidly growing economic region, it faces a variety of traditional and non-traditional security challenges. It is also recognized that Russia, Japan and the United States are important players not only in Northeast Asia but also in the wider Asia-Pacific context and share many common interests and responsibilities to promote greater security and prosperity.

- The rise of Chinese influence and power on both political and economic issues is the most significant development in the strategic environment of Northeast Asia, posing both opportunities and challenges. The experts pointed out that China's increased military capability and assertive behavior can have serious repercussions in view of heightening tension over maritime disputes in the region and emphasized the value of measures to promote greater transparency amongst leading Northeast Asian military powers. The experts are unanimous that policies to contain China are inappropriate and counterproductive now and that efforts should be made to strengthen our comprehensive cooperation with China so that it will play a law-abiding role in the region. At the same time necessary precautions should be taken to hedge against undesirable developments.
- The experts agree that political and military developments in North Korea is the most urgent challenge to the security of Northeast Asia. While the experts believe that North Korea's

positive and concrete steps are necessary to ease the tension on the Korean Peninsula, they also recognize that North Korea's behavior will depend on the choices which will be made by Kim Jong Un, as well as on his ability to consolidate his leadership and control over contending factions and interest groups. Given this considerable uncertainty, the experts recognize the need to address together possible challenges, such as a third nuclear test, and consult in advance about coordinated responses.

- The experts agree that in order to avoid the danger of arms race in the Asia-Pacific, efforts should be made to involve China into bilateral and multilateral consultations that would prevent uncontrolled military build-up and unintended escalation and develop habits of cooperation among regional militaries. Participants believe that greater transparency and confidence-building measures are key issues to achieve this goal. In this context, it was pointed out that bilateral defense hotlines and trilateral strategic and defense dialogues and exercises would be worthy of further consideration.
- Given fast growing regional economic development, it was also recognized that energy security is an important challenge in the regional strategic environment, given the rapidly rising demand for energy in the Asia-Pacific and that the quest for energy could in some cases bring about behavior destabilizing to energy markets as well as maritime security. It was pointed out that building a stable supply-chain and development of energy resources in the region needs to overcome the limits of bilateral undertakings and increasingly rely on regional multilateral market-based institutions to help ensure both supply and demand security as the center of gravity of the world's energy market shifts to the Asia-Pacific.
- Prospective gas reserves in East Siberia and the Far East allow Russia to develop new centers of gas production to meet domestic demand as well as to increase exports. Moreover, the growing demand for gas in Northeast Asia and favorable geographic location of Russian gas resources provide for favorable conditions for Russian natural gas deliveries to Northeast Asia which can be arranged as a combination of gas supply (i.e. to China and Republic of Korea) and LNG deliveries (i.e. to Japan, Republic of Korea, the USA and Mexico, China and Taiwan). In the changing energy world, the importance of international energy cooperation is becoming critical to all countries of the region, especially in the field of diversifying energy supplies and routes, mitigating air pollution and maintaining regional energy cooperation.
- The experts also recognized that Northeast Asia as well as the wider Asia-Pacific region

faces numerous security challenges of a non-traditional nature. Especially they came to recognize that there is much to be done among the three countries on the maritime security front. They recognized the vulnerable nature of the maritime security and reaffirmed the importance of the law of the sea as codified in the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea. The experts attached particular significance to the freedom of navigation and the security of sea lanes, which is an important component for further expansion of trade in the region. They also agreed on the need to increase efforts that address the common challenges on the sea such as piracy, illicit trade of goods including especially materials useful for production of weapons of mass destruction. They are also aware that the three countries play an important role in disaster management and rescue activities, given that the Asia-Pacific is prone to natural disasters including earthquakes and typhoons. In this connection, the Japanese experts expressed their gratitude for the U.S. and Russian help at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake, while the latter countries appreciated Japan's rapid recovery.

- It is also recognized that this region faces new types of threats to cyber security and that this would be a useful topic for the trilateral conference to address in future meetings.

Role of bilateral alliances and multilateral frameworks

- While the experts today recognize drastic changes in the strategic environment of the Asia-Pacific region since the end of the Cold War, they also recognize the sources of continued instability. The experts also noted the crucial role of existing bilateral alliances, as instrumental to maintaining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. The experts at the same time recognize the value of Trans-Pacific multilateral frameworks which would also contribute to lasting stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region through enhancing confidence and cooperation among its members. A regular dialogue involving the foreign and security institutions of the U.S., Japan and Russia could contribute to this development.

To this end, the experts recognized the growing importance of steady efforts to develop existing multilateral frameworks in the Asia-Pacific to enhance confidence and promote cooperation, which is conducive to the regional security and stability. The East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) are the two of the most influential frameworks for furthering the improvement of the security environment in the region. It is also noted that ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)Plus contributes to confidence building in the region. There is also useful smaller "mini-lateral" cooperation among some

of the members of the above frameworks.

- In this context, it is agreed that the participation of the United States and Russia in the EAS and their engagement in this region is a positive move to strengthen effectiveness of this multilateral undertaking.
- It is further agreed that Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation is a driving force for regional economic integration of this economic powerhouse of the world. Experts of the three countries are looking forward to the APEC 2012 in Vladivostok in September which focuses on (i) trade and investment liberalization and regional economic integration, (ii) food security, (iii) supply chains, and (iv) innovative growth and welcome Russia's leadership for the successful summit as well as close coordination among consecutive chairs of Japan, the United States and Russia.
- As security in the Northeast Asia and wider Asia-Pacific is a complex notion covering issues of traditional security, non-traditional security, and economic and energy security, it is important to make use of various multilateral frameworks as described above as well as bilateral and mini-lateral frameworks ("flexible multilayer and multilevel cooperation"). Promoting cooperation, exchange of information and confidence-building through these frameworks is conducive to regional stability by preventing misunderstanding and reducing mistrust as well as expanding areas of common interest. We encourage governments to participate widely in these frameworks.

Current Cooperation among Russia, Japan and the United States

- Russia, Japan and the United States, being three major countries in this region with both the will and capacity to contribute to regional security and stability, share wide-ranging interests and areas of cooperation, despite existing differences including those over territories and maritime jurisdiction.

Experts recognized that the three countries have been engaged in cooperation in such areas as maritime safety, energy and economy, but believed that much more can be done utilizing the trilateral format.

- It is also agreed that the expert communities of the three countries have important roles to play to advise their government on specific ideas of cooperation and confidence-building. It

is further agreed that dialogues and exchange of information among the experts are also useful in deepening mutual understanding.

Further Steps (Areas of Future Trilateral Cooperation)

- Based on the trilateral dialogues, experts from Russia, Japan and the United States identified the following areas of cooperation, with a view to contributing the stability and prosperity of the Asia Pacific, as worthy of further consideration and follow-up.

■ Regional architecture

- Recognizing the need for economic engagement to be considered and included in sustainable and effective regional security relations, the parties agreed on the important concept that significant economic engagement is a necessary condition for establishing balanced security structures. In this context experts encourage the adoption of an economic integration initiative within the East-Asia summit (EAS).
- Enhance APEC by making it congruent with ASEAN. The three countries should support a recommendation for the three ASEAN economies not yet members of APEC (namely Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar). By inviting all ASEAN members to be part of APEC, ASEAN's key role of regional security and economic architecture will be enhanced and support APEC's impact and relevance to all our countries.
- The parties underlined the importance of the ASEAN's defense ministers meetings Plus (ADMM+) to security in North-East Asia. They strongly encourage the ADMM+ to meet annually instead of every two years and support the idea that ADMM+ be developed as a key input to the EAS leaders.

■ Maritime security

Experts noted existing cooperation among Russia, Japan and the United States on bilateral basis in the field of maritime security. Given the importance of securing sea lanes which are free both from obstruction and illegal activities, the experts believed that the three countries can explore cooperation on maritime security including countering piracy and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

- All three delegations strongly encourage the United States to ratify UNCLOS and accede to the treaty as soon as possible. Having all engaged parties in the Asia Pacific included in UNCLOS is a vital foundation to resolving disputes according to the rule of law.

■ Energy security

Experts agreed that the three countries can strengthen their cooperation on energy security. Such cooperation should be conducted with a view to increasing investment and ensuring stable energy supplies which benefit both consumers and suppliers. The three countries can also cooperate in the area of energy efficiency and renewable energy, reducing market inefficiencies that jeopardize the benefits of trade to both suppliers and consumers. The three countries can explore various measures including the existing multilateral frameworks such as EAS and APEC as appropriate. It is also agreed that three countries should fight against discriminatory trade and investment practices inconsistent with the WTO rules. In this connection, the United States and Japan welcome Russia's succession to the WTO. Given that energy security in Northeast Asia can only be maintained in the sustainable global energy environment the experts note the importance of exploring new opportunities to that end, These opportunities may include exploration and development of Arctic fields, taking into account environmental concerns, international and trilateral cooperation to ensure continued safe use of nuclear energy, utilizing unconventional gas and other non-traditional energy resources.

■ **Cyber security**

Experts noted that threats to cyber security are common to all the three countries, and believed that the three countries should deepen discussion and explore cooperative measures on this issue.

■ **North Korea**

The experts agreed that the three countries should continue to urge North Korea to refrain from further provocative action and to take concrete and positive steps toward denuclearization. The experts also agreed that the three countries should closely cooperate, along with the Republic of Korea and China, to solve the outstanding issues and achieve peace and prosperity of the Korean Peninsula. The six-party talks on denuclearisation of North Korea are regarded as significant instrument to pursue this goal. Experts agree that five parties should coordinate closely to induce North Korea's positive steps, keeping abreast with such multilateral institutions as EAS.

■ **Non-proliferation**

Experts noted that the three countries can strengthen cooperation on non-proliferation both on the policy level, such as coordinated approaches toward North Korea and Iran, and on the operational level, such as export control. In this context, the experts agreed that the three

countries can cooperate on practical measures to enhance the capacity and legal framework of the developing countries to prevent them from becoming conduits for illicit trade related to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this connection the experts stress the importance of strict implementation of all UN resolutions adopted to comply to the non-proliferation regime.

■ **Economic Development in Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia**

Economic development in the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia is crucial for Russia's deeper integration in the Asia-Pacific region, and it has been identified as a high priority by the current Russian government. Experts agree that Japan, Russia and the US should work together with other international partners to promote a more open and attractive investment environment for both Russian and foreign investors.

■ **Humanitarian assistance at the time of disaster**

As noted above, the Asia-Pacific is prone to natural disasters, and Russia, Japan and the United States have capacity and assets to help the affected neighbors at the time of disaster. The three countries can explore improving communications and strengthening cooperative operations among their authorities responsible for humanitarian assistance.

- **Sustainability of marine resources**

- The three sides agreed to consider new common measures and activities for protection of biodiversity and conservation of fish stocks, including developing cooperation on anti-poaching and building instruments to stop illegal fishing.

- Experts concurred that in supplementing the bilateral alliances in the region, it is important to strengthen efforts to enhance confidence and promote cooperation through multilateral frameworks. Japan, Russia and the United States can jointly and actively contribute to the efforts made under the frameworks of the EAS and ARF to further enhance their credibility and effectiveness. The three countries should play significant roles in promoting open networks among relevant players and prevalence of the rule of law in the region, in order to minimize risks and maximize opportunities for growth of the Asia-Pacific region. This endeavor should not be exclusive and will be more relevant if it leads to the involvement of other regional players.

- In this context, some participants suggested to explore the possibility of establishing a

mechanism for information exchange relating to a broad range of security issues (traditional and non-traditional risks and challenges), as worthy for further consideration.

- Experts also believed that it is important to formally involve government experts to have effective follow-up of the trilateral cooperation. The experts of the three countries therefore recommend their respective governments to initiate the Track 1.5 Dialogue among Japan, Russia and the United States as a successor undertaking to this current Track 2 trilateral dialogue.

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