

PREFACE

Introduction: Significance and Issues of Japan-Russia Joint Research

The changes in the global strategic environment following the end of the Cold War have brought about changes in the strategic environment in East Asia, as well. As a result of the significant decline in Russian military strength in the Far East region following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the military threat to Japan from the North has declined markedly. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to assert that the relationship between Japan and Russia since the end of the Cold War has entered an era of cooperation, particularly in terms of the military relationship between the two countries. This is made clearly apparent by the fact that the greatest progress in the Japan-Russia relationship has been seen in the area of defense exchanges.

As part of these defense exchanges between Japan and Russia, the annual defense research exchanges between the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) and the Center for Military-Strategic Studies, General Staff of the Russian Federation (CMSS GS), have continued since 1993, convening a series of discussions regarding various issues related to security in East Asia and security issues that directly confront the two nations.

Based on these results, NIDS and CMSS GS are now engaged in Japan-Russia joint research on the theme of security issues in the Asia-Pacific region (conducted during the two year period of FY2005 and FY2006, ending in March 2007). The objectives of this joint research are to evaluate national security and regional security issues in the Asia-Pacific region, and to examine the short and medium-term security outlook for the region. The results of this joint research, which also includes studies into the future of regional stability in the Asia-Pacific region and into regional security mechanisms, can be expected to help promote mutual understanding between Japan and Russia in the area of security, and to provide some useful suggestions regarding security in the Asia-Pacific region.

1. Significance for Japan

The linchpin of Japan's security policy is its bilateral alliance with the United States, and this fact has remained unchanged since the end of World War II. With the dramatic change in the strategic environment seen at the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the two countries of Japan and the United States acted to redefine the significance and role of the Japan-U.S. alliance. The alliance today is more important than ever as a cornerstone for stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Japan, however, also sees great significance in engaging in dialogue and cooperation with Russia in regard to security. First of all, Russia is important for Japan when the rising

Chinese power is taken into consideration. Following the end of the Gorbachev era, the relationship between the Soviet Union (and then Russia) and China improved rapidly, and the Soviet-China (now Russia-China) border region saw an increase of confidence-building and progress in demarcation of the border. Among improvements in the China-Russia relationship, stronger cooperation between the two countries in military technology and expansion of the export and transfer of advanced Russian weaponry to China have helped to strengthen China's naval and air force capabilities. From the perspective of Japanese security, these issues require scrutiny. In the dialogue between Japan and Russia, this is a concern that must be raised with the Russian side. On the other hand, for Japan, progress in the cooperative relationship with Russia is important in strategic terms because it can serve as a brake of sorts on China.

Second, it is important to ensure a multilateral response to the expansion of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and other related issues after the events of September 11, 2001, and cooperation between Japan and Russia on these issues has also become more important. Japan and Russia are both participants in the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), while Russia is working through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and other initiatives to implement multinational cooperation in various forms to deal with terrorism in the unstable Central Asian region. These efforts show the significance of information exchanges between Japan and Russia, and reveal that there are many things that Japan can learn from Russia.

Third is cooperation in energy security. Energy demand in East Asia is rising rapidly, accompanying the economic growth of countries in the region. Japan, China, and other major countries in the region have been forced to recognize the need to reduce their excessive reliance on the Middle East for resources, and to diversify their sources of supply. For the countries of East Asia, Russia is therefore becoming increasingly important, and a strategic dialogue for energy security is developing.

The fourth point has to do with issues related to the changing role of the Self-Defense Forces. The National Defense Program Guidelines (New Defense Guidelines) for FY2005 and beyond, adopted in late 2004, upgraded international peace cooperation to a central duty of the Self-Defense Forces. While this will surely lead to more international peace cooperation activities for the Self-Defense Forces in the future, it also means that Japan will require the cooperation of other countries for medium to long-range transport capabilities, where the Self-Defense Forces are deficient, and in this regard cooperation with Russia will be important. Dialogue with Russia on international peace cooperation should help to foster the ongoing development of shared perceptions, which will smooth international cooperation for execution of these kinds of missions.

Fifth is cooperation in regard to North Korea. Japan and Russia are members of the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons development, and even though Russia's influence with North Korea has declined, it cannot be denied that there is still a chance that

North Korea can be approached by working through Russia. Moreover, Russia undoubtedly has much information and analyses that can offer some hints about North Korea.

2. Significance for Russia

In the midst of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing political and economic chaos, the Russian armed forces unavoidably encountered chaos in efforts at reform and construction. Moreover, reductions in force levels led to Russian force reductions in the Far East region, as well. After the Cold War ended, Russia was compelled by drastic deterioration of its military strength in the Far East to adopt confidence-building measures with China in order to secure military stability.¹ In addition, the main issue for Russia after the Cold War was economic reconstruction, which led Russia to place importance on economic cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region, which is steadily increasing its weight in the world economy. As a result, Russia has concluded that long-term peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region is essential. For a regional security mechanism, Russia has embraced the concept of building an East Asia collective security mechanism, and has touched on the topic in the course of Japan-Russian defense exchanges.² Moreover, Russia has brought up the idea of an East Asia collective security mechanism in official discussions with Japan, and has expressed a desire that it be mentioned in joint proposals. Japan, however, has difficulty agreeing because its security is based on the Japan-US alliance. It is nevertheless significant that Japan and Russia are exchanging ideas and engaging in discussions about this issue.

A look at the strategic environment in the Asia-Pacific region after the end of the Cold War reveals a number of points where Russia recognizes the strategic importance of Japan. First, the two countries share a common perception of such new threats as expansion of terrorism and proliferation of WMD, and cooperation between the two in these areas has become more important. For example, the Japan Coast Guard and the Russian Border Service staged a joint anti-terrorism exercise for the first time on May 4, 2006.

Second, the rise of China makes cooperation with Japan important for Russia, as well. President Vladimir Putin views the population decline in the Russian Far East region as a security issue. While the population in the Russian Far East region is declining, the population on the other side of the border in China is rising, and is now about 20 times larger than the population on the Russian side. Putin believes that this decline in population can be reversed by revitalizing the Far East region's economy, and views development of the

¹ For an analysis of why Russia needed to implement confidence-building measures with China in response to the deterioration of Russian military strength in the Far East, see Rajan Menon, "The Strategic Convergence between Russia and China," *Survival*, Vol.39, No.2, Summer 1997, pp.101-125.

² When Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev proposed an East Asia collective security concept in 1969, his goal was the dissolution of bilateral alliances centered on the United States and elimination of US influence. In post-Cold War Russia, however, the concept of a collective security mechanism in the region is seen as urgently necessary for a militarily decrepit Russia.

region's resources as essential.³ He sees the importance of economic cooperation with Japan in attaining this goal, and understands the need for building a wide-ranging cooperative relationship that includes energy cooperation. These various perspectives demonstrate the significance of discussions between Japan and Russia regarding security issues in the Far East.

Third, in order to realize the idea of an East Asia collective security mechanism, Russia will somehow have to avoid formation of a confrontational structure that pits China and Russia against the Japan-US alliance. If Russia has designs on using a strategic partnership with China as a way of restraining the United States, such a structure may well emerge. However, Russia believes that deepening its security cooperation with Japan, an ally of the United States, will prevent such a structure from becoming established. Russia probably also believes that strengthening cooperation with Japan is a way toward forming the foundation for maintenance and development of such multilateral mechanisms for collective security as the Six-Party Talks.

3. Joint Research Issues and Methods

This joint research first examines the military and political foundations for security in the Asia-Pacific region. Russia has experience in Europe with building various security measures and mechanisms. What differences exist in this area between Europe and the Asia-Pacific region? To respond to this question, the research focuses on the problem of how experiences and lessons in Europe can be applied to the Asia-Pacific region. Next is an examination of factors regulating regional security in the Asia-Pacific region. Here, the research focuses on the medium- to long-term security trends in the region, and on extraction of factors affecting those trends. The final research theme is the future of regional stability and regional security mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region, featuring proposed solutions by both Japanese and Russian writers.

The Russian side in this joint research project wished to prepare a summation of policy proposals under the names of both CMSS GS and NIDS. As mentioned earlier in this preface, one of Russia's goals is to build a collective security mechanism in East Asia, and the Russian researchers apparently intended to have this policy line included in the above joint summation of policy proposals. This intention had some disparity with those of the Japanese side, whose thinking on security policy is founded on the bilateral alliance with the United States. After some negotiation, it was agreed that the final report would not take the form of a joint policy proposal, but would instead take the form of a collection of policy papers, with both sides expressing personal opinions about the theme of each chapter.

There are differences of opinion between Japan and Russia regarding many of the security

³ Some observers point out that a recent upturn in the Russian economy may have lessened the urgency in Russia for seeking economic cooperation with Japan.

issues in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the outlook and role of the strategic partnership between China and Russia or of the SCO, evaluation of the Japan-US missile defense issue, and the role of bilateral alliances. Nevertheless, the two sides share similar perceptions about the general security environment in the region, and share a broadly similar recognition of the need for building some kind of regional security mechanism as discussed under the Six-Party Talks framework, where major nations in the region meet to discuss the problem of North Korean nuclear development. Given the issues described above, it is clear that summation of the research in a final report featuring parallel expression of opinions on the points where Japan and Russia do and do not agree will have great significance in promoting security cooperation between Japan and Russia in the future.