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ASEAN-RUSSIA

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ASEAN-RUSSIA

FOUNDATIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

EDITED BY

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FOREWORD

This volume is the third in the series of ASEAN-Russia relations books published by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) and its counterpart Russian institute, formerly with IMEMO and now with MGIMO. We warmly welcome our new Russian partner, with which we organized the third ASEAN-Russia Conference in April 2011. These conferences are particularly useful as Track Two diplomacy efforts to examine the state of relations between both sides, and to share some ideas on how to advance cooperation between ASEAN and Russia. This year's conference was useful as it precedes Russia's Chairmanship of APEC in 2012, and as Russia is searching for new ways to add value and substance to its recent membership of the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the Asia-Europe meeting (ASEM).

This year's conference witnessed some stimulating discussions. One of the highlights was an animated discussion on Russian soft power. Another major point of discussion was how to ascertain Russia's value-adding capability for ASEAN, and vice versa. The presentation of the paper on a roadmap on Russia-ASEAN economic cooperation was especially relevant in this context. Also highly relevant were the discussions on the possible Russia-ASEAN FTA; Trans-Pacific Partnership, including possible Russian participation; and energy cooperation. In the area of geopolitics, there were excellent discussions on Russia-China relations, and how this will impact upon Asia-Pacific regional security. One example was the paper on maritime logistics, an area seldom examined. In the area of educational cooperation, the National University of Singapore paper evoked high interest from the Russian education representatives present, namely, MGIMO, Moscow State University and the Russkiy Mir Foundation. In the area of cultural cooperation, there were diverse and interesting presentations about cooperation on paintings, food, translations of books, and the publication of a bilingual magazine. Many of the topics mentioned above are covered in the papers published in this book.

Lastly, I wish to commend the paper-writers and the co-editors for their hard work and interesting ideas, which have made this volume an illuminating and distinguished book, and a very useful reference for students and scholars of ASEAN-Russia relations.

Ambassador K. Kesavapany
Director, ISEAS
July 2011

PREFACE

This project — both the book and the conference that preceded it — is dedicated to the 15th Anniversary of the Russia-ASEAN dialogue partnership celebrated in 2011. In moments like these, it is natural to dwell on the past, to register what is happening at present and to look into the future. The title of this volume may not sound too original, but, nonetheless, it is a reflection of these basic attitudes.

Just like in some previous joint ventures of the type, the ASEAN input is mobilized and coordinated through ISEAS, the body with a rich institutional memory, focused for almost half a century on all sorts of Southeast Asian studies, be it linguistics and ancient history or modern regionalism and recent manifestations of globalization. Compared to ISEAS, the present coordinator on the Russian side — the ASEAN Centre that was opened in MGIMO-University of Moscow in June 2010 — is still an infant. The April conference was practically its debut on the regional academic scene. Judging by the positive feedback we received (and, I hope, by the contents of this book) the start is not so bad.

As you may see, this time the Russian writing and speaking team is bigger and more diverse in terms of professional interests and research specializations than in any of the previous encounters with ISEAS. On the list of Russian participants, you will find political scientists and economists, experts on particular countries or groups of countries and those who are dealing with ASEAN as a whole, university professors and business consultants, representatives of the government and civil society groups. The fact that each of them has something to say about Russia-ASEAN relations is an indication that, little by little, the fabric of these relations is becoming thicker and stronger, and they are no longer limited, like in the Soviet era, to intergovernmental contacts.

Of the people, who should have been engaged in this project, but missed it due to some unhappy circumstances, I cannot help but mention Professor

Gennady Chufrin. On our side, he was the driving force of the previous ISEAS-IMEMO projects on Russia-ASEAN relations, and we will be glad to have him back as a key participant and an inspiration for future events and publications.

In the same breath, I thank my Singapore colleagues — Mark Hong and Amy Lugg of the ASEAN Studies Centre at ISEAS — for being so competent, cooperative and friendly co-editors.

Throughout the rest of 2011 and some of 2012 we will be looking forward to a continuation of dialogues with the ISEAS scholars.

*Dr Victor Sumsky
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He is currently a Vice-Chairman of the International Committee of the Singapore Business Federation, and was a Visiting Research Fellow at Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) from February 2004 to October 2011. After his retirement in October 2011, he was appointed Visiting Senior Lecturer in James Cook University at its Australia and Singapore campuses, and also at Capilano University in Vancouver, and as Senior Visiting Fellow at Asan Institute in Seoul, South Korea. Mr Hong was awarded four scholarships, including the prestigious President Scholarship, Humanities Scholarship and Fulbright Scholarship.

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Dr Vladimir Anisimov is a professional drawer and painter, holding the rank of Distinguished Artist of the Russian Federation. In 1991 he founded the Bureau of Creative Expeditions — a non-governmental entity which started to promote trips of his colleagues abroad. The purpose of the artists who took part in these trips was to create artistic images of other countries for presentations to the Russian public and to familiarize foreigners with modern Russian art. Today, after twenty years of work, the Bureau has to

its credit expeditions to India, Afghanistan, Cuba and Indonesia, scores of colourful albums and numerous exhibitions. Among its latest successes is “The Necklace of Equator” — an exhibition dedicated to the island of Bali. It was displayed in Moscow at the State Museum of Oriental Art in spring 2010.

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Julia Sherstyuk-Viswanathan is founder, publisher and editor-in-chief of *103rd Meridian East*, a bilingual quarterly which is Singapore’s first-ever Russian-English magazine about culture, lifestyle, diplomacy and business. Viewing herself as a cultural ambassador of sorts, she strives to bring the two countries together and introduce a sense of mutual understanding through stories by both Russian and Singaporean contributors. After acquiring her master’s degree in English as a second language and American and European Literatures, she carried on with her post-graduate study at St. Petersburg State University (American Women’s Literature) and taught English as a second language and literary translation theory course at Petrozavodsk State University, Russia, before settling down in Singapore more than ten years ago. Today, more than two years of its existence, *103rd Meridian East* has become a platform for dialogue between diverse cultures and gained recognition both in Russia and Singapore. One year ago, she decided to bring even more of Russian culture to Singapore by opening an authentic Russian restaurant here, which has a unique concept based on Russian folklore and named after a mythical island, the centre of all vital forces, in ancient beliefs, called Buyan.

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

His Excellency Mr Sayakane Sisouvong
ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General
ASEAN Political Security Community

**DELIVERED AT THE “ASEAN-RUSSIA CONFERENCE:
FOUNDATIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS”
INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
SINGAPORE
26–27 APRIL 2011**

Ambassador Kesavapany, Director, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

Dr Victor Sumsky, Director, ASEAN Centre, MGIMO University, Moscow

Dr Vyacheslav Nikonov, Chairman of Russian National Committee, CSCAP
Executive Director, Russkiy Mir Foundation

Distinguished Guests and Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to thank the co-organizers, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) and the MGIMO (Moscow) for inviting me and giving me the opportunity to take part in this important interactive conference on “ASEAN-Russia: Foundations and Prospects of a 15-Year-Old Dialogue”. It is an honour for me to speak before such distinguished participants and the audience today here in Singapore, the clean, green and beautiful city state.

I would also like to congratulate the organizers for setting the topic of this meeting, which is very timely and relevant as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Russian Federation celebrate the 15th Anniversary of bilateral relations.

Distinguished Guests and Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

When ASEAN decided to elevate the Russian Federation to its full Dialogue Partner in 1996, the size of the Russian economy was much smaller than its current one¹ and it had just embarked on changes. Today, as we celebrate the 15th Anniversary of ASEAN-Russia dialogue relations, the Russian Federation not only continues to play an active role on the world-stage through the United Nations (UN), but it has also become an important member of the G8, the G20 and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). By the end of this year, 2011, it will become a full-fledged member of the East Asia Summit (EAS). The Russian Federation has already been playing an important role in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus).

Last Thursday (14 April 2011), when the leaders of the world's largest emerging economies had their BRICS Summit in Hainan, the People's Republic of China, many commentators came up with the BRICS profile. Regardless of its vast land area of 17 million square kilometres covering two continents, Asia and Europe, the Russian Federation's GDP in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) is US\$15,806. It is the highest among the BRICS members (Brazil: US\$11,289; India: US\$3,290; China: US\$7,517 and South Africa: US\$10,505).²

These are just some examples and figures to support that ASEAN leaders have made a farsighted and strategic decision to embrace the Russian Federation as ASEAN's full Dialogue Partner. This decision was based on political, economic, socio and culture consideration which increasingly brings greater strategic benefits to both ASEAN and Russia through these areas of cooperation.

Distinguished Guests and Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

While appreciating the Russian Federation's great achievements in the past years, ASEAN has had its own, no less significant achievements and

successes. With its geo-strategic location, enormous natural resources, population of nearly 600 million with their fine tradition and cultural heritage, its sustained economic growth and very importantly its Charter, ASEAN has been praised by the international community as one of the most successful regional organizations in the world. In his address to the readers of *International Affairs Magazine*, Special Issue 2010, President Dmitry Medvedev also states that “... ASEAN has become an authoritative and influential regional organisation.”

At the same time, it is important to stress here that while making its utmost effort to build the ASEAN Community by 2015 comprising three pillars, namely political-security community, economic community and socio-cultural community, ASEAN has created greater opportunities and momentum for the Russian Federation and other Dialogue Partners as well as other external partners to take advantage of.

Now, given such an important and timely conference, it is crucial to have a brief review of ASEAN-Russia cooperation in the past fifteen years before we exchange our views on its future prospects. ASEAN-Russia cooperation has been guided by the Joint Declaration of the Heads of State/Government of the Member Countries of ASEAN and the Russian Federation on Progressive and Comprehensive Partnership signed at the first ASEAN-Russia Summit in December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur. The Joint Declaration is aimed to promote and strengthen the ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership in a wide range of areas including political and security, economic and development cooperation. ASEAN and Russia also adopted the Comprehensive Programme of Action (CPA) 2005–15 to realize the goals and objectives set out in the Joint Declaration.

It is gratifying to witness that significant progress has been made in the relations since the first ASEAN-Russia Summit held on 13 December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur. These include:

- the adoption of the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the ASEAN-Russia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime at the 4th SOMTC + Russia Consultations in Kuala Lumpur on 19 June 2008;
- Action Plan of the ASEAN-Russian Federation Joint Working Group (ARJWG) on Science and Technology (2007–11);
- the adoption of the TOR of the ASEAN-Russia Tourism Consultations at the Second ASEAN-Russia Tourism Consultations held on 7 January 2009 in Hanoi, Vietnam;
- the accreditation of the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to ASEAN;

- signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the ASEAN Centre in the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) by the ASEAN Secretary General Dr Surin Pitsuwan and the Rector of the Russian Foreign Ministry's MGIMO University Dr Anatoly Torkunov on 23 July 2009;
- launching of the ASEAN Centre in MGIMO on 15 June 2010 in Moscow;
- the adoption of the ASEAN-Russia Energy Cooperation Work Programme 2010–15 by the First ASEAN Senior Officials on Energy (SOME)-Russia Consultation held in Dalat on 20 July 2010;
- the Signing of the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation between the Governments of the Member States of ASEAN and the Government of the Russian Federation on 30 October 2010 at the sidelines of the 2nd ASEAN-Russian Federation Summit in Hanoi;
- Russia's participation in the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting with Dialogue Partners (ADMM-Plus);
- Russia's participation in the East Asia Summit (EAS).

Under the Comprehensive Programme of Action (CPA) to promote cooperation between ASEAN and Russia 2005–15, ASEAN and the Russian Federation have organized a number of joint activities in forms of workshops, conferences and training in energy, science and technology, SMEs, education and tourism. The funding for the activities came from the ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership Financial Fund (DPFF). Russia has expressed its continued commitment in contributing US\$1.5 million annually to the DPFF starting in 2011, which would provide a stronger support for funding joint projects in order to effectively and timely implement the Comprehensive Programme of Action (CPA) 2005–15.

In terms of political and security cooperation, ASEAN also highly values Russia's commitment to its cooperation with ASEAN, namely, accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), the commitment to addressing the transnational challenges, the active participation in a series of consultative meetings with ASEAN and ASEAN-initiated forums. ASEAN and Russia have held regular meetings and consultations on the issues of mutual interests within the ASEAN-Russian Federation dialogue mechanisms.

The key indicators such as total trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) between ASEAN and the Russian Federation have grown over the years. ASEAN's total trade with Russia has grown from US\$5.4 billion in 2007 to US\$6.8 billion in 2009. The total FDI from Russia flows to ASEAN has also grown substantially from US\$31 million in 2007 to US\$157.3 million in 2009.

To keep momentum and to reaffirm their commitment to further deepening and enhancing ASEAN-Russia dialogue relations, the 2nd ASEAN-Russia Summit in Hanoi on 30 October 2010 adopted the Joint Statement of the Summit. The Joint Statement provides guidelines for future relations and cooperation between ASEAN and the Russian Federation for the years to come.

Distinguished Guests and Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

While ASEAN-Russia cooperation has made significant progress, much more needs to be done to further tap the enormous potential existing in ASEAN and Russia. Our conference provides an excellent opportunity to identify our strength and weaknesses, to further build upon our success, to improve our weaknesses and to translate all bilateral agreements and decisions into concrete action in order to bring more benefits to our peoples. Being one of the ASEAN Secretariat staff who has been handling this matter for over a decade, I would like to share with the conference a number of observations:

1. There is a very strong political commitment by ASEAN and Russia as demonstrated by two ASEAN-Russia Summits.
2. The two key documents signed and adopted by our leaders during the two summits provide an excellent guidance and direction to ASEAN-Russia cooperation.
3. There are well established mechanisms to help support the implementation of agreements/decisions. What is needed for the time being is not to create new mechanisms, but to revise the existing ones.
4. There is also a need to improve coordination within ASEAN, within the Russian Federation and between ASEAN and Russia to expedite the process and to be more responsive to the two leaderships' strong political will and commitment.
5. While ASEAN highly values Russia's recognition and continued firm support of ASEAN centrality and role in the emerging regional architecture, ASEAN encourages Russia to be more active in shaping this architecture.
6. While ASEAN-Russia cooperation in the three key areas of political-security, economic/trade and socio-cultural continues to bring more benefits to both sides, ASEAN believes that greater benefits will be brought about with Russia's active participation in the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. At the same time

much more needs to be done in the areas of cooperation under the three pillars.

7. While ASEAN welcomes the Russian Federation's foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region, ASEAN needs to know more about this policy. For example, is there any element under this policy which corresponds to the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity? To this end, a seminar or workshop is suggested.
8. ASEAN welcomes Russia's consideration to participate in the programmes aimed at bridging the development gap between the old and new ASEAN member states including the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) development projects as it will help accelerate ASEAN integration.
9. There is a need to deepen and enhance people-to-people contact between ASEAN and Russia although the Russian Federation has long established its presence in Southeast Asia. The degree of people-to-people contact between each individual ASEAN member state with Russia varies. Russia needs to invest more in this area as well.

Distinguished Guests and Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to conclude by pointing out that in the past fifteen years, ASEAN and the Russian Federation have developed mutually beneficial cooperative relations on the basis of mutual trust and respect. Although important milestones and the momentum in ASEAN-Russia cooperation has been created and there is strategic guidance given by the leaders of ASEAN and the Russian Federation, I strongly believe that with the rich experience and wisdom of our distinguished participants this conference will contribute to further substantiating the Progressive and Comprehensive Partnership.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to ISEAS and MGIMO for the warm welcome and hospitality.

My sincere gratitude also goes to all the people who rendered cooperation and assistance to successful convening of this important and timely conference.

I wish you a very good health and greater success.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Notes

- ¹ According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and the International Monetary Fund, the Russian Federation's GDP (PPP) was US\$0.9 trillion in 1998 and US\$2.2 trillion in 2010.
- ² Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC and the International Monetary Fund.

OPENING REMARKS

“RUSSIA-ASEAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION: A RUSSIAN VIEW FROM SINGAPORE”

**His Excellency Mr Andrey N. Rozhkov
Ambassador of the Russian Federation
to the Republic of Singapore**

**DELIVERED BEFORE THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PANEL AT THE “ASEAN-RUSSIA CONFERENCE:
FOUNDATIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS”
INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
SINGAPORE
26–27 APRIL 2011**

Dear friends,

Distinguished panelists,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address you prior to the start of a discussion on economic cooperation between Russia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In my view, this part of the conference might be the most interesting one as it deals with the issues of practical interaction between the partners, the kind of interaction that can be measured in material terms.

Previous discussions summarized what we managed to achieve in terms of political, strategic and functional cooperation during the fifteen years of our dialogue partnership. We have to our common credit two summits, numerous joint declarations and statements, and a solid legal framework to regulate cooperation. Russia is now a participant in so many ASEAN-centred multilateral formats — the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus, the Asia-Europe meeting (ASEM) and most recently the East Asia Summit (EAS).

No doubt, these are very important achievements reflecting Russia's growing engagement in Asian affairs and recognition of ASEAN's central role in the region.

At the same time it is very clear that the Russia-ASEAN dialogue is strongly focused on political and security issues, while economic cooperation lags behind. Why is it so? And what needs to be done in order to correct this structural imbalance?

Before I share with you some of my thoughts on this subject, I should warn you that the substance and the scope of my views are influenced by my current status as the Russian Ambassador to Singapore. However, I tend to think that whatever positive developments there are in the field of economic cooperation between Russia and Singapore, these could be projected and replicated in the entire ASEAN format for the benefit of both sides.

Let me start from the basics. Economic interaction, be it trade, investments, tourism or services, starts with people, with their very human and natural interest to explore something unknown, with their passion to look for new opportunities, which seem to abound in foreign lands.

Of course, huge contracts related to energy or military equipment or infrastructure investment agreements between governments and MNCs form the bulk of trading and investment statistics and its significance should not be overlooked and underestimated. But what I am speaking about now is the individual initiative which, in the end, forms the fabric of material interaction between nations and serves as the main driver for growth and cooperation.

Quite often we, the officials and bureaucrats, try to direct this private initiative relying on paper plans that tell the people what to do and where to go. In reality this approach does not work. Why? Because (please, believe me, it is a very hard thing to say) official directives and plans are not always linked to reality, and do not always look profitable to the parties concerned.

It means that for those, who are supposed to implement all these plans, there is no motivation to go where they are told to go. Only if they are interested in doing certain things, if they find it profitable, attractive and safe, they would risk their hard-earned money, invest their time and efforts and choose particular destinations.

Most ASEAN businessmen would first consider China, India, Australia or Vietnam to expand their businesses and make investments, but not Russia. Why? Is it due to language or culture barriers? Is it the lack of information or legal protection? Is there too much red tape? Is something wrong with tax, or even climate? One can only guess. We would never know the real answers, unless we have a dialogue with these businessmen through some established channels of direct and interactive communication. And this is exactly where Governments should step in.

To me, it is obvious that the future of economic cooperation between Russia and ASEAN depends on developing an effective private-public partnership, with authorities actually assisting private entrepreneurs in their endeavours, listening to their needs and creating favourable conditions for their businesses to flourish. This is what Russian businessmen find in Singapore and this is what ASEAN businessmen should find in Russia. In other words, the course of economic cooperation between Russia and ASEAN should be formed from the bottom and up and not vice versa. With this in mind, let me make a few more points.

Serious lack of reliable information on business opportunities prevents ASEAN businesses from expanding in Russia. Ongoing contacts are sporadic, fragmented and limited to narrow territorial or industry niches. Existing business promotion mechanisms are few and so far not efficient. What are the solutions? Again, let me make some very basic observations:

1. In the era of online communications everything starts from Web representation. Please, tell me, do you know any single internet address where one could obtain updated, comprehensive, first-hand information on Russia-ASEAN economic cooperation, structured and categorized trade and investment opportunities, law requirements and legal procedures to set up businesses? Why not start with that?
2. Instead of inventing new vehicles for business promotion, why not use existing ones more effectively? Ambassador Michael Tay, who is here, could confirm that his “baby”, the annual Russia-Singapore Business Forum, has outgrown its initial limits and now serves as a unique platform for interaction between businessmen from all over Asia and the CIS, be it Ukraine and Kazakhstan or Vietnam and Japan. Why not

upgrade its status and officially transform it into Russia-ASEAN Business Forum?

3. The major ongoing project in bilateral economic relations between Russia and Singapore is creation of special economic zones. Why not widen its geography and give it an inter-regional project status? Why not merge it with the Federal Program of Socio-Economic Development of the Russian Far East? Why not think of developing it into a combined growth strategy? For example, with food and energy security concerns looming all over Asia, why not think of creating, in cooperation with ASEAN countries, special agro-clusters in the Russian Far East?
4. With the entire world moving in the direction of free trade, is it not time for Russia to consider this option? First steps in this direction have been taken: as you know, Russia is considering signing free trade agreements (FTAs) with Vietnam and New Zealand. But, maybe, it would make more sense to do it first with Singapore which is the greatest proponent of free trade in this part of the world? Or even consider concluding a Russia-ASEAN FTA?

So, dear friends, as it turns out, there are more questions (some of them rather provocative) than answers at this point, and this is how it should be. After all, we are here for a brainstorming session. Think-tanks should be several steps ahead of the crowd. We should not be afraid of saying something that might sound unconventional or rebellious today. Tomorrow it may become an element of mainstream thinking.

With these words I am happy to pass the ball to the next speaker, along with my wishes for a fruitful discussion to all of you.

Thank you!

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“RUSSIA AND ASEAN”

Vyacheslav Nikonov
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**DELIVERED AT THE “ASEAN-RUSSIA CONFERENCE:
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INTRODUCTION

Russia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries do not have a habit of looking at each other as natural partners. Honestly, only a few of my compatriots, mostly advanced students of international relations, would be able to name the ten ASEAN member states. Looking from this part of the globe, Russia is also not too visible. It is not perceived as a relevant factor in regional affairs. This traditional neglect is short-sighted and outdated on both sides. We do matter to each other.

WHY DO WE MATTER?

Russia matters because it is an important country. Unlike the USSR, it is not a superpower, but it is one of the great powers. It accounts for one-eighth of the Earth's surface, being the biggest Asian state with the longest Pacific coast. With a population of 142 million people, not too big by Asian standards, Russia is the largest European nation. It is one of the five permanent United Nations (UN) Security Council members. It is number one in the world as the supplier of energy, in natural resources, in nuclear might, and in space research. It is the seventh to eighth largest economy, still much bigger than that of ASEAN's ten economies combined. Russia has a great culture, and the Russian language (an official one in the UN) is the fifth most frequently spoken on Earth. And now Russia starts looking more and more to the southeast of its borders.

ASEAN matters for Russia because it is an extremely important and interesting group of rapidly growing countries, representing a distinct civilization of 600 million people. One of the paradoxes of the Asia Pacific is that although there are many great powers in the region, ASEAN countries have traditionally been the centre and the driving force behind the regional integration processes. The twenty-seven-nation ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which includes the Russian Federation, functions as the main venue of regional political dialogues on peace and stability, cooperation in security and confidence-building measures. The dialogues with leading partners (known as ASEAN+1) play an increasingly important role. Cooperation with China, Japan and South Korea in ASEAN+3 has been gaining momentum, and now there is ASEAN+8 (which again includes Russia). So, ASEAN is absolutely crucial for integration schemes in the Asia Pacific, where Russia is now becoming more active, with its chairmanship of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 2012 and its membership of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the East Asia Summit (EAS).

GO EAST STRATEGY

We in Russia have many reasons to go east. Although one still needs to prove that, the proof is there. The shift of the world development to the Asia-Pacific region has been the mega trend of the past few decades. The Asia Pacific is becoming the engine of global development — the role that Europe had been playing for the past five centuries. This is happening due to the economic upturn of the region, which has benefited the most from globalization. The Asia-Pacific region (including North America) accounts

for more than half of the gross world product. The region hosts the world's largest economies — American, Chinese and Japanese, which is joined by two more economic giants — India and the Russian Federation. Almost half of the G20 are Asia-Pacific countries: Australia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Russia, South Korea, the United States, and Mexico. Russia's closer integration with the most rapidly developing part of the globe can bring enormous economic benefit.

The Asia-Pacific comprises major geopolitical centres, above all the United States, which has remained the dominant power in the region since World War II. America's trade and economic relations with the Asia-Pacific countries by far exceed its ties with Europe. China, with a population of over 1.3 billion, has a good reason to aspire to the role of the world's second superpower. India, an active participant in all processes in the region, is becoming an increasingly important global and regional player. Other Asia-Pacific countries include Indonesia, the world's largest Islamic country, Japan and South Korea, and Australia and New Zealand, which boast the highest level of development in the Southern Hemisphere.

The ASEAN part of the Asia Pacific is the world's key test-range for working out a model of political modernization which is viewed here not as "Westernization", but as a special way of development based on a synthesis of democratic forms of government and autochthonic political culture. Proceeding along this path, the region has posted impressive economic growth. This model is characterized by the priority establishment of an economic basis and legal groundwork for economic liberalism. It gradually enforces the norms of constitutional law and "measures out" democratization, depending on the society's ability to "digest" political changes. Focusing on traditionalism and ethical values, Asian countries are implementing in practice the concept of a multi-polar world order.

There has been a serious potential for conflicts in the Asia-Pacific region, which Russia has to take into account. The first is the rapid growth of defence spending, with China, Japan, India and South Korea maintaining the leading positions. The United States keeps a massive military presence in the region, building up its powerful system of strategic and tactical missile defense system. Second, there has been a dramatic increase in the imports of conventional armaments, defensive and even offensive, such as missiles and aircraft. Third, the problem of proliferation and stockpiling of nuclear weapons has visibly increased. Aside from the official "nuclear club" countries — Russia, the U.S. and China — another three countries — India, Pakistan and North Korea — now have nuclear weapons. Fourth, tensions persist on the Korean Peninsula. Fifth, there is a problem of trust, or even plain animosity, in

relations between certain Asia-Pacific countries. Territorial disputes abound, involving Japan, Russia, South Korea, China and some ASEAN member states. Conflicts over the use of forest and water resources, fishing and borders of economic zones are not infrequent, and the possibility of the economic confrontation escalating to a political one cannot be ruled out. New cross-border challenges include the aggravation of religious/ethnic conflicts, sea piracy, environmental and natural disasters, and epidemics. Sixth, there is a contradiction between the strengthening of the defensive might of a number of new, more active and stronger players in the Asia-Pacific region and the existing system of bilateral and multilateral military-political alliances, which arbitrarily undertook the responsibility for security in the region. Seventh, fear is felt again in Asia-Pacific of a bipolar confrontation — perhaps hypothetical — between the U.S. and China. Anxious to avoid it, the countries of the region are seeking to incorporate the two powers into the common system, which would guarantee against such a conflict.

All this brings to the forefront the need for a regional architecture that would help to prevent and resolve conflicts and create stimuli for cooperation. Having Russia as part of this architecture can make it more stable.

ASIA-PACIFIC RUSSIA

The Russian Federation is an Asia-Pacific country, too, although it has not been very aware of this capacity. The main obstacle which has been hard to surmount is the Russians' — and particularly the Russian political and economic elites' — disdainful attitude towards Asia as a secondary region of the world. In the Russian Far East, the people complain that this kind of outlook downgrades the eastern regions to a "raw-materials appendage of the parent state" and a "military-political outpost in an alien and hostile Asia". Other countries of the region often do not regard Russia as an Asia-Pacific country, because its demography, economy and politics largely follow European patterns. So, Russia's role in the region, although growing, is still marginal.

But there is a growing understanding that Russia should integrate into the Asia-Pacific region, mostly through intensive economic and social development of Siberia and its Far East. It is there that the government should channel capital in the first place — along with innovations and human resources — and create a favourable business environment focusing on the Far Eastern region's competitive advantages: natural resources (above all, fuels), the transit potential, and technological potential (for less developed countries). It is planned now that in Siberia and the easternmost provinces,

Russian and foreign investors should be offered preferential investment terms and free economic zones.

Russia must fully tap its energy, transport, research and development (R&D), innovation and raw material potentials in its own interests and in the interests of the entire Asia-Pacific region. The federal target programme “Economic and Social Development of the [Russian] Far East and Trans-Baikal for the Period Till 2013” and the strategy for co-development of Eastern Siberia and Russia’s Far East with China’s northeastern regions can play an important role in these efforts.

The geopolitical position of Russia as a Eurasian country that can bridge Europe and Asia can also boost its global and regional roles. Today, communication between these two powerful regions is done along bypass routes, through the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Shipping at least part of cargoes by trans-Asian railways and highways would bring tremendous benefits to transit and customer countries, as it would dramatically reduce the cost and timing of cargo transportation.

Russia has been involved more and more in the Asia Pacific through regional organizations. It is a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The Asia-Pacific vector of the SCO’s development was codified in the 2004 Tashkent Declaration of Heads of the SCO Member States, which set the task of creating a partnership network with other international bodies and forums active in this region. Russia is a member of BRICS and the G20, which also have a very strong Pacific dimension.

Russia’s chairmanship of APEC in 2012 is expected to significantly contribute to its integration with the Asia-Pacific region. The important task is to make the 2012 summit in Vladivostok successful and Russia’s APEC chairmanship effective. Another development was the admission of Russia to the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) at the 8th ASEM summit in Brussels, held in October 2010. And, of course, Moscow steps up its dialogue with ASEAN.

RUSSIA-ASEAN

Since 1996, Russia has been a fully-fledged official partner of ASEAN. The list of treaties and agreements is quite impressive: Joint Declaration on partnership for peace and security (Phnom Penh 2003), Joint Declaration on cooperation to fight international terrorism (Jakarta 2004). In 2004, Russia signed the Treaty of Bali. The first Russia-ASEAN summit was held with the participation of President Vladimir Putin in 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, where a number of important documents were worked out:

- Joint Declaration on advanced and comprehensive partnership;
- Intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in economics and development; Comprehensive programme of actions to promote cooperation between Russia and ASEAN for 2005–15.

It took five more years to hold the second summit, when President Dmitry Medvedev visited Hanoi in October 2010. The Joint Declaration of the Hanoi Summit included mutually agreed approaches towards the architecture of security and cooperation in the Asia Pacific and strategy for the development of the Russia-ASEAN dialogue. An intergovernmental cultural agreement was signed, as well as the working plans and road maps on energy, emergencies, long-term economic and trade cooperation.

The Russia-ASEAN partnership has been institutionalized. Since 2009, Russia has its permanent representative in ASEAN (who is also the ambassador to Jakarta). The Foreign Minister is participating in the annual post-ministerial conferences of the Association with its dialogue partners in ASEAN+1 format. The permanent mechanisms of the partnership include:

- Joint committee for cooperation;
- Joint planning and governing committee;
- Working group on trade and economic cooperation;
- Working group on cooperation in science and technology;
- Moscow ASEAN Committee, comprising of all the ambassadors of the ASEAN countries to Russia.

Ties between the parliamentarians are also becoming more frequent. Members of the Russian Federal Assembly participate as observers at the meetings of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

It was back in 1998 when the Russia-ASEAN Business Council was launched after the signing of the agreement between Russia's Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the ASEAN Confederation of such chambers. The economic ties are not too impressive, but they are growing even despite the crisis. The largest partner is Singapore, here we are speaking about US\$2.5 billion of investments in real estate, transportation and storage infrastructure, deep sea drilling and special vessels, and food processing. The second largest is Malaysia with cooperation in space launches, aviation, oil and gas, and high-tech. The third is Vietnam, which is Russia's strategic partner. We cooperate in nuclear projects, energy, raw material extraction, and banking. Thailand is the fourth, but it is definitely number one as a tourist destination. Other promising areas are energy, aerospace, high-tech, agriculture. Russia also has more than US\$1 billion worth of trade with

Indonesia, which is a very promising partner in the aerospace industry, natural resources, clean energy, trade in traditional items, and investment. Trade volume with the rest of the ASEAN countries is also growing.

We have begun to study each other more carefully, and the ISEAS-MGIMO conference in April 2011 is proof of that. Russia is quite advanced in the area of Southeast Asian studies. There are the Institute of the Far East and the Institute of Oriental Studies in the Russian Academy of Sciences; there are special departments in many universities. All the major languages spoken in the ASEAN countries are taught in Russia. The ASEAN Centre was established in Moscow at MGIMO-University. The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) Russia actively operates under my modest coordination.

However, Russian studies are not that developed in the ASEAN countries with the obvious exception of Vietnam. ASEAN members rely more on outside sources of information, which are not always reliable. The Russian language is rarely studied even in schools, not to mention at university level. Russkiy Mir Foundation which I also chair is prepared to provide assistance and knowledge to start any Russian studies and/or language programmes in every ASEAN country.

We should also have more intellectual exchanges such as the ISEAS-MGIMO conference. That can bring us closer to the common agenda on major international issues including the new Asia-Pacific architecture.

TOWARDS THE NEW ASIA-PACIFIC ARCHITECTURE

Globalization is intensifying economic interdependence and interpenetration of interests, which is a factor of regional stability. At the same time, the region is economically heterogeneous and fragmented. The Asia-Pacific architecture took several decades to evolve. Still, interaction and coordination of the activities of international organizations and forums within the Asia-Pacific region remains an open question. The Asia Pacific is an “alphabet soup” of multiparty institutions at different stages of development, divided and heterogeneous by nature, objectives and composition of their members. There is no pan-Pacific system; each existing format has something or someone missing.

APEC, which unites twenty-one member economies, has a prominent place in the hierarchy of regional organizations. But granting broader political and military-political functions to APEC is not on the agenda, although some countries have made such attempts. What we knew until lately as the ASEAN+6, or the East Asia Summit mechanism was not perfect as it lacked

an economic foundation. Without the U.S. and Russia it was unable to create a balanced inclusive regional architecture.

Years-long efforts to promote “preventive diplomacy” in the region for regulating imminent conflicts have had little success due to apprehensions that this may provoke interference from large countries (the U.S. in the first place) in the internal affairs of weaker states that “do not meet the standards”. In addition, ASEAN member states which are in the centre of integration processes are suspicious and jealous about any attempts to create structures that may sideline them in regional integration. A distinctive feature of Asia-Pacific organizations is that they have a loose structure, and their decisions and agreements are not binding. Such organizations function on consensus, trying to take into account the opinions of all the participants.

This motley picture can hardly be called a fully-fledged regional architecture. Unlike Europe, the Asia-Pacific region has no organization with a mandate to seek comprehensive solutions to political, economic or security problems. There are no documents that would regulate certain security aspects, like the Helsinki Final Act, the Vienna documents on confidence- and security-building measures, or the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Lastly, the Asia Pacific has no large blocs, such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or continental bodies like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe or the European Union. Arms control in the region is not regulated within legal or institutional frameworks, and there is no effective mechanism in the region to settle conflicts.

Many Asia-Pacific countries increasingly feel the need for a comprehensive model of cooperation and security. The concept of network diplomacy is becoming increasingly popular, i.e. the establishment of a partnership network of multilateral associations in the region. The region is considering merging several regional platforms, for example the ASEAN Regional Forum with the APEC Forum, or the East Asia Summit with APEC, so that regional cooperation acquires both political and economic dimensions.

Some have suggested creating an Asia-Pacific G8 comprising the United States, Japan, China, Russia, India, South Korea, Australia and Indonesia. There are also plans to institutionalize ASEAN+8, including defence ministers’ and summit meetings, as an “umbrella” structure that would coordinate security efforts in the region. It looks as though the East Asia Summit will be held in this format, while APEC will continue handling economic issues.

There are many supporters of an idea to build a regional architecture on the basis of new or existing free trade zones. The question is which zone

should be taken as the basis. Some call for setting up a free trade zone for the entire region, while others maintain it should be built around ASEAN+3.

One scenario provides for setting up of an entirely new body, but it did not gain much support. Another scenario envisions a security element in APEC. This idea is of interest, yet it has certain limitations, as India does not fit into this format. In addition, China would resent the membership of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Russia has a flexible position on a new regional architecture, holding that a future pan-Pacific system must have a niche for Russia. From our viewpoint, a new security and cooperation architecture should be comprehensive in nature; it should not focus on a narrow range of problems, for example, economic integration. It should also encompass security and other fields, including the humanitarian one. The main task for Asia-Pacific countries is to overcome the existing dividing lines, and build an integral structure using the available “abutment stones” and “bricks” and seeking the establishment of a common security and cooperation space.

In the present conditions, it would be most realistic to go along the way of developing horizontal ties in the spirit of network diplomacy, and creating partnership ties between multilateral organizations and forums. It is a demand of the times that the Asia-Pacific region builds a cooperative, transparent and multi-polar system of regional security and cooperation, which would rest upon the principles of collectivism, norms of international law and indivisible security for all states in the region.

CONCLUSION

In the 1990s, Chinese politicians unofficially brought forward the following stratagem: “Lean on the North, stabilise the West and go South”. Russia, for its part, could formulate its geopolitical course for the decades to come as follows: “Lean on the West, stabilize the South and go East”. The West is the prime source of high technologies and high-quality investments; the South packs the key threats to the country’s security, while the East provides markets for energy resources, raw materials and technologies, and offers new areas for bilateral and international cooperation.

To conclude, the twenty-first-century imperatives offer a new view of Russia not merely European or Eurasian, but as a Euro-Pacific country.

INTRODUCTION

“RUSSIA AND THE ASEAN MEMBER STATES: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN PROGRESS”

Christopher Len

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines Russia’s engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its member states. The paper will start with a background account of Russia’s pro-Western foreign policy during the 1990s. This is to enable readers to understand the evolution of Russia’s foreign policy from the time of independence in 1991 under President Boris Yeltsin and how it contrasted with the pragmatic foreign policy implemented by his successor, Vladimir Putin and thereafter by Dmitry Medvedev.

This account will be followed by an overview of Russia’s foreign policy today at the international level and with the Asian region. It will be pointed out that in contrast to the early days when Russia struggled in its attempts to court the West and “Westernize” itself, Russia is today doing very well

on the world stage, having adopted a more open, flexible, and balanced foreign policy approach. This is especially apparent in the context of the ASEAN-Russia relationship. It is acknowledged that the political and legal basis for ASEAN-Russia cooperation has developed considerably in recent years. It will then be pointed out that although economic ties between Russia and the ASEAN bloc is presently limited, there are clear areas of growth opportunities, based on the collaborations and deals that are already underway.

The author will then give some thoughts on the way forward for ASEAN-Russia collaboration. It will be argued that in order to further solidify this growing relationship and move from symbolic to substantive cooperation, the next step would be to develop greater economic linkages.

RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 1990s UNDER YELTSIN

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the newly independent Russia led by President Boris Yeltsin initiated an ambitious process of triple modernization to transform Russia from a command economy to a free market economy, from a dictatorship to a democracy, from a four-century-old empire, to a nation-state.¹ The two main aims of Russia's foreign policy were to first, secure favourable external conditions for domestic reforms; second, to overcome the legacy of the Cold War and to dismantle confrontational structures created during that period.²

The Russian reformers in the Kremlin thought that the best way to achieve these aims was by establishing closer ties with the West; targeted at the United States of America and Western Europe. Moreover, the leaders of the new and still fragile Russian democracy regarded the West, with its technical expertise and financial potential, as a vital source of aid. It was also felt that support from the West could also guard against the comeback of reactionary and nationalist forces, which opposed the new reforms instituted under Yeltsin. As a result, the Kremlin's main orientation immediately after independence in the early 1990s was skewed towards the West, aimed at acceptance into the Western bloc as an equal partner.

By 1996, the hope that Russia would be accepted as a full-fledged partner and ally of the West and that the reforms would translate into tangible political and economic benefits diminished considerably. Many in Russia began to feel that the over-enthusiastic adoption of the Western economic models and the prescription of "shock therapy" through privatization,

liberalization and tight monetary policy were more likely to lead to “Latin Americanization” than rapid advancement into the “First World”.³ The West also failed to deliver on the expectations of a new “Marshall Plan” of large-scale economic and financial assistance to help Russia develop its economy.⁴ In fact, many Russians believed that the West’s attitude since 1991 was geared, consciously or unconsciously, towards exploiting and undermining their country.⁵ In August 1998, the Russian rouble devalued, the Russian Central Bank defaulted on its rouble-based debt, and Moscow declared a moratorium on payment to its foreign creditors.

The Soviet socialist system had served Russia for over seventy years before it was terminated. On the other hand, Russia’s neo-liberal experiment prescribed by U.S. economists and implemented through the International Monetary Fund lasted just seven years, after which it was rejected. The 1998 Russian debt default marked the start of a new pragmatic approach in Russian foreign policy. In August 1999, Vladimir Putin became Russian Prime Minister and in March 2000, he assumed the Presidency. Under Putin, Russia focused on establishing a more open, flexible, and balanced foreign policy approach, which included the Asia Pacific. In May 2008, Putin became Prime Minister due to the constitutionally mandated term limits for the Russia presidency. His foreign policy approach was nonetheless continued by his successor, Dmitry Medvedev, who became the third president of Russia.

RUSSIA’S FOREIGN POLICY TODAY UNDER PUTIN AND MEDVEDEV

Compared to the turmoil experienced by Russia during the 1990s as it underwent triple reforms, Russia is doing relatively well on the world stage today. In contrast to the socio-economic pessimism permeating through the United States, Europe and Japan due to the global financial crisis that hit the world in 2008, Russia’s economy has remained fairly buoyant because it has benefited through the revenues collected from the high oil and gas prices. While these countries are facing serious budget cuts, the Russian Government on the other hand had dramatically increased its military funding in April 2011, by approving RUB20 trillion (estimated at US\$704.9 billion) to be spent on the military’s modernization from 2011–20. As doubts over the safety of nuclear power emerged following the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, Russia is also in a favourable position to increase its oil and gas supplies to the European and Asian markets.

Russia's relations with its neighbour China can also be characterized as stable and friendly. China, which is worried about American strategic encirclement, has worked to ensure that Russia remains on-side as its strategic partner. Beijing also needs Moscow's tacit acquiescence for its growing engagement in Central Asia. While the recent Arab revolutions in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya has rattled the Chinese authorities which feared the growing number of "mass incidents" between protestors and police, and the emergence of its own "Jasmine revolution", the Russian authorities in comparison, are in control of the domestic social and political situation, despite facing its own set of challenges. Finally, Russia's membership in the G8, G20 and BRIC as well as its winning bids to host the 2014 Winter Olympics and the 2018 FIFA World Cup have all added to Russia's international prestige.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavarov has explained that the main goal of Russia's Asia-Pacific strategy is "to provide favourable external conditions for modernising Russia, to further friendly relations with the countries in the region, to take an active part in regional affairs, and to join integration processes".⁶ Moscow has also made great strides towards this goal. Russia has been a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since its inauguration in 1994, it is a founding member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) set up in 2001 and it became a full member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1998. More recently, it gained admission into the ASEAN-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 2010 and is due to be admitted into the East Asia Summit (EAS) as a full member in November 2011. Russia is also scheduled to host the 2012 APEC summit in Vladivostok.

THE ASEAN-RUSSIA PARTNERSHIP

As the other papers in this edited volume will be covering growing ASEAN-Russia relations rather comprehensively, only a brief overview of key political events will be provided in this paper.⁷

Political relations between Russia and ASEAN stretch back to July 1991 when the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia attended the Opening Session of the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in Kuala Lumpur. In July 1996, Russia was elevated to become a full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN during the 29th AMM in Jakarta.⁸ The inaugural ASEAN-Russia Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting was held in June 1997 during which the two sides agreed to cooperate in the areas of trade and investment, science and technology, environment, tourism, human resources development and

people-to-people interaction. In November 2004, Russia acceded to ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. In December 2005, the first ASEAN-Russia Summit took place in Kuala Lumpur; then-President Putin also attended as guest of the inaugural East Asia Summit held at the same time.

In October 2010, the Second ASEAN-Russian Summit took place. The joint statement released noted that, "ASEAN and the Russian Federation have developed mutually beneficial cooperation on a broad range of areas and have moved to practical implementation of joint projects." Both sides also made the commitment "to consolidate and further promote ASEAN-Russia progressive and comprehensive partnership towards enhancement of the relations to a higher plane".⁹ The statement also specified in-depth the common grounds with respect to ASEAN-Russia political and security, economic, and socio-cultural cooperation. As evidence of continuing dialogue over the years, the 9th Meeting of the ASEAN-Russia Joint Cooperation Committee (9th ARJCC) took place in April 2011, while the 8th ASEAN-Russia Senior Officials Meeting took place in Myanmar in June 2011.

These meetings led to the signing of a number of significant agreements and also paved the way for ministerial and official contacts between the two sides. In December 2005, the "Comprehensive Programme of Action to Promote Cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Russian Federation 2005–2015" and the "Agreement between the Governments of the Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Government of the Russian Federation on Economic and Development Cooperation" were concluded. More recently in August 2010, the first ASEAN-Russia Economic Ministers Meeting took place during which the parties agreed to develop a possible roadmap to enhance economic relations between ASEAN and Russia.

In 2009, as a sign of commitment to deepen relations with ASEAN, Russia appointed its first ambassador to ASEAN while a year later in 2010, an ASEAN Studies Centre was set up at MGIMO (the Moscow State University of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation) as a research and educational entity to promote understanding between Russia and the ASEAN member states. Russia has also committed itself to allocate US\$1.5 million annually as a regular contribution to the ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership Fund (DPFF), which is to be used to promote activities between Russia and the ASEAN region.¹⁰

With such bilateral interactions, Foreign Minister Lavarov noted that, "the legal basis and the mechanisms of Russia-ASEAN cooperation have largely been formed".¹¹ Despite progress in these areas, economic ties

continue to lag. Trade between ASEAN and Russia stood at US\$10 billion in 2008, and reached US\$12.5 billion in 2010. In comparison, ASEAN's 2009 trade stood at US\$178.2 billion with China, US\$159 billion with Japan, US\$74.7 billion with South Korea, US\$58.7 billion with Australia, and US\$20.2 billion with India.¹²

Starting at such a low base, Russia has potential to expand its trading relations with ASEAN for three reasons. First, the ASEAN economies are set to grow further, especially if the ASEAN Economic Community initiative is successful. Second, East Asia's demand for energy supplies is set to increase in the coming decades and Russia is suitably positioned to serve as a supplier of oil and gas, and to assist in the development of nuclear power to the ASEAN region. Third, the opening up of the Northwest Passage in the Arctic along its Siberian coast presents unique opportunities for Russia to increase manufacturing cargo traffic between Asia and the West, and to channel oil and gas shipments from the remote parts of Russia into East Asia.¹³

The biggest priority for ASEAN-Russia relations today is how to translate political gains into substantive and meaningful cooperation. There are signs that the two sides are moving in this direction. In 2006, the Russia-Singapore Business Forum (RSBF) was set up to "demystify" Russia. In 2010, with support from the top leaderships of both governments and the participation of the business luminaries from Russia and Asia, the RSBF developed into a business-to-business platform to connect the business communities of Russia, Singapore, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Asia.

So what kind of specific economic and trade opportunities are there to be considered between ASEAN and Russia? The examples below illustrate the growing trade, investment and economic linkages between the two sides. These collaborations and deals represent areas for future growth. A point that emerges from these examples is that ASEAN could benefit from Russia's strengths in the high technology, chemical processing and products, energy and mineral resource wealth, and arms manufacturing.

In February 2011, reports from Indonesia indicated that Russia is to build a US\$3 billion nickel smelter in Halmahera Island in eastern Indonesia. In November 2010, Russia and ASEAN held an International Workshop on Biotechnology in Food Industry in Hanoi, Vietnam. In 2010, Russian gas giant Gazprom opened an office in Singapore to conduct Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) trading. There are also reportedly plans for the company to move into oil and carbon trading, and possibly become a gas supplier for Singapore, introduce smart (energy) metres for households, and engage in the trading of alternative energy, such as biomass. In 2010, it was reported that

Swiss private banking group Julius Baer is setting up a desk in Singapore to serve wealthy Russians seeking to invest in Asia, in competition with UBS AG and Credit Suisse Group AG which have already done the same. It has been estimated that assets in Asia to be managed on behalf of Russians may more than double to at least US\$50 billion in five years.¹⁴

In 2009, Vietnam was the biggest customer of Russian arms in a package worth US\$3.2 billion which included six Kilo-class submarines and naval infrastructure deals development. Later the same year, Hanoi purchased another twelve Su-30MKK fighter jets worth US\$600 million. The latter arms deal also included an agreement for the construction of Vietnam's first nuclear power station. In 2007, Russia and Indonesia sealed a US\$1 billion arms deals involving the sale of Russian tanks, military helicopters, submarines, and fighter jets. Russia has also been engaged in exploration and production activities in Vietnam, Myanmar and Indonesia.

ASEAN-RUSSIAN INTERACTION

ASEAN-Russia should work towards all round and comprehensive cooperation based on common interests and mutual benefit. As part of the conclusion, the following are suggestions on the key areas the two sides should prioritize in order to advance and entrench the ASEAN-Russia partnership.

First, there is a need to expand economic links. To do so, the two sides should set up people-to-people networks targeting the young and examine establishing free trade agreements (FTAs). The Russian Government also needs to increase its own investments towards the Russian Far East and Siberia to facilitate Asian trade.

On setting up people-to-people networks, the governments should move from “demystifying” Russia to “enchanted” the people of ASEAN and Russia from a young age. In order to identify business opportunities and facilitate investments and cooperation, cultural and professional networks are essential. Improved knowledge between people of different countries is a necessary criterion for successful business dealings. There should be a joint ASEAN-Russia immersion programme to bring the youths from both sides together as a basis to improve the mutual understanding of people and policies. This should include the study of local languages. Such personal networks could over the years form the basis for eventual business-to-business contacts. In addition, this initiative could also lead to increased tourism for both ASEAN and Russia in years to come. MGIMO's ASEAN Studies Centre could become the contact point for such collaboration between Russia and the various ASEAN member states.

On the subject of FTAs, the idea of an ASEAN-Russia FTA has been suggested. However, it will probably take a long time to realize since it will involve many parties at the negotiating table. Russia should meanwhile focus its efforts on negotiating FTAs with key ASEAN member states. One is Vietnam, which has a long history of economic cooperation with Russia. The first meeting of the joint working group for the Vietnam-Russia FTA already took place in Hanoi in October 2010. There is clearly a meeting of minds in this regard. Russia thinks that Vietnam can act as a gateway to help Russia enter the ASEAN market. Vietnam on its part has also expressed willingness to have a bilateral FTA with Russia and the Customs Union of Russia-Belarus and Kazakhstan in the belief that it will bring huge economic trade, services and investment benefit.¹⁵ The other is Singapore, which is one of the most trade friendly nations in the world with numerous FTAs with key trading partners.¹⁶

On the Russian Far East and Siberia, the seaport in Vladivostok can serve as a maritime gateway for Asian trade while the Trans-Siberian railway through Siberia can also function as a transport corridor for moving cargo. For them to realize their full logistics chain potential, Moscow needs to increase investment and reduce the barriers to trade in these areas.

Second, the emphasis on ASEAN-Russia cooperation based on mutual interest reflects the recognition today that traditional and non-traditional security challenges require governments to take into account global and regional collective interests.

On traditional security, ASEAN member states are not engaged in any territorial disputes with Russia, unlike with China. There is also no “Russia Threat” overshadowing the ASEAN region today. Engagement with ASEAN and its member states represent a good platform for Russia to underline the doctrine of peaceful coexistence of big powers with small and medium-sized states. In this regard, Russia should consciously reach out to ASEAN and its member states and help promote peace and stability in the ASEAN region. Russia should avoid wading into any disputes in the ASEAN region, such as the South China Sea dispute since it will only further complicate the situation. Instead, it can use APEC, ASEM, ARF, and the EAS as constructive diplomatic platforms to ensure that Southeast Asia remains as an open region.

On non-traditional security, Russia should further collaborate with its ASEAN counterparts to deal with common challenges namely, natural disasters, climate change, energy security, terrorism, food security, ageing population, and research and management of pandemics.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON THE WAY FORWARD

The year 2011 marks fifteen years of the ASEAN-Russia dialogue partnership. Russia is today a self-confident actor on the international stage. ASEAN meanwhile is currently in the process of transformation with plans to set up the ASEAN Community by 2015, based on three pillars, namely, the ASEAN Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community and an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.

Russia is poised to assume a new role in the ASEAN region. Moscow's ongoing engagement with ASEAN and its member states reflect an open, flexible, and balanced foreign policy approach under Putin and Medvedev. It is pragmatic and non-ideological, based on economic and trade opportunities, and aimed at creating a favourable external environment to support Russia's domestic development and to enhance its international image. ASEAN and its member states meanwhile welcome the ASEAN-Russia partnership as it helps keep the region open, and enables them to tap into Russia's strengths in the fields of high technology, chemical processing and products, energy and mineral resource wealth, and arms manufacturing.

Notes

- ¹ Daniel Yergin and Thane Gustafson, *Russia 2010* (New York: Random House, 1993), p. 4.
- ² Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 290.
- ³ John Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism* (London: Granta, 1999), p. 150.
- ⁴ Vladimir Batuk, "The End of the Cold War", *History Today*, April 1999, pp. 31–32.
- ⁵ Jacques Sapir, "West's Autistic View of Russia", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1999.
- ⁶ Sergei Lavarov, "Russia and ASEAN can Achieve a Great Deal Together", *International Affairs* 2010 (Special Issue), p. 12.
- ⁷ Additional information can also be found at the ASEAN Secretariat's webpage on ASEAN's relations with Russia: Russian Federation, <<http://www.aseansec.org/4981.htm>> (accessed 15 May 2011). The Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Indonesia also has further information: Russia-ASEAN Dialogue Partnership, <<http://www.indonesia.mid.ru/russia-asean/russia-asean-e.html>> (accessed 15 May 2011).
- ⁸ ASEAN-Russia Relations, ASEAN Secretariat, April 2011, <<http://www.aseansec.org/5922.htm>> (accessed 15 May 2011).
- ⁹ "Joint Statement on the Second ASEAN-Russia Federation Summit, Ha Noi, 30 October 2010", ASEAN Secretariat, <<http://www.aseansec.org/25502.htm>> (accessed 15 May 2011).

- ¹⁰ “Co-Chairs’ Press Release of the 9th Meeting of the ASEAN-Russian Federation Joint Cooperation Committee, Jakarta, 7 April 2011”, ASEAN Secretariat, <<http://www.aseansec.org/26147.htm>> (accessed 15 May 2011).
- ¹¹ Sergei Lavrov, “Russia and ASEAN can Achieve a Great Deal Together”, *International Affairs* 2010 (Special Issue), p. 12.
- ¹² Sergei Lavrov, “Russia and ASEAN can Achieve a Great Deal Together”, *International Affairs* 2010 (Special Issue), p. 12.
- ¹³ Alissa de Carbonnel, “Russian gas tanker forges Arctic passage to China”, Agence France-Presse, 24 August 2010.
- ¹⁴ Joyce Koh, “Julius Baer sets up Russia Desk in Singapore, joining UBS and BSI”, Bloomberg, 27 September 2010.
- ¹⁵ “Negotiations on Vietnam-Russia FTA begins”, Voice of Vietnam, 11 October 2010, <<http://www.bilaterals.org/spip.php?article18276>> (accessed 15 May 2011).
- ¹⁶ Refer to the International Enterprise Singapore website for more information of Singapore FTAs: <<http://www.fta.gov.sg/>>.