

Summary of JIIA Forum Presentation

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**Anatoly Torkunov, Rector, Moscow State Institute of International Relations  
“A New Stage of Global Development: The International Dimension of  
Russian Modernization”**

Last night I flew into Tokyo from Seoul precisely at the time that, on the Korean Peninsula, North Korea was shelling South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island. This brought home to me once more the instability of Northeast Asia.

National security over the next twenty years will likely confront structural changes within a new world order based on hierarchy and multipolarity. Overall assessments of economic strength, culture, scientific capabilities, resources, etc., will determine the place of each country within the hierarchy. The US will likely maintain its leading position for the time being. Below it on the second tier will be the EU and China and on the third tier Japan, India, Brazil and South Korea (as well as South Africa and Turkey in the future), and these second- and third-tier countries will likely have an increasing impact on the world. Russia qualifies as a second-tier country in terms of several indicators – natural resources, nuclear weapons, etc. – but its lag in science and technology, its declining population, and its underdeveloped infrastructure put it at risk of falling to the third tier or even lower, making modernization a national issue.

Today's world is seeing progressing globalization, and its impact extends beyond economics and finance into many other fields such as politics, science and technology, culture, ideology and security. Military threats have moved from the state or alliance level to the local level and, even as the role of nuclear deterrence in Russia-US relations has diminished, strategic collaboration on nuclear non-proliferation and other issues has become more important. With the limitations of hard power becoming visible as demonstrated in the US invasion of Iraq, soft power is gaining in significance. The new threats of international terrorism, international crimes such as drug smuggling, cyber-terrorism, piracy, food and water issues, environmental pollution, and infectious diseases pose risks not only for individual countries but for entire regions as well.

We have entered a new stage of development in international relations, characterized by the appearance of the Obama administration in the US, the EU Lisbon Treaty, the new European and Atlantic security initiatives of President Medvedev, the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict, etc. The true nature of this new stage of globalization is to be found in the regional formation process. Although the start of a new stage naturally cannot completely rewrite the international political and economic development trends of the 1980s and 1990s, it will modify their interrelationships and regional priorities. International conflicts, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and religious terrorism are spreading over many regions. It may seem a contradiction that, in a world with dramatically higher speeds of information dissemination and technological development, efforts to resolve threats in Iran, the Korean Peninsula, Afghanistan, Sudan, and off the coast of Somalia are lagging. Delays in resolving issues can be seen not only in military matters but also in numerous other areas such as environmental/climate change issues and related energy issues, illegal immigration, human trafficking, and the peaceful use of nuclear power. Where there is no political will, there is no resolution.

Nevertheless, there are also reasons for optimism. The emergence of the Obama administration was one important reason, leading to a lessening of anti-American sentiments in the Islamic world. Opportunities for collaboration between Russia and the US, and between Russia and the West as a whole, have also expanded. However, ratification of the US-Russia START treaty has been held up in the US Senate. The countries of NATO would do well to recognize the infeasibility of NATO-centric security efforts in Europe and Asia. Positive developments in the Asia-Pacific region include the development of numerous international frameworks – including APEC and ASEAN as well as the East Asia Summit in which Russia and the US are to participate from next year – and the transformation of the G20 into an increasingly functional mechanism for breaking out of economic crises and avoiding currency wars.

Russia's modernization program occupies an important place also in its relations with countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan, China and South Korea are clearly leaders in today's global development, and they are skillfully combining traditional and modern elements to present a new scheme for governance. Bilateral relations between Japan and Russia must be raised to the level of mutually beneficial intellectual exchange, and the conditions for this are already in place. Russia is intent on actively engaging in such frameworks as the East Asia Summit, ASEM, APEC and ARF. Trade and investment between Japan and Russia did see a decline due to the economic crisis, but they have

picked up in recent years. Japan-Russia cooperation is also thought possible in nuclear power, gas chemicals, ICT, energy conservation, the peaceful use of outer space and other high-tech fields. Cultural exchange between the two countries as typified by the Russian Cultural Festival in Japan is important, too.

Finally, dialogue continues between Japan and Russia on extremely delicate issues such as a peace treaty. While I have nothing new to add on this issue, it is vital that we do not become emotional or frustrated but instead engage in dialogue in a calm atmosphere. In view of Russia's geopolitical interests and the changing balance of power in Northeast Asia, both the Russian public and its leaders are convinced of the need to develop a productive partnership with their wonderful neighbor Japan so that Russia can achieve its priority aims of economic and political modernization.