

# 27<sup>TH</sup> ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE

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**RUSSIA RECONNECTING WITH EAST ASIA**

by

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Dear Ms. Joewono,

Dear colleagues,

It is my pleasure to greet all of you here at the **27<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Roundtable**.

Let me in the outset thank the Malaysian hosts for their excellent organization of this event. I am especially grateful for the proposal to hold a **separate topical session** on Russia. I regard it as a recognition of my country's role in the region, and a desire to learn more about Russian Asia-Pacific policy.

First of all I'd like to indicate that to have an active policy in the eastern direction, to enhance bilateral ties with all nations of the region, to participate in the major regional multilateral fora are priorities of Russian foreign policy. This political course is determined in the **Decree of the President of the Russian Federation**, signed by Vladimir Putin on May 7, 2012 on the very first day of his new presidential term.

Recognizing the Asia Pacific as a key direction of the Russian policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not a timeserving decision but a well-adjusted course which we implement consistently and systematically.

We don't need to return to the region, we are and were for centuries an integral part of it. **Russia's relations** with many nations of the region have a long and rich history, **go deep into times**. **We have been** a reliable partner and trustworthy friend of many Asian nations. And we are proud of our assistance to them, which contributed greatly in obtaining their independence and statehood.

It goes without saying that Russia **has always had and will always have its multifaceted interests** in the region, especially now, when we are facing urgent need for large scale socio-economic development of Siberia and the Russian Far East. And

it is quite natural that in this process we are looking at this region that asserted itself as a driving force of the world's economic development. Without any doubt global political and economical role of the region is strengthening. Thus, it is logical that Russia as well as other states expands its involvement in the regional integration.

So what is today's geopolitical picture in this emerging new powerful center? We see growing activity of key players and multilateral structures, above all China, India, some ASEAN members, and Russia. The United States announced pivot to Asia, the attention of the EU towards the region also increases.

It is natural that all players are eager to promote their own interests. Thus it becomes more and more necessary to put their growing political activities into order, arrange it in a systematic way. And first step here, in our view, should be **establishing an atmosphere of trust and mutual confidence while preventing rivalry and confrontation**. To achieve there is no other way but to intensify and deepen political dialogue, speed up joint efforts to seek long term solutions.

Let me now explain what Russia does to this end. We proceed from the necessity of developing friendly and mutually beneficial relations with all the states demonstrating the same aspiration. I want to specially emphasize in this context Russia's relations with **China. Moscow and Beijing** have real trust and mutual understanding, real equal partnership, which is not aimed at any third party and may be considered as a role model of relations between two large neighboring nations in the 21 st century.

As a result sino-russian trade is booming. Last year alone it demonstrated a 5.2% growth having reached an unprecedented mark of 87.5 bln USD, and we are sure we can achieve a 100 bln landmark quite soon.

Russian-Chinese cooperation in the international affairs has obtained global dimension and is truly of strategic nature. The special character of bilateral relations



relations was clearly demonstrated when the newly-elected Chinese President Xi Jinping chose Russia for his first official visit abroad.

We maintain privileged strategic partnership with **India**. Since year 2000 the bilateral trade turnover increased six times. It exceeded 11 bln USD and we were able to continue with such positive dynamics even despite recent financial shocks in the world. Moscow and New Delhi regularly coordinate positions on a broader international issues and together with China are members of BRICS.

Our relations with **Vietnam** have also reached the level of strategic partnership. We develop dynamic mutually beneficial ties with **Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Australia** and of course with the **ASEAN** member-states.

After acceding to WTO we became deeply engaged in the issue of joining the **process of preferential trade in Asia-Pacific**. We are now negotiating the agreements on free trade with Vietnam and New Zealand. We also follow closely the evolvement of Trans-Pacific Partnership and Comprehensive Regional Economic Partnership projects. We resolve these tasks in line with our commitments under the Common Economic Space between Russia, Kazakhstan, and Byelorussia and emerging Eurasian Economic Union.

The next important element of Russia's input into regional confidence building is our **participation in multilateral fora** like APEC, ARF, the EAS, Asia Cooperation Dialogue, ASEM and others. These formats have already gained considerable experience, became a factor of regional and global affairs. Proceeding from their potential we consider it is necessary to create in the region a **network of partnership ties** between existing multilateral dialogues. It is not a secret that many of them often deal, though in different ways, with the same issues, like energy and food security, disaster management, education, finance, etc. It is important not only

to avoid this unnecessary overlapping but also provide synergy and complementarity between existing dialogue platforms.

Let me say here a few words about **East Asia Summits**. We view this mechanism as the key regional platform for leaders' dialogue. We are strongly convinced that the political component, primarily the issues of strategic stability and the principal issues of regional economic development should be discussed within the EAS. This dialogue is intended to formulate the unified agenda and its work should be reinforced by the activities of other regional fora.

We attach special attention to the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization** which has proved its importance as a stabilizing factor in the vast region of Central Asia and of overall regional security architecture.

I would also like to mention **APEC**. In Asia Pacific today it is the most representative mechanism of discussions on key issues of regional and global economic cooperation. Russia's APEC presidency in 2012 was focused on deepening regional economic integration and trade liberalization, food security, development of transport and logistics infrastructure, innovative cooperation. We managed to approve more than 60 practical Russian initiatives and proposals. Their implementation would add further dynamics to major of the APEC lines of work. Now we cooperate actively with Indonesian chair in order to provide continuity of the APEC process.

Another priority of Russia's regional policy is our dialogue partnership with **ASEAN**, organization which plays a central role in regional integration processes. We attach special importance to filling our cooperation with ASEAN with practical issues in economic, science and technology, humanitarian spheres. We also study long-term projects in space, nanotechnologies, and energy spheres with the help of the financial fund of our dialogue partnership. This May in Moscow we held the first Russia – ASEAN Youth Summit which was a useful and interesting event. In two



weeks in St. Petersburg Russia – ASEAN business forum will be held with a view to focus on fostering investments into innovative and infrastructure projects, increasing cooperation in industry, energy and communications.

Within the **ARF** we increase efforts in combating new threats and challenges, especially cyber-crimes. Last year on Russia's initiative the ARF Ministerial Statement on cyber-crime was adopted. It laid down the foundation for the forum's effective work in this area.

We also actively participate in **ADMM-plus**. Together with Thailand we undertook the coordination of ADMM-plus Working group on military medicine.

Dear colleagues, we believe a solid system of security and cooperation in Asia-Pacific is possible with preserving the ASEAN centrality in the processes of regional integration. The high rate of integration should be supplemented by such system of international relations that would provide conditions for maintaining stability and high economic growth.

Given the vast **conflict potential** in Asia-Pacific this task is even more acute. We well know the broad range of threats and challenges both traditional and non-traditional existing in the region. Among them there is the nuclear issue of Korean Peninsula, numerous territorial disputes, nuclear proliferation risks, terrorism, illegal drug trafficking, transborder crime, cyber-crime, piracy at sea, natural and man-made disasters. These factors can potentially trigger military and political tensions and result in open confrontation.

The developments on the **Korean Peninsula** are of the most serious concern. The current situation is so fragile that any careless move may result in snowballing escalation. Under such circumstances it is vital to show maximum restraint and consider thoroughly each possible step by every player involved. In any case there is

no alternative to political and diplomatic solution of existing problems. Any other scenario may lead to deep disturbances in North-East Asia. We are confident that a way out of the current dead-end should be looked for not on the rails of consolidating the existing military alliances in North-East Asia and pumping in more and more modern arms to the subregion, but in the sphere of establishing reliable legal mechanisms of security, peace and mutually beneficial cooperation which could become one of the constituent elements of a new security architecture in North East Asia and beyond.

Situation in **Afghanistan** is critically important to Russia, especially in view of planned withdrawal of a major part of foreign military forces in 2014. The volume of illegal drug trafficking from Afghanistan is of threatening dimension. Obviously, Russia faces here new challenges of preventing expansion of terrorism and extremism threat from this country, especially when we talk about escalation of tensions in Northern provinces of Afghanistan with a risk of its spillover to our neighboring nations in Central Asia.

We closely monitor the situation in **South China Sea**. Russia is not a party to these territorial disputes and will not be engaged in them. We proceed from the fact that all States involved must strictly follow the principle of renunciation of the use of force or the threat of the use of force, continue to persistently seek ways of political and diplomatic solution of problems on the basis of international law, first of all the UN Charter and the UN Convention on the Law of Sea of 1982.

Consultations and negotiations on territorial disputes in South China Sea must be held between the Parties directly involved and in the format determined by them as the most convenient. We support the efforts of the ASEAN member-states and China on elaboration of legally binding Code of Conduct in South China Sea on the basis of the Declaration on Conduct in the South China Sea signed by the ASEAN members and China in 2002 and the Principles of Realization of the Declaration agreed in July 2011.



Dear colleagues, at the 7<sup>th</sup> East Asian Summit in Phnom Penh last November Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov put forward an initiative to commence multilateral dialogue on establishing **a stable and reliable architecture of security and cooperation** in Asia-Pacific. The idea is to work out the framework principles of developing state-to-state relations. It implies peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use of force or threat of force, renunciation either of confrontation or cooperation directed against the third parties; building partnership ties between multilateral entities within the Asia-Pacific and, of course, indivisibility of security which means that no country should strengthen its own security at the expense of diminishing the security of others. We have prepared draft document and currently discuss it with our partners in EAS.

While drafting this document we were guided by international and regional instruments in the field of security based on universally recognized norms. We also employed provisions of the **Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in the Southeast Asia of 1976** and the **EAS Declaration on Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations adopted at the 6<sup>th</sup> EAS in November 2011**. We have also incorporated into the text a number of main ideas contained in the **Russian-Chinese Joint Initiative on Strengthening Security in the Asia-Pacific Region of 2010**.

The main goal we strive to achieve is to launch a dialogue on establishing future regional architecture. We are confident that there is a need of a **collective instrument of security** in Asia-Pacific. That is why we propose to complete the principles of mutual relations developed for South-East and East Asia and expand them to the entire Asia Pacific region. In practical terms the adoption of such declaration could be substantiated by a **"Road Map"** of its implementation. And as a long-term objective we see legally binding agreement on security in "Greater Asia Pacific".



We are not idealists and understand that it is not an easy task. The process to develop such document may be long. But we believe time is ripe to launch this work. We consider **East Asia Summits** as a right venue for discussing such a fundamental issue.

We would appreciate if as many players as possible join the work on the draft and we anticipate their substantial contribution. The final document should synthesize all the ideas and thoughts, take into consideration the interests of all states of the region. It should become in the end the **product of collective labour** of EAS members.

Ladies and gentleman, In conclusion let me underscore once again that increasing participation in the regional processes is **deliberate choice** of Russia and there is no alternative to this. We are open for cooperation with all nations in the interests of peace and stability in the region. We need a balanced, secure and prosperous Asia-Pacific, which lives in harmony within itself and with the rest of the world.

Thank you and now I can take your questions.