

# **Symposium on Northeast Asian Security 2011**

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**Russia in the Northeast Asia:  
national interests and the threats to national security in 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The idea that the future of the global community depends on the development prospects of the Asian-Pacific mega region became axiomatic to contemporary politicians and scientists. North-East Asia is one of the most important parts of the Asian-Pacific region and the closest geographical neighbor of Russia. East Asia accounts for quarter of the current world GDP. Three countries of Northeast Asia – Japan, China and South Korea account for more than 90% of the regional economy.

As predicted, the next 20 years Asia will be the primary engine of global economic growth. Due to this fact, even simple geography of any country in the promising Asian-Pacific region can be regarded as its geopolitical and geo-economic bonus. In this sense, Russia is no exception. Despite the obvious historical and traditional "Atlantic area" priorities of its foreign policy, Russia is now strongly positioning itself as a Pacific power. APEC summit in 2012 in Russia, Vladivostok is a clear proof of that.

At the same time, **economical cooperation of Russia with the Northeast Asian community can be the factor of strengthening of regional stability and security.**

However, despite of all official statements, the Asian-Pacific direction or "vector" of modern "multi-vector" Russian foreign policy is still underdeveloped. In 2009, the Government of Russia adopted a basic for foreign policy document – "National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2020" aimed at creating conditions for ensuring national interests and national security. Unfortunately, this document has absolutely no indication of the Russian foreign policy priority in security in the Russian Far East, North East Asia, and the Asian-Pacific region. New Strategy, like all previous ones, is oriented toward Europe and the Atlantic area. The Asian-Pacific region is not even mentioned. Today, like 20 years ago, the Russian state has no Asian-Pacific strategy and lives without clear foreign political and economic targets in the region.

The lack of understanding of the significance of the Asian-Pacific region by the Russian elite is the reason for only a minimal Russia's presence in its economy and politics. Today the role of Russia in the Asian-Pacific integration process is determined as raw peripheral participant.

Russian Federation represents the real economic and trade presence in the Northeast Asia in the past 20 years mainly through the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia. Asian-Pacific countries account for more than 85% of export-import operations in the Russian Far East, while the "North Pacific Four" – Japan, China, South Korea and the United States account for about 80% of this amount.

Russia's raw materials position in the Northeast Asia may appear to be a weak as well as a strong side. In the acute crunch situation in the world, natural-resource complex in the Russian Far East (oil, coal, metals, timber, etc.) is its most important competitive advantage.

The world economic growth leads to the demand for energy in an ever larger scale. The problem of energy security is becoming increasingly important for multilateral and bilateral cooperation in Asia.