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In 2015 Russia and South Korea celebrate the 25th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations. Much has been accomplished, but significant potential for collaboration in Northeast Asia to address new and traditional threats remains untapped. In this analytical paper experts of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) and Institute for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (IREES), Seoul National University (SNU) offer their vision of a comprehensive regional security architecture that meets Russian and South Korean national interests. Working on building a new security system in Northeast Asia should begin with the formation of multilateral partnerships on specific security issues, i.e. energy security, nuclear safety, transport security, food security and international information security.

The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of RIAC and IREES, SNU.

The full text is published on RIAC's website. You can download the Working Paper or leave a comment via this direct link – russiancouncil.ru/en/paper25

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Foreword from RIAC

Russia and South Korea may be geographically close countries, but their relations during the 20th century were quite intricate. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established just 25 years ago in September 1990. Much has been accomplished since then. Today, Russia and South Korea cooperate in almost every sphere of human activity, from applied medical sciences to space exploration. And there seems to be a kind of national consensus in both countries that strategic partner relations need to be developed.

The paper titled “Security and Cooperation in Northeast Asia” is the first document prepared jointly by the experts of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) and Seoul National University (SNU). The joint work proceeded from the fact that to form a strategic partnership Russia and South Korea should not only strengthen cooperation in bilateral affairs, but also join efforts to resolve pressing regional and global problems – in particular with regard to reducing tensions in Northeast Asia.

Russia and South Korea are both interested in eliminating the military threat in the region, which has been brought about primarily by the 60-year standoff between North and South Korea and has been made all the more complicated by the nuclear issue. What is more, the two Koreas, Russia, China, Japan and the United States converge in terms of their security interests in Northeast Asia. Existing security structures in the region are in dire need of modernization. They were formed during the Cold War at a time of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union and thus do not anymore reflect both the new balance of power in the region and the current regional and global threats.

Of course, we have not seen eye to eye with our South Korean colleagues on every issue. But it is natural. Historically, Russia and South Korea have had different traditional allies and strategic partners, which certainly had an effect on how the two countries approach certain problems.

But we did agree on the main issues – that, for instance, the resolution of the North Korean nuclear question can be started from the normalization of relations between the two Koreas. Concrete proposals were made on how to proceed in both of these areas, and a list of measures that could help restore the Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear weapons programme was presented. It was stressed that bringing Pyongyang out of political isolation and making it a fully fledged participant in international affairs would benefit everyone in Northeast Asia. Both sides spoke in favour of putting the “Korean question” back on the UN agenda and having the United Nations hold a peace conference on the matter. It was noted that the two Koreas should be the parties to a peace agreement, or other document that could replace the 1953 Armistice Agreement and that the five permanent members of the UN Security Council could act as guarantors that the parties fulfil their obligations under the treaty.

We also agreed that work on building a comprehensive regional security architecture in Northeast Asia should begin with the formation of regional

partnerships on specific soft security issues, i.e. energy security, nuclear safety, transport security, food security and international information security. We put forward concrete proposals for partnerships in these areas. We believe that creating such partnerships would allow us to move gradually to the discussion of broader issues concerning peace, development and security in the region and, ultimately, to the creation of a comprehensive security system in Northeast Asia.

International relations in the modern world carry such a level of responsibility that they can no longer be the exclusive domain of governments. Experts in the fields of science, culture, technology and business should make their voices heard. I am confident that the governments of our two countries will take note of the views expressed in the joint paper by RIAC and IREEES, SNU and take the necessary actions.

On behalf of the Russian experts group,

Gleb Ivashentsov

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Russia, Member of RIAC

Foreword from IREEES, SNU

Northeast Asia has been changing dramatically in recent years. With China rising and the US pivoting towards Asia, their competition and cooperation have been constructing a fundamental axis of regional politics, along with Japan's progress toward the so-called "normal state" is also bringing forth much backlash. Russia, which had experienced a severe weakening of power in the 1990s, has since returned to a position of major power in the 2000s and has been experiencing much inconvenience with the Western world. Russia now puts in a lot of effort towards entering Northeast Asia that has been becoming a new center of world politics and economy. In addition, North Korea's continuation of nuclear and missile program and their unpredictability that undermines the expectations of developing relationships with the outside world make the Northeast Asian political environment even more complicated.

This year South Korea and Russia has celebrated the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relationship after having established it in 1990. The relations of the two countries have experienced a rapid development, heightening expectations in the 1990s, which soon turned into a rapid cooling of relations, then various efforts were made in the 2000s in an attempt to improve the relations that had came to a state of lull, reaching a level of "strategic cooperative partnership" as desired by both countries in 2008. However, it is difficult to agree that the two countries have reached a true "strategic cooperation" level after evaluating their relations from the perspectives of strategic communication, strategic coordination, and fulfillment of strategic projects.

It has become increasingly important to create a regional security cooperation mechanism that would stabilize the rapidly changing Northeast Asian environment and achieve common prosperity. In recent years, increasing attention has been given to soft security cooperation, as the structure of Northeast Asian regional politics has been significantly restricting hard security cooperation. Regarding the soft security cooperation, Russia can provide various opportunities to Northeast Asia, and South Korea has expressed its deep interest in the idea of fostering Northeast Asian peace through soft security cooperation in the "Northeast Asian Peace and Cooperation Initiative."

Thus, some civilian experts of South Korea and Russia have been exploring a common project for the possible security cooperation in this region. This project has originally been initiated as a form of a joint project in the process of the regular exchanges and opinion sharing since 2010 between the Center of International Studies and the Institute for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at Seoul National University on the one hand and the Eurasia Foundation and later the Russian International Affairs Council on the other. There have been a countless number of meetings on South Korean–Russian relations and strategic cooperation among many experts of both countries in the past 25 years. However, it is true that the two sides had heavily focused on expressing their own ideas and opinions and did not give much weight and consideration to what the other side had to say. Thus, this paper has been created within a framework of a joint project

among the experts from each country while considering what the South Korean–Russian strategic cooperation can contribute towards Northeast Asian security. It is true that there will be aspects where the positions of the two sides will not be completely aligned. However, this joint paper is noteworthy and worthwhile in the fact that the authors have tried to develop it as a platform to explore and examine positions that could be accommodated and accepted by both sides.

Through such experience, it is hoped that the experts of both countries continue to conduct joint research on various security cooperation issues that are discussed in this paper in the near future. It is possible and quite natural that there will be a difference in positions of such civilian experts and the government themselves. Some aspects of this paper even hold a somewhat controversial character. However, through such joint efforts, it is possible to showcase the certain areas where the two countries – and other Northeast Asian countries in extension – would face conflicts of interest and differences in opinions, to examine whether compromise and concession would be possible, to find a way to achieve a higher degree of strategic cooperation, and hopefully to contribute in achieving peace and common prosperity in Northeast Asia.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude towards the South Korean colleagues and Russian experts including Ambassador Gleb Ivashentsov for the enthusiasm and passion they showed in the joint project despite their busy schedules. Without their time and effort, such an achievement would have been impossible. I would also like to thank all of the supporters who expressed their interest in this project for their candid critiques and constructive feedback regarding this joint document that helped us improve and advance it further.

We hope that this joint paper, a joint achievement of South Korean and Russian civilian experts, would successfully contribute in the advancement and improvement of Northeast Asian security.

On behalf of the South Korean experts group,

Beom Shik Shin

*Director of the Institute for Russian, East European,
and Eurasian Studies at Seoul National University*

1. Northeast Asia: Security Threats and Challenges

Northeast Asia is the most dynamically developing geopolitical space in the world today. The center of gravity of both the world economy and global politics is gradually shifting to this region, and it is largely here that the future worldwide developments are being determined. Rapid economic growth has already transformed Northeast Asia into a global center of production, distribution, and demand, the main holder of gold and forex reserves, and a global investor. The most futuristic science and technology projects can be found here. Modernization models for the social and political order are developed and tested here, based on a mix of traditional Western democratic forms of governance and local political cultures.

However, Northeast Asia has accumulated considerable potential for conflict. Political rivalry and struggles over spheres of influence are on the rise. There is obvious tension in the finance sector. Armed forces are being built up. The region is home to six of the ten largest armed forces in the world (China, the United States, North Korea, Russia, Japan, and South Korea) and three of those countries (the US, Russia, and China) already possess nuclear weapons while North Korea is developing nuclear weapons.

Traditional threats, including the conflict on the Korean Peninsula, territorial disputes, and the Taiwan problem, can be augmented by the issue of energy security. New threats such as terrorism, transnational crime, drug trafficking, environmental and natural disasters, and man-made catastrophes threaten the social stability in the region.

The simultaneously interdependent and competing relations between the US and China are having a significant impact on the situation in Northeast Asia. Washington sees the growing rise of China as a challenge. To respond to that challenge, the US is building an entire set of measures generally categorized under its “return to Asia Pacific strategy.” The prospects of the relations between Beijing and Washington settling their differences are still unclear in terms of both timeline and content. If the tendency for confrontation in Chinese–American relations prevails, other countries in the region will be forced to choose between expanding their economic partnerships with China and developing political–military cooperation with the US.

The ever-growing security challenges and threats in Northeast Asia directly affect the interests of Russia and South Korea. Geography has fated the two countries to work together to solve many common problems. Russia has returned to the global arena as a strong state, and its involvement is critical for addressing significant international issues, South Korea has turned into an industrial and commercial world power that seeks to establish itself as an influential independent player on the foreign policy field.

During high-level meetings over the past several years, Russian and South Korean leaders have repeatedly voiced the shared opinion that the challenges

facing mankind are global and that, therefore, the only effective response will be one implemented through joint efforts by the entire international community.¹

Historically, Russia and South Korea have different circles of traditional allies and conduct different international dialogues. However, this should not prevent them from bringing their bilateral ties to a new level – a strategic partnership. This partnership can be seen as one cell in the multi-polar global community, where, despite all their differences, countries can work together to build a more democratic, just, and therefore safer world order, based on equality and mutual respect for interests.

A Russian – South Korean partnership is valuable primarily because it can facilitate the creation of a balanced multilateral security system in Northeast Asia. It is an urgent imperative to establish that system. Northeast Asia's existing security architecture was created during the Cold War in the context of the US–Soviet conflict. It does not fit into the current configuration of power forces in the Asia–Pacific region, nor is it up to the task of addressing global and regional threats.

There is no doubt that a Northeast Asian security system should include all the states that are geographically related to that region, i.e. China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Mongolia, and Russia, as well as the US, which, albeit not geographically part of the region, has vital security interests there.

Russia, like China, has an objective interest in the US presence in Asia and in cooperating with it, albeit naturally not as part of a US-centric system. Washington's self-proclaimed "return" to Asia is a suitable moment to launch a substantive discussion on this topic.

A key principle of Northeast Asia's comprehensive security system should be the rejection of the confrontational Cold War mindset. Containment should be replaced with engagement, the non-use of force or threat of force, equality, and openness. From a strategic point of view, Northeast Asia can enjoy maximum stability and dynamism if the interests and ambitions of all players are clearly expressed and understood by all the other players. A reliable, mutually beneficial balance of power cannot be built on the basis of weakness and discontent.

¹ Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Korea (issued November 13, 2013) // Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. URL: http://www.mofa.go.kr/webmodule/htsboard/template/read/korboardread.jsp?typeID=24&boardid=11781&tableName=TYPE_KORBOARD&segno=7453 (in Korean); Press Statement following the Meeting with the President of the Republic of Korea Lee Myung-bak (issued November 10, 2010) // Official Website of the President of the Russian Federation. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/9476> (In Russian).

2. The North Korean Nuclear and Missile Program and Inter-Korean Normalization

The more than 60-year confrontation between South Korea and North Korea, which has been aggravated by the Korean Peninsula nuclear question, is the most acute security issue and the chief military threat in Northeast Asia. It needs to be understood that the resolution of Korean Peninsula nuclear question should go along with inter-Korean normalization. Two tasks need to be addressed at once: 1) freezing and subsequently dismantling North Korea's nuclear weapons program and bringing the country back into the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, and 2) defusing political tensions on the Korean Peninsula and developing relations between North Korea and South Korea and other countries in the region.

The "Korean question" arose during the Cold War, and the end of the Cold War paved the way to answering it. Moscow made the first move by establishing diplomatic ties with South Korea in 1990. South Korea and North Korea were accepted into the United Nations, and China followed Russia by opening an embassy in Seoul in 1992. However, the US and its allies did not recognize North Korea at the time.

New hopes that the problem could be solved emerged after Seoul proclaimed its so-called "Sunshine Policy" towards North Korea. This policy entailed addressing the considerable backlog in contacts – primarily trade and economic – between the two Koreas throughout the first decade of this century. There was good reason to believe that the ideas behind the Kaesong Industrial Park, which combined the two systems of management, would gradually spread throughout the entirety of North Korea, thus establishing a basis for the economic integration and subsequent political unification between the two states. Unfortunately, the inter-Korean rapprochement failed.

In 2003–2008, the Six-Party Talks were held among the two Koreas, China, the US, Russia, and Japan to find a peaceful solution to the Korean Peninsula nuclear question. The joint statement issued by the six parties on September 19, 2005² contained a constructive basis for moving towards not only ensuring the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, but also improving the general situation in the region. Not all the parties to the talks, however, were ready to put the agreements into action. Soon afterwards, Pyongyang tested its nuclear weapons three times.

However, there is still hope of resurrecting negotiations in the six-party format. All six parties need to exercise restraint and common sense when fulfilling the UN Security Council resolutions on the nuclear question of the Korean Peninsula,³ and

² Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks (issued September 19, 2005) // US Department of State. URL: <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm>

³ UN Security Council Resolutions 825 (1993), 1540 (2004), 1695 (2006), 1718 (2006), 1877 (2009), 1874 (2009), 1874 (2009), 1928 (2010), 1928 (2010), 2094 (2013), 2087 (2013), 2141 (2014), 2207 (2015) // United Nations Security Council. URL: <http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions>

they should urge their partners in the West and the East to do the same. There is no place for an unreasonably broad interpretation of the sanctions listed in those resolutions. It is of utmost importance to avoid any action that could exacerbate the tensions surrounding the Korean Peninsula. Removal from isolation, socio-economic growth, and the opportunity for North Korea to become a full member of the international community could only benefit all the countries in Northeast Asia. A North Korea that feels relatively secure and confident is a much more reliable negotiating partner on any given topic than a North Korea that is cornered under the weight of sanctions.

The following measures could help restore the Six-Party Talks process:

- a statement of commitment by the six parties to promote lasting peace and stability in Northeast Asia;
- a statement by the US and North Korea of general willingness to respect each other's sovereignty, to peacefully coexist, and to take steps aimed at normalizing bilateral relations;
- a statement of consent by the six parties to develop a compromise formula that would give North Korea the opportunity to implement peaceful nuclear programs, including to create a light water reactor, in the future;
- a declaration by the six parties adopting the consensus principle for implementing their agreements – “commitment for commitment, action for action.”

Russia has consistently supported the idea of building bridges between the two Koreas. Normalization of the inter-Korean relations would undoubtedly be facilitated by putting the following large Russian – South Korean – North Korean partnership projects into practice: the international rail corridor from Europe to Korea, the construction of a Russia – North Korea – South Korea gas pipeline, and the creation of a unified energy system in Northeast Asia, which includes regions in East Siberia and the Russian Far East.

Since the military hostilities in the Koreas ended more than 60 years ago, there has been a ceasefire regime in place – but no peace – between the two states. Peace might stand a chance on the Korean Peninsula if the “Korean question” were put back on the UN agenda after a 40-year hiatus. After the XXX session of the UN General Assembly passed two opposing resolutions on this question in November 1975⁴ – one resolution supported by 59 countries (including the US) and the other by 54 countries (including the USSR) – the topic of a peaceful solution in the Koreas was completely removed from the agenda.⁵

A peace conference dedicated to the Korean Peninsula could be held covering a variety of topics such as achieving peace; establishing diplomatic ties between North Korea and South Korea, the US, and Japan, respectively; denuclearizing

⁴ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3390 (XXX), passed at the 2409th plenary meeting on November 18, 1975 // United Nations. URL: <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/5659647.58396149.html>

⁵ Voting Records (A/RES/3390(XXX)A-B) // Official Website of the General Assembly of the United Nations. URL: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/documents/voting.asp>

the Korean Peninsula; reducing arms and armed forces; developing economic cooperation between the two Koreas, and offering economic aid to Pyongyang. The conference could bring together the UN Secretary General; the five permanent members of the UN Security Council; South Korea and North Korea as well as possibly some other states on the mutual agreement of both Korean states. Obviously, that idea would not immediately be accepted. But the proposal to conduct Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear question was not immediately accepted, either.

The peace treaty or other type of document – charter or declaration, for example – that aims to eventually replace the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement should be more than just a non-aggression pact between the parties to the Korean War. It should be a much more ambitious partnership document that turns North Korea from a rogue state into a full participant in international relations and a recipient of aid from international monetary and financial organizations. Both the Koreas must be parties to that peace treaty. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council would act as guarantors for the parties to adhere to their commitments.

3. Trust: the Basis of Security

The key obstacle standing in the way of a Northeast Asian security system is the lack of mutual trust. Trust is impossible without a dialogue on specific issues of mutual interest. In general, the best way to reduce tension between neighboring countries and to create trust-based relations is to implement joint, mutually beneficial, large-scale, long-term economic projects. Europe acquired that experience in the late 1960s and early 1970s. By signing agreements to lay pipelines from the Soviet Union to Western Europe, and by involving Western European companies in the construction of large industrial facilities in the USSR, the Soviets and Europeans were able to lessen the mistrust engendered by the Cold War and pave the way for political *détente* in Europe. The latter culminated in the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Helsinki and the subsequent creation of the OSCE. Naturally, it is hardly reasonable to blindly superimpose Europe's 40-year-old experience onto Northeast Asia, but the region certainly can and should learn something from that experience.

In 2013, South Korean President Park Geun-hye proposed the idea of initiating multilateral talks on peace and cooperation in Northeast Asia that would focus on less contentious issues. The purpose was to gradually foster mutual trust between the parties, thus preparing them to transition to addressing the wider issues of peace, development, and security in the region.⁶

That is a logical approach. The foundation has to be laid before a building can be built. For the "building" of Northeast Asian regional security, that foundation could be a network of partnerships aimed at addressing specific areas of security that are common to the countries in the region. Despite their diverse military and political interests, the Northeast Asian countries are united by shared concerns for energy, transport, food, and cyber security, as well as the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy. Legally binding regional partnerships or sector-based communities would ultimately create the conditions to move towards a comprehensive security system in Northeast Asia. It is worth remembering that the foundation of the European Union was laid in 1950 with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community.

⁶ Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.
URL: http://www.mofa.go.kr/ENG/North_Asia/res/eng.pdf

4. Forming a Network of Regional Partnerships in Northeast Asia

4.1. Energy Security Partnership

International policy today is largely guided by the competition for access to energy resources. This is completely true for Northeast Asia. Despite their diverse military and political interests, all the regional players share common deep interest in their energy security.

The energy landscape in Northeast Asia is a set of markets that are isolated from and interact very little with each other. There is no deep regional cooperation to speak of. This fact occasionally prompts individual states to take unilateral action without considering the interests of their neighbors, and it generates conflicts over resources. The problem is particularly acute because unlike Europe and North America, the Northeast Asian countries (except Russia) do not have strategic oil and natural gas reserves. This lack of cooperation not only does nothing for the stability of the region's energy security, but it also has a negative influence on the entire global economy. For example, China started to experience a shortage of imported oil for the first time in 2007. By June 2008, that shortage had driven up petrol and diesel fuel prices at world energy exchanges by an average of 18%.

Rapid growth of the Asian economies is also fuelling rising demand for natural gas. Northeast Asia's willingness to make greater use of natural gas gives rise to a whole host of economic, political, and security problems. Despite rising gas production and new technology (shale gas), it is becoming clear that not all the Asian countries are capable of satisfying their rising gas demand with domestic supplies. For that reason, gas will inevitably have to keep flowing from two sources: 1) pipelines from Russia and Central Asia and 2) liquefied natural gas delivered by sea.

The electric power industry poses its own set of issues. Countries generate a considerable amount of electricity at coal-fired power plants, but regional power grids even in individual countries operate autonomously and are not interconnected.

Many elements of energy cooperation that are well established in other regions – primarily in the framework of multilateral cooperation – are underrepresented in Northeast Asia. Northeast Asia has no multilateral energy dialogue and no energy summits to speak of. It has yet to draft or adopt a single multilateral document at even the lowest level (such as a declaration of intentions), not to mention documents like the partnership and cooperation agreement signed between Russia and the EU.⁷

All of this indicates the need for establishing a Northeast Asian Comprehensive Energy Partnership. That partnership would coordinate the following items: the energy policies of the countries in the region, the quantities and terms of energy supplies, projects aimed at developing energy transport infrastructure, energy conservation programs, and programs to improve renewable energy sources. The purpose of the partnership would be to ensure:

⁷ Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation Establishing a Partnership between the European Communities and their Member States, of one part, and the Russian Federation, of the other part (signed June 24, 1990) // European Commission. URL: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2003/november/tradoc_114138.pdf

- the fulfillment of the region's energy needs (hydrocarbons, electricity, fuel for nuclear power plants, etc.), coupled with environmental protection;
- the regulatory consolidation of uniform rules for setting tariffs on energy sources and for state regulation of these tariffs, with an exhaustive listing of the grounds;
- the speedy and successful resolution of any oil and gas supply emergency in Northeast Asia;
- the creation of strategic oil and gas reserves in the region, which will keep the Northeast Asian energy market stable and predictable;
- compliance with unified environmental norms and safety standards at an international legal level;
- the fulfillment of energy conservation programs and programs to improve renewable energy sources;
- reliable guarantees of large-scale investment in new energy projects, particularly those involving natural gas liquefaction and shale gas production;
- the security of land and sea routes for energy resource deliveries, as reliable transit is a key element of energy security.

Both the mutual exchange of energy business assets between suppliers and consumers and the creation of international consortiums to implement large energy projects of interregional significance could serve as important architectural elements of a Northeast Asian Energy Partnership.

Certain principles in the International Energy Charter⁸ could be applied to that partnership; for example, access to energy resources and their production, access to markets, trade liberalization in the energy sector, and incentives and protection for investment. At the same time, the content of that partnership should be broader and deeper than the Charter, which, for example, does not touch upon the spread of nuclear technology and its use or oil and liquefied natural gas transport by sea, noting that these issues are governed by the national laws of the participating countries.

A regional system is needed that can resolve the numerous conflicts in the energy sector. At the same time, net energy exporters should be given the same treatment under international law as that enjoyed by net energy importers.

Not only would a Northeast Asian Energy Partnership ensure stable economic development in the region; it would also alleviate confrontations between states or groups of states on the energy resource market. After all, competing interests over resources are the root cause of a number of territorial disputes in the region.

4.2. Partnership on Security in the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy

In the address on August 15, 2014 – the 69th anniversary of Korea's independence – South Korean President Park Geun-hye proposed creating a consultative body for

⁸ International Energy Charter (signed May 20, 2015) // International Energy Charter.
URL: http://www.international.energycharter.org/fileadmin/DocumentsMedia/Legal/IEC_EN.pdf

nuclear safety in Northeast Asia. According to her plan, the consultative body's main duty would be to make sure that the region's nuclear power plants operate safely and securely.⁹

This is a very timely proposal. Northeast Asia plays a key role in the global nuclear power industry. According to the IAEA, 130 (or 30%) of the world's 437 operational nuclear reactors are located in Northeast Asia.¹⁰ "Fukushima Syndrome" has had no bearing on the development of nuclear energy in the region. Northeast Asia is actively rolling out new nuclear energy development programs. Of the 72 nuclear power reactors currently under construction, 47 (or 65%) are in Northeast Asia.¹¹

Northeast Asia is also home to some of the leading exporters of nuclear power plants. Russia and South Korea occupy a significant share of the world nuclear power plant market. Russia is a leader on the world nuclear reactors market,¹² and South Korea is striving for the third place on it.¹³ If China develops a third-generation reactor for export, it might pose some competition to Russia and South Korea in the coming seven to ten years. Therefore, Northeast Asia may have a major hand in setting the standards for future nuclear power plants around the world.

China, Japan, the two Koreas, Mongolia, Russia, and the US would participate in the Northeast Asian Nuclear Safety Consultative Body. Other countries might be included as observers or dialogue partners. The nuclear safety consultative body should not duplicate the work of existing international organizations, associations, and agencies that work on nuclear security and safety. At the same time, it will be necessary to determine how representatives of the IAEA, the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO), and the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), which have a wealth of experience in nuclear security, will participate in that consultative body.

Membership in the proposed consultative body should not be conditioned by membership in the aforementioned international organizations or by participation in their activity in any form; nor should it be conditioned by participation in key international treaties and agreements on nuclear security. However, the new group's objectives should include ensuring full membership for all the Northeast Asian countries in international organizations and agreements like the Convention on Nuclear Safety,¹⁴ the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident,¹⁵ the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency,¹⁶ the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and

⁹ The Address of the President of the Republic of Korea // Official Website of the President of the Republic of Korea.

URL: [http://www1.president.go.kr/news/newsList.php?srh\[view_mode\]=detail&srh\[seq\]=6971](http://www1.president.go.kr/news/newsList.php?srh[view_mode]=detail&srh[seq]=6971) (In Korean);

South Korea Suggests Northeast Asia Nuclear Safety Group // Reuters. August 15, 2014.

URL: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/15/us-nuclear-safety-southkorea-idUSKBN0GF0A920140815>

¹⁰ IAEA Annual Report 2013 // International Atomic Energy Agency.

URL: https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/anrep2013_full_0.pdf

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Nuclear Plants Abroad // Rosatom. URL: http://www.rosatom.ru/aboutcorporation/bild_npp_2 (In Russian).

¹³ Nuclear Power in South Korea (Updated August 2015) // World Nuclear Association.

URL: <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Country-Profiles/Countries-O-S/South-Korea>

¹⁴ Convention on Nuclear Safety (adopted June 17, 1994) // International Atomic Energy Agency. URL: <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/infocirc449.pdf>

¹⁵ Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident (adopted September 26, 1986) // International Atomic Energy Agency. URL: <https://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Conventions/cenna.html>

¹⁶ Convention on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency (adopted September 26, 1986) // International Atomic Energy Agency. URL: <https://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Conventions/cacnare.html>

on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management,¹⁷ and the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage.¹⁸

The creators of the Northeast Asian Nuclear Safety Consultative Body should study and take into account the experience of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and other international organizations that specialize in nuclear issues. That said, Euratom is not an entirely suitable model for the new body because, firstly, it was created for the purpose of coordinating its participants' research programs on the peaceful use of nuclear power, and secondly, security is just one of its objectives. Euratom handles a variety of topics related to nuclear energy, such as research, developing safety standards, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. One of its goals, for example, is to ensure regular and sufficient supplies of ore, source materials, and special fissile materials in the EU.

4.3. Transport Partnership

An optimal transport and logistics structure is key to developing integration processes and maintaining high economic growth rates in Northeast Asia. A reliable transport and logistics chain is vital to supporting sustainable development and economic, energy, food, and environmental security in the region.

Northeast Asia lacks a multilateral cooperation mechanism in the transport sector. Some work is already being carried out in the context of the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI), but its membership is currently limited to Russia, China, South Korea, and Mongolia, leaving out Japan and North Korea. Moreover, none of the transport corridors in the GTI zone has become a transport corridor of international significance. So far that corridor is nothing more than national pieces of railways and roads, ports, checkpoints, and other physical infrastructure that facilitate internal and bilateral interstate freight and passenger transport. The issue is not just that international transit has a minimal share in overall transported cargo along any transport corridor; these routes have also failed to become transport corridors on a regional scale. Because there are no multilateral intergovernmental agreements on cross-border transport, and because the customs and other authorities have failed to harmonize their work, countries are forced to turn to bilateral agreements for transit and for admitting foreign vehicles into domestic territories.

It is therefore necessary to create a Northeast Asian Transport Partnership, which would:

- establish effective interaction among overland, sea, and air transport in the region;
- develop transport infrastructure;
- develop a rapid and coordinated response to emergency transport situations and provide anti-terrorism protection for transport facilities and vehicles;

¹⁷ Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management (adopted September 5, 1997) // International Atomic Energy Agency.
URL: <http://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/infocirc546.pdf>

¹⁸ Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (signed May 21, 1963) // International Atomic Energy Agency.
URL: <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/infocirc500.pdf>

- assist in diversifying transport and logistics chains in the region, which would entail bringing the Northeast Asian countries to markets on other continents.

One potential way to diversify transport and logistics chains would be to utilize Russian transit capabilities, which would involve improving Eurasian transport corridors and routes by modernizing the Trans-Siberian Railroad, the Baikal-Amur Mainline, and Russia's Pacific Ocean ports along with the North Korean and South Korean ports, as well as developing new sea routes. One sea route could run from Europe to ports in the Russian Far East to Northeast Asia, while another could connect China's northeast provinces, ports in the Russian Far East, Korean Peninsula, and Japan, and the west coast of the US and Canada. Another potential sea route would connect China's northeast provinces, ports in the Russian Far East, and ports in Japan, South Korea, North Korea and other Northeast Asian countries.

Since the Strait of Malacca, the Suez Canal, and the Panama Canal are already overcrowded, the Northeast Asian Transport Partnership and Russia could look into the possibility of using the Northern Sea Route. The Northern Sea Route is the shortest route from the Northwest European markets and the Asia Pacific region for transit traffic between ports in East Asia, the Pacific coast of North America, and Northern Europe, as well as for hydrocarbon deliveries from fields in the Russian Arctic to consumers on the Pacific coast.

The region offers a plethora of opportunities for transport cooperation. Initiatives to develop Russian transport corridors should be linked to the concept of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road of the 21st century, which have been put forward by Chinese leader Xi Jinping and are similar to the Eurasia Initiative proposed by South Korean President Park Geun-hye.

Asia has a massive infrastructure funding gap which is the main challenge to the region's economic growth. Therefore China's initiative to found the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) was welcomed by many countries. As of today, more than 50 countries including Russia, South Korea and a list of major countries of the European Union (Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK). have joined the project.¹⁹

4.4. Food Security Partnership

Regional food security can be bolstered via sustainable development in the agriculture and fishing industries, by facilitating investment and trade, and by creating efficient and flexible food markets and market infrastructure. Price volatility and the need for joint efforts to secure the food supply – including investment liberalization and innovative agricultural development – are serious issues.

One goal of the Food Security Partnership (that could be joined by representatives of both the state and private sectors) could be to schedule the establishment of a system that could ensure food security in the region by, for example, 2020. Its other primary objectives could be:

- to raise productivity in the agriculture and fishing industries;

¹⁹ Members // The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. URL: <http://aiibank.org/html/pagemembers/>

- to raise the level of transparency and control of information and to exchange information on agricultural production and fishing, as well as on supply and demand for food;
- to develop market infrastructure;
- to reduce the costs and losses involved in food production and transport, and to create a food supply chain;
- to discuss responsible ecosystem maintenance and the responsible management of and trade in biological resources and wildlife resources;
- to raise the quality of and simplify food safety standards;
- to promote agricultural research and to support education systems;
- to facilitate the development and dissemination of new and existing technology.

One promising way to cooperate on food security would be to form a regional system for monitoring and forecasting the food situation. This could entail:

- combining the capabilities of national satellite systems to gather data on agricultural production and fishing, and to generate optimal joint response measures based on that data;
- promoting greater activity among small producers and consumers on local agricultural and food markets with an eye to increasing cross-border trade;
- promptly informing one another of price dynamics for key agricultural and fishing products, as well as exchanging information on the current and predicted potential of various exporters.

Northeast Asia is a maritime region, and seafood constitutes a large part of the local diet. As such, aquaculture (the artificial breeding and processing of fish and other marine life) is a sector in which many food producers from various countries (particularly small and medium producers) could join forces.

A higher degree of coordination is needed when it comes to rendering food aid during emergencies. Devastating natural disasters that deprive thousands of people of their livelihood are a frequent occurrence in Northeast Asia. Food reserves are a necessity for providing humanitarian aid in emergencies. More specifically, the Northeast Asian countries could, for example, create a Regional Grain Fund modeled after the Asian Rice Fund formed by the ASEAN+3 countries.

4.5. International Information and Cyber Security Partnership

One issue that Northeast Asia should address on its path to building a regional comprehensive security system is international information security, including cyber security. Because of the rapid development and widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT), critical national infrastructure has become dependent on that technology. Fundamentally new dangers have emerged as a result, and they are primarily connected with the potential use of ICT for purposes that threaten international stability and security, and undermine

principles such as the respect for the non-use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and respect for human rights and freedoms.

Of particular concern are the possible development, use, and spread of information weapons and the resulting threats of information wars and information terrorism, which are capable of provoking information conflicts, the destructive consequences of which can be compared to the damage caused by weapons of mass destruction.

This is especially important for Northeast Asia, because every one of the countries in the region possesses advanced information technology that is widely used in all areas of life. The challenge is to formulate a multilateral international regime aimed at enhancing Northeast Asia's international information security. This regime should regulate that states and other international subjects bear responsibility for activity in the information space carried out either by them or from the territories under their jurisdiction.

The underlying idea behind a Northeast Asian information security regime should be a commitment to not resort to action in the information space for the purpose of harming the information networks, systems, resources, and processes of another state and its infrastructure; of undermining political, economic, and social systems; and of psychologically manipulating the population in order to destabilize society and the state.

Several international and bilateral agreements on international information security could be referenced when designing Northeast Asia's own regional regime. For example, Northeast Asia could take a cue from the 2001 Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (also known as the Budapest Convention),²⁰ although that document is largely outdated and contains a number of offensive and discriminatory clauses. Another example is the 2010 Russian–Brazilian intergovernmental cooperation agreement on international information and communication security.²¹

Of special attention is a landmark document from June 17, 2013 entitled “Joint Statement by the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation on a New Field of Cooperation in Confidence Building”²² which covers ICTs. In that document, the two heads of state voiced a common understanding of the political–military, criminal, and terrorist threats that can arise from the use of ICTs. They also announced the completion of three “landmark” steps designed to strengthen relations, increase transparency, and build confidence between Russia and the US. First, the document suggests establishing a direct communication link between high-level officials to manage potentially dangerous situations arising from events that may carry security threats to or in the use of ICTs. Second, the two heads of state agreed to create an information-sharing mechanism in order

²⁰ Convention on Cybercrime (adopted November 23, 2001) // Council of Europe.
URL: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/185.htm>

²¹ Agreement between the Government of the Federal Republic of Brazil and the Government of the Russian Federation on International Information and Communication Security (adopted May 14, 2010) // Cyber Security and the Internet Governance: Documents for Agencies and Experts. M, Statut, 2013. Pp. 237–245 (In Russian).

²² Joint Statement by the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation on a New Field of Cooperation in Confidence Building (issued June 7, 2013) // The White House. URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/17/joint-statement-presidents-united-states-america-and-russian-federation-0>

to better protect critical information systems, for which purpose they established a communication channel and information-sharing agreements between their computer emergency response teams. Finally, the document envisages the use of a direct communications link between the Russian and US Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers in order to facilitate the exchange of urgent communications that can reduce the risk of misperception, escalation, and conflict. The agreement clearly specifies the quantity, level, and format of the information to be exchanged between the two countries.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The security challenges in Northeast Asia are multifaceted. Accordingly, the Northeast Asian countries must work together in two interconnected areas on the path to forming a comprehensive regional security architecture: 1) resolving the situation on the Korean Peninsula and 2) building a common security system in Northeast Asia.
2. The situation on the Korean Peninsula requires urgent attention, as it is one of the most potentially dangerous military threats in Northeast Asia. Not only does the peninsula's nuclear problem need to be addressed; paths to inter-Korean normalization also need to be pursued so as to put an end to more than 60 years of hostility between the two Koreas. Two challenges need to be addressed simultaneously: 1) how to freeze and subsequently dismantle North Korea's nuclear weapons program and bring the country back into the NPT under IAEA safeguards, and 2) how to defuse political tensions on the Korean Peninsula and develop relations between South Korea and North Korea and other countries in the region.
3. The Korean Peninsula's nuclear problem should be addressed by resurrecting the Six-Party Talks that took place in 2003–2008 among the two Koreas, China, the US, Russia, and Japan. The joint statement issued by the six parties on September 19, 2005 contained a constructive basis for moving towards not only ensuring the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, but also improving the general situation in the region.
4. Peace might stand a chance on the Korean Peninsula if the “Korean question” were put back on the UN agenda after a 40-year hiatus. A peace conference dedicated to the Korean Peninsula needs to be held that brings together the UN Secretary General, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, North Korea, South Korea, and other countries as agreed with the two Koreas.
5. The peace treaty or other type of document – charter or declaration, for example – that aims to eventually replace the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement needs to be signed by South Korea and North Korea. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council would act as guarantors for the parties to adhere to their commitments.
6. In parallel with settling the Korean Peninsula issue, Northeast Asia needs to make an effort to build a regional security architecture in the region as a whole. The key obstacle standing in the way of this and of addressing the “Korean question” is a lack of mutual trust.
7. In order to establish trust-based relations, the Northeast Asian countries could develop a dialogue on topics of common interest. An advisable way to do so would be to create an aggregate of regional partnerships or communities on particular aspects of security, such as:
 - energy security;

- nuclear energy safety;
 - transport security;
 - food security;
 - international information security, including cyber security.
8. Through these partnerships, it would be possible to gradually transition to discussing the wider issues of peace, development, and security in the region, and ultimately, it would be possible to build a comprehensive security system in Northeast Asia.
 9. Based upon the cooperation in Northeast Asia, Russia and South Korea can find various ways and strengthen the ground for their collaboration on the Eurasian continent, which is undergoing dynamic economic and geopolitical changes in the recent years.

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About the Russian International Affairs Council

The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) is a non-profit international relations think-tank on a mission to provide policy recommendations for all of the Russian organizations involved in external affairs.

RIAC engages experts, statesmen and entrepreneurs in public discussions with an end to increase the efficiency of Russian foreign policy.

Along with research and analysis, the Russian Council is involved in educational activities to create a solid network of young global affairs and diplomacy experts. RIAC is a player on the second-track and public diplomacy arena, contributing the Russian view to international debate on the pending issues of global development.

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About the Institute for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at Seoul National University

Seoul National University (SNU) was founded in 1946 as the first national university of Korea. It now has 16 colleges, a graduate school for master's and doctoral programs and 10 professional graduate schools with programs ranging from business and law to environmental studies and dentistry. Graduates have long served as public servants in key positions of the South Korean government.

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The Institute for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (IREEES) was originally founded at Seoul National University in 1989 under the name of Institute for Soviet and East European Studies. IREEES serves as the focal point for students and faculty who conduct professional and comprehensive scholarly research on Russian and other Slavic and East European languages, literatures, politics, economies, cultures, histories and societies.

With post-Soviet restructuring in those countries IREEES's mission is to promote and support innovative research and education on the given geographic region with newer perspectives and visions. The geographic region of IREEES's research include former Soviet Union and East Europe, specifically Russia and other Slavic and East European countries, Central Asia, Caucasus, Siberia and Eurasia.

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