



RUSSIA AND THE RISE OF ASIA

Dmitri Trenin



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Summary

Russia is reacting to the rise of Asia by shifting its attention eastward—from the Ural Mountains to the Amur River. Moscow interprets this rise primarily in terms of the changing global balance of power and the West's decline. But Asia's growing influence also significantly affects Russia's interests. Moscow must learn to act like a Euro-Pacific power if it hopes to effectively confront the challenges and opportunities in the East.

Key Points

- Russia is essentially a European country, but two-thirds of its territory—Siberia and the Russian Far East—is located in Asia.
- A good Russian-Chinese relationship promotes international stability and is of great value to Moscow and Beijing.
- Russia and China have entered a diplomatic alliance, taking similar views on issues such as national sovereignty. But the balance of power is tilted in Beijing's favor, with Russia largely reduced to the role of resource base for China.
- Moscow sees the United States as a key political and strategic balancer in the region, so the U.S. pivot to Asia did not threaten Russia.

Recommendations for Russia

- Moscow should formulate an effective policy for developing its eastern provinces, stepping up its efforts to integrate those territories both into Russia's single economic, political, and cultural space and into the Asia-Pacific region.
- A resource-based model for developing the Far East is insufficient and must be complemented by efforts to create a network of high-tech enterprises and scientific and educational institutions in the region. Cooperation with the most developed countries in the Asia-Pacific is essential to this.
- The Russian-Chinese partnership needs to be one of equals. To achieve balance in its relations with China, Russia must develop a comprehensive long-term strategy in the Asia-Pacific and more actively diversify its policies in the region by expanding ties with Japan, India, South Korea, and Vietnam.

- Russia's territorial dispute with Japan over the Kuril Islands must be resolved in a way that creates an engine for positive transformation in Moscow's relations with Tokyo. The Russian-German relationship could act as a model.
- The United States and Russia should hold a serious—and long-overdue—dialogue on Asia-Pacific security- and development-related issues. Such a dialogue could help forge a north Pacific partnership, a future pillar of stability and a vehicle for development in the region.
- Moscow is involved with the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program, but it must develop a long-term approach to the Korean Peninsula that moves beyond that issue.

The rise of East and South Asia is universally recognized as the most significant geopolitical development of the early 21st century. It affects virtually all other nations, but probably none so intimately as Russia. The Russian Federation is essentially a European country, but two-thirds of its vast territory—Siberia and the Russian Far East—is located in geographical Asia. There, Russia shares a nearly 4,500 km long border with China. Russia is also a close—though seemingly distant—neighbor of Japan. Of all Pacific countries, it has the longest, though also probably the least developed, ocean coastline. Only the relatively narrow (180 km) Bering Strait—the gateway between the Pacific and the Arctic—separates mainland Russia from Alaska. What happens in Asia and the Pacific can affect Russia in various ways: economically, through trade and investment flows; militarily, due to geographical proximity, e.g., to the Korean Peninsula; and demographically, in the form of cross-border migration.

New Global Balance

The present Russian government sees the rise of Asia, above all, in terms of global rebalancing. Over the past two decades Russia has tried, and failed, to fit itself into the enlarged West. Early in their terms, each of Russia's three Presidents—Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin, and Dmitry Medvedev—looked for political and even military alliances with the United States and NATO. Each time, however, they were disappointed. Since 2012, back in the Kremlin again, Vladimir Putin has reasserted Russia's stance as a separate geopolitical unit—a free non-Western agent, standing apart from united Europe and focused on building its own power base in the center of the continent: a Eurasian Union. If successful, this union should give Moscow more leverage vis-à-vis Brussels (and Berlin) in constructing a Greater Europe stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

As a self-described pole in an increasingly polycentric world, Moscow insists on maintaining its strategic independence, which is the essence of what the Russian officials mean when they speak of their country as a great power. From the Kremlin's perspective, the most serious perceived threat to Russia's independence comes now in the form of the U.S. global dominance and its interventionist practices. Anything that helps cut the U.S. global role down to size—be it China's GDP, ASEAN's regional diplomacy, or India's military power—is thus more than just welcome. It is essential for a new global order to take shape, one that would be based on more or less co-equal relationships among the world's leading nations, some of them Asian. In this context, the Russo-Chinese partnership should, apart from everything else, create checks and balances to reduce U.S. global dominance.

Thus, the rise of Asia broadly agrees with Russia's interests regarding the global order. Asia's surge contrasts with the relative decline of the West, including the United States. Since the Russians, despite their European origins, do not associate themselves with the West as a whole or even with political Europe for that matter, they view the changing balance of power between the West and the new (Asian) East as a positive process of global leveling at the top. The new situation gives Russian leaders both a breathing space and more room to maneuver. There is also a pinch of *Schadenfreude* involved as the Russians look at the travails of the European Union and the partial retrenchment of the United States: the trauma of the break-up of the Soviet Union is recent and still aches.

New Challenges

Asia's rise, however, is far from problem-free for Russia. No longer seeking to join the West, the Russians are certainly not becoming Asians. Even though two-thirds of the country's territory is located east of the Urals, only one-sixth of Russia's population lives there. These 25 million people equal, roughly, the population of Shanghai. Russia has a very long coastline in the Pacific, but its ports are tiny compared to those of its neighbors. When one takes the flight from Moscow to Vladivostok, one is impressed by two things, equally powerful. The plane spends nine hours in the air and lands in the same country, without crossing international borders. And—on a clear day, looking down, one sees very few traces of human activity east of the Urals. The rise of Asia means that the most dynamic part of the world now physically touches the least developed part of Russia. Nothing illustrates it better than the contrast between glitzy and booming cities on the Chinese bank of the Amur River—where until recently primitive villages stood—and the dilapidated, crumbling towns on its Russian side.

This fact is of enormous significance and carries the potentially highest risks. In a globalized world of instant communication and porous borders, Moscow can only hold on to its Siberian and Far Eastern territories if it manages to successfully develop them. Russia's former internal colony—Siberia—and its former strategic bulwark of the Far East, to stay Russian *de facto*, not just *de jure*, need to become attractive to Russians themselves and to contribute to regional economic prosperity. This is a tall order. However, should Russia fail in responding to this challenge, it can see its population-poor but resource-rich territories gravitate to outside magnets, and foreigners coming in to take control of the more lucrative assets, maybe leaving Russian sovereignty intact, but hollowed out. The vision of 21st century Khabarovsk as a latter-day Harbin should serve as a warning to Russian strategic minds in order to prevent it from becoming reality. This concerns, above all, Russia's relations with China.

China

The rise of Asia has often been used as shorthand to describe the rise of China. The recent transformation of Sino-Russian relations is truly fascinating. A quarter century ago, Moscow and Beijing were still engaged in a cold war, which in the late 1960s erupted in bloody border clashes, invoking nuclear overtones. A little more than half a century ago, China was a junior ally of the Soviet Union within the “socialist camp.” A century ago, imperial Russia dominated Northeast China, then known as Manchuria, and Harbin, one of its major cities, with its 200,000 Russian residents, was known as “little Moscow.” Even three decades ago, as Deng Xiaoping was starting his reforms, China’s GDP was estimated to be no more than 40 percent of that of the Soviet Russian republic within the USSR.

Now, China dwarfs Russia, economically, four-plus times over. Its defense budget is nearly twice as large. Russia no longer supplies machinery to China, but has essentially turned into a resource base for its giant neighbor. No other great-power relationship in modern history, including the U.S.-Russian one, has undergone a change so abrupt, profound, and quick, under peacetime conditions—and no other relationship has undergone such a momentous change so smoothly. In terms of power, Russia and China have traded places and have happily adapted to the new situation. This was anything but automatic or preordained, and it owed everything to the management of the relationship by the two countries’ leaderships and elites.

As regards the Russians, they, almost miraculously, have adjusted to a strong China, which they had never known or had to deal with before. There were no hurt feelings, as toward the United States, and no envy. They have not become obsessive about China’s newly-grown power. They rarely remember the bitter thirty-year confrontation with Beijing and have been happy to largely demilitarize the Sino-Russian border. They were able to make concessions to finalize the agreement that delineates and demarcates that border in its entirety. Vladimir Putin called the Russo-Chinese border agreement the most important of the achievements of his first two presidencies. That fact alone speaks volumes about Moscow’s priorities and more broadly about the relationship itself. It needs to be added that, during the 1990s, the Russians also used the China connection to help keep their struggling Far Eastern provinces, as well as the starving defense industry, afloat economically.

On the global scene, the Russians have been happy to stand alongside China at the UN Security Council and in such new fora as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS: this, they believe, should enhance Moscow’s international weight and prestige. The Russians feel challenged, no doubt, by China’s spectacular growth in all areas, but hardly threatened, at least for now, which sets them apart from many of China’s other neighbors. The reasons for

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Russia's relaxed attitude toward Beijing lie partly in the Kremlin's view of China's leadership as thoroughly rational and focused mostly on the domestic agenda; the belief that China has no interest whatsoever in alienating Russia and that Beijing is fully aware where Moscow's red lines are and respects them; the conclusion that China's main foreign policy and strategic vectors—now and for the foreseeable future—are pointed toward the east and the south; and, finally, the unspoken fact of mutual nuclear deterrence.

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The Chinese should be credited with impressive tact and understanding as far as post-Soviet Russia was concerned. They might have despised Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's policies privately, but they never allowed themselves to crow over Russia's demise publicly. Instead, they showed respect for Russia and did not indulge themselves in pricking its self-image. They proceeded to engage Russia in an ostensibly equal partnership, won Moscow's acquiescence for the economic penetration of ex-Soviet Central Asia, and capitalized on the Kremlin's penchant for standing up to and quarreling openly with Washington.

Very important, the Chinese, through a consistent policy of deepening engagement with Russian energy companies, such as Rosneft, have managed to win Moscow's approval for investment in the Russian energy sector. The whole thing, so far, has been a win-win for both parties.

It is wrong to conclude, however, that Russia has become, or is on the way to becoming, a tributary state—in the long Chinese tradition. The Chinese are smart enough to understand that Russia's great-power status fully applies to its relations with China, not just the United States. Rather, Beijing set itself a more practical and more realistic agenda: to keep Russia as a safe rear, so that China could look east and south without worrying too much about the threat from the north; to gain access to Siberia's vast resources: energy today, fresh water tomorrow; and to secure Moscow's backing on the issues that concern the Chinese, such as U.S. missile defense and the territorial dispute with Japan. Deepening the arms relationship beyond off-the-shelf deals to include transfers of advanced Russian technology to the People's Liberation Army is another key priority for Beijing.

China and Russia have forged a diplomatic alliance on the global stage, taking similar views on such issues as national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. At the UN Security Council, Beijing and Moscow opposed NATO's use of force against Yugoslavia in 1999 and Syria in 2013. In 2003, Moscow took a harder line on Iraq (Beijing abstained), but on Libya in 2011 and on Iran and North Korea over the years until the present day, Russia and China have virtually marched in lockstep. This alliance is solid, for it is based on fundamental national interests regarding the world order as both the Russian and the Chinese governments would prefer to see it.

The Russo-Chinese relationship, however, carries no features of a military alliance. Yes, there is an arms and technology relationship, revived in 1992 after

a break of three decades; yes, there are regular military exercises on land and at sea, held in the territory of either country; yes, Moscow and Beijing are de facto leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which prioritizes security and development. Yet, China is reluctant to tie its hands by an alliance with another major power, even one that has grown much weaker in comparison to what it was in the second half of the 20th century. As for Russia, it certainly cannot lead a new alliance, and it does not want to be led by a senior partner. The Sino-Russian security relationship is thus evolving toward a security community of two neighboring countries, rather than a military alliance between them.

Despite its many achievements, the Russian-Chinese relationship suffers from a number of problems. The overall balance keeps changing in Beijing's favor, making the notion of co-equality increasingly difficult to sustain. The structure of bilateral trade is skewed to China's advantage, with Russia largely reduced to the role of a raw-materials purveyor to Beijing. Even then, Gazprom and the Chinese companies have been haggling for years over the gas price for China. The People's Liberation Army's conventional military forces have modernized, with Russian aid, and should be reckoned with. The Russian authorities still treat Chinese state-run companies with caution, and many Russians in Siberia view Chinese immigrants—a relatively small number, most probably about 300,000, with a little over half of them residing in Moscow and elsewhere in European Russia—with mistrust, even talking about Beijing's "demographic aggression."

The Chinese public, for its part, has not forgotten the past wrongs incurred at the hands of the Russian empire, including "unequal" border treaties, and this, in turn, revives old Russian suspicions about the neighbors' territorial ambitions. The Chinese leaders were caught off guard a few times in the past decade by the vagaries of Russian domestic developments that affected them, as in the case of the Yukos Company, a major supplier of oil to China, or of the closure of a market in Moscow, used by Chinese wholesale traders. Beijing is also concerned lest the current wave of anti-immigrant feeling in Russia, for the time being focused on people from the Caucasus and Central Asia, affect Chinese citizens.

Internationally, China has risen to the role of the principal trading partner of Central Asian countries and is economically active elsewhere in post-Soviet countries, including Ukraine and Belarus. China is also Russia's competitor in the international arms market, sometimes offering clones of Russian weapons systems. Russia, for its part, supplies arms to India and Vietnam, who see China as a credible military threat. Russian companies drill for oil and gas in the South China Sea off the coast of Vietnam and close to what Beijing regards as its economic area. At the same time, Moscow views future development of the Arctic as very much the business of the littoral states, and it is not excited by China's interest in the area. So far, Moscow and Beijing have been able to control or

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manage these differences, and they will probably be able to continue doing so in the medium term, say, through the mid-2020s, but in the long term the situation is open. In order to deal with a strong China more effectively, Moscow needs to diversify its Asia-Pacific policy by means of reaching out to other important actors, beginning with Japan.

Japan and Northeast Asia

Following the end of the Cold War, Russia's relations with Japan have experienced a generally positive shift. Essentially, Moscow no longer considers Japan a likely military adversary. Economic relations have also expanded, for example, with the Japanese automotive industry investing in car production in Russia, and Russia covering about 10 percent of Japan's oil and gas needs. Political relations have markedly improved after Russia's rejection of communism, with Moscow and Tokyo now sharing a range of interests on the world stage. However, the Russia-Japan relationship has not been able to reach its full potential due, in large part, to the lingering territorial issue between them. Since 1991, several attempts to resolve the dispute over the Kuril Islands, which the Japanese refer to as the Northern Territories, have failed, leading to frustration.

In the current strategic environment of Northeast Asia, however, both Russia and Japan need each other more than before. For Russia, a solid "Japan connection" would mean not only more investment and technology transfers, particularly to help develop Russia's Far Eastern territories, but also a serious diversification of Russia's foreign policy options in the Asia-Pacific region. The broad model Moscow could follow in its approach to Tokyo is the current Russia-Germany relationship. Since the reunification of Germany in 1990, that country has been Russia's key partner in Europe. The Russo-German reconciliation has also been a linchpin of security on the European continent. There can be no direct parallels, of course, between the situation in Europe and in Asia, but turning Japan into a "Germany in the east" for Russia appears promising and is worth exploring.

For Japan, Russia, given its geopolitical position, could be an important strategic partner, improving the balance on the the Asian continent for Tokyo. A friendly and close relationship with Moscow would give Tokyo additional reassurance in security terms, complementing its long-standing alliance with Washington. A stronger Russia connection would contribute to Japan's energy security. Japan could also tap into the generally benign attitude toward the Japanese among the ordinary Russian people, which contrasts positively with the attitudes in China and elsewhere. A genuine people-to-people rapprochement would provide a strong basis for the relationship. Eventually, Japan and Russia should be able to form a security community, where recourse to force or a threat of force is no longer even conceivable.

After Moscow's abrupt about-face on Korea in the early 1990s, and subsequent attempts at policy rebalancing to win back at least some leverage in Pyongyang,

Russia has been clearly giving priority to its relations with Seoul. South Korea's advanced economy is seen as a modernization partner for Russia. Moscow has also made a proposal to Seoul for a joint economic outreach to North Korea in the form of a transit gas pipeline and a rail link connecting Russia and South Korea across North Korea. In some distant future, Russians see a unified Korea led by Seoul, and they are developing their policy accordingly. In the Six-Party Talks on the Korean nuclear issue, Moscow has been careful, however, to coordinate its steps with Beijing, conscious of China's overriding strategic interests on the Korean Peninsula. Basically, Russia staunchly favors a non-military approach to North Korea, generally viewing Pyongyang's provocative behavior as a survival strategy rather than preparation for attack.

On the maritime disputes in the East and South China Seas, Moscow has assumed a neutral stance. It certainly does not want to become involved on either side. Taking China's position would not only harm Russia's relations with Japan and a number of ASEAN countries; it would de facto mean Moscow's acceptance of Beijing's leadership, and thus the loss of Russia's strategic independence—the Kremlin's most precious international commodity. By contrast, siding with Tokyo and/or Hanoi and Manila would greatly damage Sino-Russian relations, reviving the Kremlin's worst nightmare—a hostile and powerful China on its doorstep. True to their general attitude, and in something of a nod to China, the Russians preach peaceful resolution of the maritime disputes by the countries concerned.

It is self-evident that under the present circumstances Russia and Japan have much to gain from their rapprochement, establishing a relationship based on cooperation and trust. Such a rapprochement should not constitute an alliance, or be directed against anyone. It would help each country to deal more effectively with its most pressing strategic issue: for Russia, development of its eastern territories; for Japan, improving the geopolitical balance on the continent of Asia. Unlike during the period of the Cold War, the United States should have every reason to support this rapprochement, by reassuring its Japanese ally: the Russia relationship would not come at the expense of the U.S.-Japanese security alliance, and the success of the rapprochement would provide for a better balance in Northeast Asia and beyond.

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South and Southeast Asia

Over time, Russia has learned to appreciate the rise of Asian multilateralism, particularly in Southeast Asia. Moscow views ASEAN's steady growth in size and stature as a positive development, leading toward a more balanced international system. Russia became ASEAN's dialogue partner, even though it generally views ASEAN as a regional cooperation mechanism and a discussion platform,

rather than a strategic actor in its own right. Within ASEAN, Moscow has been able to revive and reconsolidate its historical relationship with Vietnam. Russia has also been seeking to use arms trade as an opening in relations with other countries in the region, especially Indonesia and Malaysia, but with much less success so far.

Having joined the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) arrangement in 1999 and having held an APEC summit in 2012 in Vladivostok, Russia has also acceded to the East Asia Summit set up to deal with security issues, as well as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), participating in the latter as an Asian country. In addition to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Six-Party Talks, this creates a network of institutions covering economic, security, and other questions across the Asia-Pacific region. Yet, Russia is careful not to tilt to either of the competing free trade area projects in the area: the U.S.-led Trans-Pacific Partnership, which excludes China, or the China-preferred option, which does not include the United States. Instead, Moscow has been promoting Eurasian integration with Kazakhstan and Belarus.

In South Asia, Russia's traditional regional partner has been India. The relationship, which amounted to a quasi-alliance in the decades of the Cold War, was largely neglected in the 1990s, but was re-energized somewhat in the beginning of the 21st century. Still, even today it remains too narrowly based, resting mainly on government-to-government contacts and Russian arms and technology transfers to India. Moscow, whose attitude toward Delhi has been unquestionably positive, would like to turn the relationship with India into a factor with a global impact, much like the Russia-China one. Yet, the insufficiently strong economic ties between the two countries and Delhi's fixation on its own neighborhood have prevented more active Russo-Indian collaboration on the global stage. BRICS, to which both countries belong, has been more of a public relations exercise than a genuine international player. Another forum, RIC—for Russia, India, and China—which usually meets on the margins of BRICS, has been largely ceremonial.

The United States

No discussion of Asian geopolitics can be complete without a reference to the United States. The Russians are fully aware of the U.S. presence in the region. What is interesting is that, after the end of the Cold War, they have treated that presence rather differently from the U.S. presence in Europe. Unlike NATO and its eastern expansion, Moscow does not protest against the continuation of America's alliances with Japan and South Korea, who are Russia's neighbors in Northeast Asia. The Russians took a more relaxed attitude toward U.S. missile defense deployments in Alaska and California—in contrast to U.S. plans for missile defenses in Europe. The Russians did not feel threatened by the U.S. announcement of a “pivot to Asia,” even if they may have been slightly offended

by not being mentioned by name in the description of the new U.S. policy by then secretary of state Hillary Clinton.

Basically, Moscow sees the United States in the Asia-Pacific region as a key political and strategic balancer. Washington's and Beijing's mutual focus on each other gives Moscow a respite and some room to maneuver. Since the end of the Cold War confrontation, the Russians may have learned to appreciate not being at the center of power struggles. The new situation, however, places its own demands on Moscow's foreign policy and diplomacy. It needs to learn to manage relations with both giants, America and China, without alienating or befriending either one too much. It is absolutely not interested in a collision between Beijing and Washington, but it is equally not interested in a collusion between the two, which it fears might come at Russia's expense. And—Russia needs to promote its interests from the position of relative weakness vis-à-vis both America and China.

Russia has managed to adjust to the rise of China and build a positive and productive relationship with Beijing. It is time for its foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region to acquire an equally strong American dimension. The Russian Federation and the United States share a range of important interests in the region: general regional stability based on balanced relations among the key powers; the peaceful development of all nations and cooperation among them; and the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and technology and prevention of military conflicts. Russia, moreover, is right to see the United States and its allies, such as Australia and Canada, as its potential modernization resource in the development of the Russian Far East and Siberia.

As for the United States, omission of Russia from the pivot strategy is a serious flaw, which Washington should correct. Russia is a weaker player compared to the Soviet Union, but it is no longer America's antagonist and is still in the game. In the 21st century, a stronger Russia in Asia and the Pacific, enjoying a co-equal relationship with China and a fully cooperative one with Japan, is squarely in the U.S. interest. A serious U.S.-Russian dialogue on the broad range of issues related to Pacific security and development is long overdue. It could lead to the common goal of a North Pacific partnership, a future pillar of stability and a vehicle for development in the region.

Conclusion

Global geopolitical shifts and Russia's own obvious needs have pushed Moscow to pay more attention to Asia. While hardly a "pivot," this shift constitutes a measure of internal rebalancing within Russia's domestic and foreign policy. The Russian government is responding to the challenges and opportunities in rather familiar ways. Domestically, it seeks to relaunch the development of eastern Russian regions by means of various state-run megaprojects, from the 2012 APEC summit in Vladivostok, to establishing a special federal ministry in Khabarovsk, to planning a state corporation to oversee the development of

the Far East and Eastern Siberia. Moscow has been placing emphasis on energy and infrastructure projects, such as oil and gas pipelines, LNG, railroads (upgrading the Trans-Siberian), and new ocean lines, such as the Northern Sea Route.

In foreign policy terms, Russia has long been a member of the Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear issue. It has managed to join the East Asia Summit and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), in addition to APEC. It has also become a partner of the ASEAN. Moscow has maintained active ties with India and Vietnam—both countries with complex relations with China—to which it sells arms (as it also does to China). Russia has been eager to expand economic relations with the technologically advanced Asian nations, such as Japan and South Korea. It has reached out to Singapore and is discussing free trade area agreements with New Zealand and Vietnam.

Yet, Russia remains largely invisible outside of Northeast Asia. The trouble is, it has little to offer besides energy supplies and arms. The transit routes to Europe, either across Siberia by rail or across the Arctic by sea, are yet to be upgraded to be of real use. The Russians also find it challenging to navigate in an international environment where they are no longer one of the dominant players. Charting a course between Beijing and Washington; Delhi; Tokyo; and Hanoi is certainly not easy. Sensing its relative weakness and the intricacies of Asian geopolitics, top Russian leaders have shunned several important summits of the organizations, such as EAS, to which they had gained hard-fought admission.

This situation should stimulate more and harder thinking. Russia needs to think of itself as a Euro-Pacific power and act accordingly. It should craft a credible policy to develop its eastern provinces, integrating them both within Russia and into the Asia-Pacific region. It should reach out to the more advanced countries of the region to secure technology and investment. In particular, it needs to turn the solution of its territorial issue with Japan into an engine for transforming the Russo-Japanese relationship along the lines of the present Russo-German one. It should have a long-term strategy of relations with China, so as to use it to its maximum advantage and not be guided solely by Beijing's preferences. It needs to work for a North Pacific partnership with its direct eastern neighbor, the United States, and with Canada, where climatic conditions approximate Siberia's. It needs to have a long-term policy on the Korean Peninsula, way beyond the nuclear issue. And it would help if Russia's leaders chose to make Vladivostok their temporary residence instead of—or at least in addition to—Sochi: this would help both Russia's domestic development and its international integration into the Asia-Pacific region.

This, no doubt, is a tall order. It is not clear whether the present Russian government will rise to the occasion. The issues related to the rise of Asia, however, will not go away—they can be expected only to become more pressing over time. Given the jubilation in Russia over the end of the “unipolar moment” and Western domination more generally, as they say, be careful what you wish for.

About the Author

Dmitri Trenin is Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center and head of its foreign and defense policy program. A career military officer, he joined the center at its inception in 1994. Prior to that, Trenin had served in Iraq with the Soviet military assistance group and in Germany in a liaison capacity; he was later on the staff of the Soviet delegation to the nuclear and space arms talks in Geneva; and he was a senior research fellow at NATO Defense College in Rome. He is a member of the Russian International Affairs Council and the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy. Among the books Trenin has authored are *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story*; *Getting Russia Right*; *Russia's Restless Border*; *The End of Eurasia*; and *Russia's China Problem*. Trenin is a regular contributor to the world media. His Twitter account is @DmitriTrenin.

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