

Russia's Far East (RFE); Modern, Future, and Foreign Policy Aspects of Russia's Far East Lynchpin Periphery

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Abstract: The Russian Far East has historically played a limited role in modern international developments, and has not been fully utilized, as current, by the Central government in Moscow. This article answers the fundamental question of what importance Russia's Far East plays in the modern Russian Foreign Policy, and the future Russian objectives on the international scale. RFE can be utilized as a method for Russia to project its power asymmetrically onto a systems and global level *vis-a-vi* regionalism within a multipolar system. Highlighting evidence of Russian Far East's strategic position in geopolitical status, economic developments, security, and its role as a key factor in Russian foreign policy projection. The author finds that the RFE summarily provides a lynchpin for Russian Foreign policy designed on a multipolaric framed world in which Russia utilizes the Far East to asymmetrically leverage its interest *vis-à-vis* regions on the international stage. The analysis utilizes theoretical framework of RSCT, RCT, and Systems theories to stage Russian IR.

Terms

APEC- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

APR-Asia Pacific Region

EAEU-Eurasian Economic Union

FTA- Free Trade Agreement

IR-International Relations

LNG- Liquefied Natural Gas

NSR- North Sea Route

RFE- Russian Far East

RSC-Regional Security Complex

RSCT-Regional Security Complex Theory

TKR- Trans-Korean Rail

US-United States (of America)

USD-United States Dollar

USSR-Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Introduction

Russia's Far East (RFE) has played a relatively minor source of economic, social, and political development for Russia over the greater part of the last two centuries, but has driven by Russian objectives and interests. Classically, Moscow centric interest has driven eastward and created periphery regions primarily due to three main reasons: first, Kerner 1947 identified the "Urge to the Sea theory,"

which was motivated by a search for warm water ports; second, Wittfogel 1957 indicted social factors suggesting Russia being an oriental or Asian identity classified as "Asian or Asiantic mode of production;" and finally, Rieber 1994 advocated that Russian Messianism performing a "quasi-religious belief in Russians as the chosen people" (as cited in Voskressenski 2003, 91). 20th century paradigms of "social Darwinism, Marxism, and Geographical

determinism” should additionally be augmented to understand Russian Far East interest (ibid). As the RFE is a “...vast land mass—comprising 36 percent of Russia’s national territory and more than 15,000 miles of seacoast—is one of the world’s greatest storehouses of untapped natural resources and represents a valuable and strategically desirable piece of real estate” it inevitably presents Russia with potential dividends as well as vulnerabilities (Lee 2013, 315).

Motivations for Russian periphery expansion and the importance of such extend beyond historic factors and should be addressed through a variety scientific of lenses. The RFE plays not only an economic role, but also a highly-advanced role of regional interconnectivity that legitimizes and projects Russian foreign policy to a locative position of asymmetry at the global stage. This article will include, and express, why Russia’s Far East holds significant security, geopolitical, economic, and global projection significance for Russian foreign policy interests. Format will address RFE *via*: (1) geopolitical lens, (2) economic lens, (3) security lens; then (4) present RFE as a critical aspect of Russian foreign policy, (5) address potential RFE development issues; and conclude (6) with how RFE plays a role in shaping Russian regional and global policy though multi-aspect analysis. This article uses RSCT and RCT as lenses to view Russian Foreign policy action within the context of systematic IR theory.

RFE Geopolitical Factors, RFE Posturing

RFE plays a critical role allowing the Federal center in Moscow to project its national, regional, and global goals politically via geographic presence. Russian goals are achieved by applying multifaceted geopolitical stratum that includes rail and transport, gas and petroleum, and military nexus within regional relations. Within “geopolitical terms, Moscow’s authority continues to rest mainly on its political-military presence in the RFE” (Lee 2013, 315). Military presence provides a framework of

countermeasure safeguarding Russian infrastructure designed to promote intra-regional cooperation. The real economic impact of RFE’s economy, and transit are significantly less than its regional competitors but the geographical location of the RFE allows for greater leveraging of Russian interest over otherwise stronger regional competitors.

Energy pipelines, albeit also fall under economic RFE policy, are of specific geopolitical interest to Russia as “energy pipelines are to Eurasia in the 21st century what railroads were in the late 19th and 20th centuries... [t]he common imperative is that Russia exert[s] hegemonic control over its borderlands,” which *vis-a-vi* creates external geopolitical pressure while securitizing domestic intra-state regions into “empire of periphery” that result in territorial security due to a need to protect resources (Burbank 2007) (Haines 2015, 596). The presences of pipelines transform periphery areas into busy geopolitically active economic hubs that draw neighbor states and regions closer to the center all while strengthening territorial security, and providing regional framework. Geopolitically pipelines provide leverage economically and securitarily, as pipelines extend distance but retain principle security environment as local factors (Buzan and Wæver 2003).

Further discussing specific geopolitical development of regional integration, Russian geopolitical power begins with the highly discussed Trans-Korean Rail (TKR) system and the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as the fastest, cheapest, and most efficient Euro-Asian transport options. TKR and NSR top conventional sea routes via the Suez Canal (Moon et al 2015, 12/17). The two projects position Russia as a regional actor *via* geopolitical projects: “[h]aving underlined the importance of the two Trans-Korean projects, i.e. gas pipeline and railway, ..., South Korean representatives repeatedly raised the issue of multilateral cooperation in North-East Asia, both in the economy and security areas with crucial Russian participation” (Itoh 2011, 55). Albeit the

Trans-Korean Rail is currently in theory and development, the TKR the NSR predictably are the most competitive Europe-Asia transport systems, which positions Russia as a critical participant at the forefront of Eurasian geopolitical development (Lee et al 2014, 420-423/428).

In 2015, the Russian Government published the “Integrated Development Plan for Northern Sea Route” which included plans for infrastructural development and further strategic integration of Asian markets, particularly China, officially making the NSR and TKR matters of National security (Gunnarsson 2016). NSR and TKR emphasize Russia’s Far East as a transit location of high economic, geopolitical, and security importance. Additionally, evidence of integration and regional standards comes from the Energy Strategy Report Ending in 2030, as goals include the

“[e]stablishment of Russian system for monitoring and assessment of the global processes in the energy sector and critical threats to stability on the Russian energy export markets. Signing of multilateral and bilateral intergovernmental agreements on fuel and energy resources transit, unification of energy systems technical operation, and technical regulation in the energy sector” (“Energy Strategy of Russia for the Period up to 2030” 2010, 168).

Such regional standards indicate Russian willingness and importance in integrating on a level that is substantially deeper than economic cooperation.

However, infrastructure goals for regional integration will require project partners. Russian integration initially focused on inclusion with Asian initiatives of geopolitical development: “...with China’s “One Belt, One Road” plan—sought Russian involvement in a big Chinese macroregional project aimed at structural change not only along Asia’s Pacific rim but throughout Eurasia,” although this project has not developed, Russian initiative indicates regional focus (Koldunova 2016, 531). Due to the geo-strategic regional concern partners are specifically

outlined as including China, South Korean, and Japan (Troyakova et al 2002, 1). Regional development targets standards of legal, economic, transport fees, logistics, regional/global system interaction, and infrastructure development (Lee et al 2014, 428). In the case of either transit system, both will require Russia as a primary actor in developing and integrating the Far East into a regional system, which legitimizes *de facto*, regardless of actual power, Russia as a significant actor in global affairs.

RFE geopolitical aspects can, and should, be utilized as a powerful foreign policy tool for changing domestic issues “...due to its geographical contiguity with China, and proximity to the Pacific Ocean, the Russian Far East has been seen as providing an opportunity for Russia to gain entry into integrative processes in the Asia-Pacific region” (Kuhrt 2012, 471). Russian regionalization and pressure for a multipolar global system seem to acknowledge the realization that China is the regions “locomotive.” Making power positioning, access to markets, and economics tied into geographic aptitude and foreign policy goals. Within this regional context, the RFE can become an essential key piece for strategic hedging on Russia’s part (ibid, 489).

Economic Factors, ‘It’s the Economy Dummy’

Russian economic factors in RFE have promoted integration processes and mutual FTAs (Free Trade Agreements) with Asian, and Eurasian states that fundamentally tie Russia into the Eurasian region. While speaking about a recently ratified FTA with Vietnam, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov indicated that economic ties were essential for regional partnership: “talks on concluding an agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Union and the People’s Republic of China are picking up momentum” promoting an ideation that Eurasian economic development has critical implications to neighbor states of economic partners of the Eurasian region (“Foreign Minister

Sergey Lavrov's remarks and answers to questions during the Government Hour at the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation" (2017). At the same time, Russia pressed for "an economic partnership among the EAEU, the SCO, and ASEAN—would entail a more independent and even leading role for Russia in this process... [t]he idea... has yet to be developed in practical terms" (Koldunova 2016, 531). President Vladimir Putin's additionally added adherence to RFE importance in regional integration; citing policy as critical: "[t]oday, we see the future of the Far East as a key socioeconomic development center for Russia, and a region that should be effectively integrated into the developing Asia-Pacific region as a whole" ("First Eastern Economic Forum" 2015). Kremlin hopes for regional integration have been built on economic objectives and projects including pipelines, transit, and imports/exports and include classically difficult markets to integrate like Japan and China.

On the Asian side, the Asian neighborhood sees the RFE as a potential mechanism to expand market power especially in post-USSR Eurasia, as economic development in the USSR rotated around Euro-centric Russian economy and expressed limited framework that has including Eurasian markets. Russian policy makers see North Asian economic integration as a policy magnification tool: "They see increased economic ties with Northeast Asia as an opportunity to increase the importance of their ports as trans-shipment points for imports to Japan develop new processing facilities and transportation links in their prefectures" (Meyer 1999, 210). Japan not only supported Russia's admission to APEC, but also contributed \$116 million USD for Sakhalin II, \$2 billion USD to the conversion of thermal power generation from coal to gas, and \$30 million USD for water system improvement among other economic projects (ibid, 212). Russia's regional policy for RFE also is reflected in Japanese imports of Gas and Oil. Since 2000 Russia exports from the

East Siberian petroleum fields rose from zero to 1 million barrels a day (Motomura 2014, 69). The development of gas and oil pipelines not only indicates economic prosperity for Russian posturing, but long-term Eurasian integration goals, for unlike sea shipping pipelines are indicative of enduring economic stratagem. Russian export of Natural Gas and Oil to Japan have significantly increased due to the 2011 Fukushima nuclear accident, a move to diversify Japanese petroleum based energy to create competitive prices, securitization thermal fuel post-Fukushima, and developing greater security compared to petroleum contracted out of the Middle East. "[Post-Fukushima]...most of nuclear power stopped and had to be replaced by LNG thermal power generation. To cope with the situation, Russia wanted to accelerate new LNG projects aiming the gas starving Japanese market" (ibid, 71). Adding to the ecological disaster and with new prospects of Middle Eastern non-reliance for thermal power generation Japan, almost naturally, turned to Russia and its Far Eastern petroleum fields due to the proximity, safety, and fleecable policies in an economic attempt to drive greater competition (Motomura 2011, 478).

Regionally, Russia has developed the Sakhalin LNG, Sakhalin-2 LNG, and Vladivostok LNG pipelines that flow from the East Siberian Fields to the Korean Peninsula, Japan, and Northern China, then in conjunction developed Central Asian Gas Pipeline, and West-East Pipelines connect West Siberian Fields routed through EEU states to Central China and South and South East Asia (Motomura 2014, 72). These RFE pipelines help establish a basic integration framework that may not be specifically designed on the intention of deep regional integration, but indicates that RFE, and in a broader sense Russian periphery regions, play a significant role in regional policy and possess regional aspirations due to the long-term nature of oil and gas pipelines. As a result, this has allowed the classically difficult Russo-Japanese relations

together built on common economic provision and demand, however thermal trade has not resolved some distancing interstate relations: Kuril Islands dispute.

Currently Russian companies, primarily Gazprom, are moving to develop multiple LNG projects in Northeast Asian and Arctic that directly focus on Far Eastern markets in addition to extensive regional market targeting. LNG projects account for a significant push for economic integration, but products and goods additionally are used as tools to promote RFE strength and regional relativity. Product group exports from RFE include Food/Agricultural materials, Fuel/Energy, Chemicals, Pulp/Paper, Metals/Petal products, and Automobiles/Equipment/Transportation. From 2006 to 2011 exports substantially increased in all aspects of the RFE total economic exports growing from \$7,008.9 million USD in 2006 to \$10,633.6 million USD in 2009, and \$21,030.8 million USD in 2011. The most significant growth in export groups was Fuel/Energy, which more than quadrupled from 2006 to 2011 and comes as no surprise as Japan has increased its demand and Russia has pressed for increased infrastructure of gas and oil (Zausaev 2016, 626) (Motomura 2014, 71). Strong raw material exports do however provide a circular issue encountered by Russia, which is the inability to move beyond being simply a “raw appendage” type market, but still utilize such markets for domestic, regional, and global projections this will be covered more in-depth in “Future Aspects and Challenges of the Russian Far East.”

Russian Securitization of the Far East

Application of RFE economic and geopolitical development not only creates a basis for securitization of territory, but security provides a basis for economic and geopolitical factors. As Russian boundaries were not clear-cut by ethnic or geographic obstacles, borders were constantly undergoing expansion to compensate for security

concerns, so Russia advanced their territory into the Caucasus, Central Asia, Siberia, and most notably the Far East. Expansionist policies lead to Multiculturalism in periphery areas because unlike the US, serfdom did not slow internal migration, Orthodoxy was not militarized to consume cultures, and there were no official exclusionary policies based on sole ethnicity (Voskressenski 2003, 94). This divergent expansionist background hindered a unified identity within periphery regions, and led to a state that claims more than 144 national identities.

To secure these periphery territories Russia provided economic and geopolitical support for distant regions. Russia has thusly securitized the Far East with a combination of soft and hard power factors. Russian fears associated with periphery secession movements have pressed increased interest and securitization via economic, military, and social development programs (Lee 2013, 316). Security and multilateral integration was aimed at “Russia’s efforts to strengthen its positions in processes of multilateral cooperation in the APR... for a new security architecture in the APR” aimed at creating a RSC external of US support (Koldunova 2016, 531). Some mechanisms include the newly developed Ministry of the Far East and Eastern Siberia, infrastructural development, economic development, educational funding, the free port of Vladivostok, and special tax exemption statuses (“Vladimir Putin Signs a Law on New Tax Breaks for Russia’s Far East” 2016). Reaffirming and developing the RFE aimed at achieving the two-fold goal of territory integrity, and served as a message to regional powers that Russia was deeply invested in the region on more than just a security basis, as the RFE represents an economic hub in the Asia-Pacific region.

On a regional level, RFE provides a connection point into the Asian region that expands to economic and infrastructural goals to increase prospects of securitization. Hirschhausen et al augment this when

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they wrote "...most other potential regional electricity sharing and oil and gas pipeline projects under consideration, may well provide economic, political, and energy supply security benefits..." (2004, 6865). Protecting critical infrastructure for domestic and regional development has prompted military and nuclear deployment in the RFE. Russian increase of military funding, especially to Naval power, has been interpreted as a method to protect Russian petroleum products including the TKR and NSR. Nuclear countermeasures against regional nuclear powers include the deployment of Tochka-U, and Iskander-M missile systems, which include the 2013 deployment of the 107th Missile Brigade, the 2015 deployment of the 103rd Missile Brigade, and the 2016 deployment of the 20th Missile Brigade, all deployments indicate Russia's counter to perceived regional threats (Blank 2012) ("Future Fire Power" 2016). Nuclear short and middle-range deployment came before North Korea's latest barrage of ICBM program expansion and Nuclear deployment in the region demonstrating an even greater demand for Russian nuclear counter measures as way of measuring counter balance in the region. Especially, considering the deployment of the Tochka-U as a short-range nuclear countermeasure to intra-regional action, not an inter-regional/global deterrence stratagem ("SS-21 (OTR-21 "Tochka")" 2016).

Securitarilly, increased energy development and geographically far-reaching energy transit present a security dilemma for nations involved in producing, transporting, and receiving energy. As international pipelines represent major economic ties inter-state/intra-regional relations must be of primary concern. Additionally, the protection of these "critical links" must be a cumulative effort on behalf of all states involved. Potential risks may be that producing and transit states may use critical energy as "levers" (Hirschhausen et al 2004, 6865). Two-fold this provides Russia a precarious position that infrastructure may allow to express policy objectives from a position of relative weakness on stronger

states, and calls for greater regional integration to curtail inter-state intra-regional discrepancies. Embedded in these security and economic ties is the critical Far East acting as a mechanism to achieve Russian global system objectives, and domestic stability.

By increasing regional interconnectivity via RFE, Russia helps to stipulate the security concern of a porous border. Kuhrt states "Russian Far East symbolizes Russian vulnerability in the shape of the long border with China, a border which, since its opening, has highlighted Russian economic and security concerns," which in addition to its lengthen is complicated by an inability to properly secure a boarder making it porous in nature (2012, 471) (Voskressenski 2003, 93). Interconnectivity and common policy that links Chinese and Russian policy would be an integral step in processing and developing a regional security complex. Common security threats of the Far East should be utilized as factors for intra-regional cooperation. On the prospect of North Korean Nuclear development, there is a possibility for Russia to play a significant role in containment and as a facilitator of a global threat. Russian-US common security interest may be drawn closer together by the development of North Korean Nuclear arms. Albeit, in 2011 US-Russia interaction in the RFE was a mere 2.2% of total RFE trade and the US has limited geopolitical interest. But, Russia's accession to the WTO, increased security threats out of North Korea, and increased US-Sino tension may "open the door" of possible cooperation (Lee 2013, 324). The ability for Russia to play a critical role with the use of RFE may become a, essential factor in containment, and could facilitate a regional and global containment stratum for the North Korean dilemma including China, the US, Japan, and South Korea (Moltz 2005, 734/735). Consequently, the RFE is a security concern and has the potential of providing a framework for inter-regional dialogue with the prospect of nuclear containment of North Korea on

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a systems or global stage. Alternatively, if Russia fails to utilize the Far East as a method to gain either regional security complex, or leverage for securitization on an international scale, the potential for Chinese regional domination would have negative consequences for Russian interests and could benefit Chinese regional development and overarching domination (“Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation” 2010).

RFE, a Lynchpin for Russian Foreign Policy and Regionalization

Post-USSR unipolar world, for a time, placed Russia as a sub-systematic actor on the international scale, which made regional consolidation vitally important to Russian foreign policy to obtain international position. Precedent for regional consolidation stems from the notion that Russia is a broad, expansive state that is located on the periphery of power regions and states that never fully dominated Russia. Lacking domination by its strong culturally-centered neighbors, Russia was able to retain a sort of cultural heterogeneity (Voskressenski 2003, 96). This ultimately led to Western states not fully recognizing Russia as a proper state, as a unitary identity was promoted as a characteristic of western nation-state apparatuses. The “Russian phenomena” placed Russia in a unique position of regional thinking, as it could format itself to not be solely part of one region, but act as a bridge between regions (ibid, 94/95/96). These domestic, regional, and internationally based historical factors has led Russian policy makers to pursue three primary goals: first, fill an important role as a critically important state on the international stage; second, become a power balancing for the Eurasian region to compete in an international level; and finally, provide an alternative to perceived internationally framed US led unipolarity on a systems and global level.

First, Russia has engaged itself in a strategic process of emerging to fulfill a role as a multi-vector global entity with power to shift international perceptions

and create precedent. Minister Lavrov indicated this in his speech at the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Foreign Affairs in 2016 “...international relations are now at a turning point – the formation of a new, multi-polar system that reflects the modern world’s increasingly complicated character and its diversity of cultures and civilizations, and helps states to deal better with common challenges” (“Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks at the opening of the Diplomatic Club at the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Foreign Ministry” 2016). Within a context of multipolarity, Russian interest for regional integration becomes a strategic centerpiece focused international security implications and breakout potential. Partnership with neighbors, especially China, South Korea, Japan, and with “India, Vietnam and Laos... expanding ties with other Asia Pacific states essentially become as much a regional goal as an international goal” (“Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks and answers to questions during the Government Hour at the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation” 2017). Develop-based Asian integration cumulate to an ideation of regional systems playing vital roles as international actors in a more equitable system that *de facto* benefits the domestic and foreign policies of Russia.

“The policy of strengthening the strategic partnership between Russia and China remains unchanged. We see these relations as a model for responsible major powers in the 21st century. Our foreign policy cooperation, including at the UN, has asserted itself as an important factor in maintaining global stability” (“Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks and answers to questions during the Government Hour at the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation” 2017).

Lavrov pressed regional policy goals as highlighted objectives within the context of an international stage, because strategic partnership hinges on the RFE and its ability to act as a type of east-west intercontinental interchange. Geographically located

near, and sharing security, economic, and geopolitical goals; partnership on a sub-international system level within Eurasia, the RFE has become a primary concern of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Consequently, developing the securitization and militarization of the RFE follows suit as a priority objective for Russian leaders. Such domestic and regional integration projects can be achieved by the “Implementation of a geopolitical goal in consolidating the population through the formation of a developed economy and an environment for comfortable living [this] was inscribed as a strategic goal for development of the larger region” (Zausaev 2016, 632).

Second, in addition to Russian goals and policies, Russia hopes to associate regional goals as motives for greater intra-regional cooperation. At a pre-APEC meeting, Russian positioning was determined as a multipolaric regional actor in Asian community: “...APR cooperation analyzed the specifics of the international political situation in the region shortly before the APEC summit; ... up with recommendations about the definitive Russia’s stance as a regional political player and participant of multilateral cooperation” (Sumsy et al 2012, 16). As Sino-Russo relations have the potential to create a type of power balance against the US and their perceived hegemony; Chinese goals, such as strategic hedging, run parallel to Russian regional integration objectives. The use of Sino strategic hedging includes the prospect of second-tier states cooperating against hegemonic influence on political, economic, and semi-military prospects, which follows the direct line of reasoning proposed by minister Lavrov. By aspect, controlled regional security and regional complexes maybe a target goal of Sino relations, which place Far East development and integration as priorities for Russian policy makers. Multipolar global system with regions acting as unitary bodies makes the Russo-Sino connection a significant actor. Nowhere closer do Russia and China connect than in the Far East, such a potential

geopolitical connection acting as a counter to hegemonic influence should be considered outright. China’s hedging will ultimately demand closer relations with its neighbors and a turn to regional stability; the antithesis of closer regionalization will risk serious economic and diplomatic repercussions (Wolfe 2013) (Lee 2013, 318). Because “[r]egional failure in Asia is compromising Russia’s broader international standing because Moscow’s strategy depends on leveraging itself in all of Russia’s key regions to facilitate its global standing, and failure in any key region has global repercussions” (Blank 2012).

Finally, the prospect of countering US unipolarity is only conceptually possible if the Eurasian region creates strong meaningful integration and consolidates goal development that expands beyond the regional level. Lavrov stated this when he said: “It is only possible to confront global threats by concerted effort... Unilateral attempts to eliminate them have failed to produce any positive results. This means that diplomacy is moving to... solutions that will suit everyone” (“Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks at the opening of the Diplomatic Club at the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Foreign Ministry” 2017). Such a multipolar vision progenerates from a world view of complexity, and clashing civilizations under the context of failed US hegemonic attempt which failed to securitize global structures under a “one policy fits all” model of international transaction. Promoting this narrative and following action serves to include Russia as a critical player in the international community, while promoting securitization for vital parts of intra-state and inter-regional stability concerning Russia.

Each of these three factors of multipolarity and regionalization hinge on the ability for Russia to maintain good relations with its Eurasian partners, develop infrastructure, and securitize the Far East. Within this context, the RFE becomes a lynchpin not only in domestic policy, but also in foreign policy objectives for the Kremlin. Without the Far East,

there would be far fewer claims for regional integration, security complexes, capacity for inter-regional development, or *ipso facto* Russian strategic multipolarity on an international scale.

Future Aspects and Challenges of the Russian Far East

Russian goals for intra-regional development do not come without challenges or roadblocks. Deep integration has been a summary challenge in the EAEU, let alone greater Eurasia. Investment, systematic incentives, domestic migration, ethnic tensions, social structure pressures, economic stimulation, regional rejection, and international failure are all factors that could potentially limit Russian development and retention of the Far East. Issues of RFE development fall under three main categories: first, social; second, economic; and finally, non-security or economy related issues.

Firstly, social issues are often compounded by economic issues, but with periphery pressures often forming out of economic difficulties in a *de facto* action, Russian development of the Far East will need to have constant tailoring of policies and economic support to retain the periphery territory (Treisman 1997). Ethnic pressures may come from new exposure of domestic “natives” to migrants, or regional workers. These pressures may lead to systematic abuses of localized power, as the “Russian Far East has experienced an increase in racism and xenophobia inflamed by local demagogues interested in deflecting popular attention from the region’s severe economic problems” (Meyer 1999, 224). However, pressure spawned from social tension should allow for Russian policy makers to create meaningful and effective policy in counteracting potential threats, as most social issues will inevitably arise in areas of substantial development where pipelines and power lines pass through, but these inevitable interactions will conceive a level of dangerous unpredictability (Hirschhausen et al 2004, 6865).

Secondly, economic problems will inevitably create issues on both macro and micro scales. Overreliance on raw exports and energy for regional integration and leveraging potential could create unpredictable repercussions on a global scale (Kuhrt 2012, 490). Investment potential on a micro scale will be paramount in development. For Russia to maximize its Far East as a lynchpin in Eurasian integration and global revision an open system that allows for regional and foreign investment will be required. “In the long run, if Russia creates a more favorable environment for foreign trade and investment, the Russian Far East’s standing in Northeast Asia will improve,” which will provide development in the RFE (Meyer 1999, 224).

Opening markets for foreign investment will likely require two essential aspects. First, that transportation infrastructure should lean towards increased integration in regional scales to promote business aspects and market availability. And second, policies and institutions should be directly stimulated and curtailed for goal achievement, which demands a revision not only of systematic prospects but also of enforcement policies, legal codes, and negative perceptions about foreign investment (Kateja 2012, 87) (Blank 2012). To develop the RFE to standards that achieve regional integration and foreign policy projection, Russia will need to not only speak about regional integration and development, but back policies with teeth to actively press development. Issues involving long-term cooperation include availability and stability of financing, transparency between nations, unitary transnational price setting, consented regulatory processes, ecological policy, and consolidated policy on: energy, economic development, and efficacy (Hirschhausen et al 2004, 6863). Such issues will demand mutually beneficiary integration and regional consolidation, which are critical for Russia’s domestic and foreign policies (“Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks and answers to questions during the Government Hour at the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the

Russian Federation” 2017) (Buzan and Wæver 2003).

Finally, non-security, or economy related issues involving the RFE will, according to Lee will be the tipping point for the successful utilization of the territory for Russian interest, or the failure of such (2013, 324). These soft issues target perceptions and attitudes associated with the territory and may directly be linked to regional identities, birth and migration perceptions, political legitimacy, and even perceptions in Russia external policies associated with the RFE residency. Perceptions of unfairness within the system may drive away cooperation internally from needed investment, skilled labor, and general support of funding for the periphery region. “Maintaining the state’s leading and proactive role in the RFE, while transforming it from Russia’s backyard into its Pacific front gate, will be one of the most significant challenges that the Kremlin’s leaders face in this century” (ibid, 315).

Conclusion

The RFE plays a significant role in geopolitical, economic, security, and global ambitions for the Russian Federation. Moreover, the role the RFE plays in comprehensive foreign policy objectives should be considered as a critical due to the drive for a key balancing position in an international multipolar framework. Russia has begun an arduous process of developing a geostrategic location for geopolitical, economic, and security motives. RFE development will ultimately hang on funding, re-writing of legal codes, and major shifts in perspective about external support for internal domestic growth and problems. Understanding how Russia’s Far East plays a role on regional and international stages indicate that Russian policies place the Far East as a critical player in global objectives, which should not be overlooked.

Geopolitically the RFE places Russia at the forefront to project its politics and policies on a regional level. Integration via long term projects in the form of

pipelines to China, Japan, and South Korean and the aspect of transcontinental shipping to open intra and inter-regional markets are only possible if Russia develops, secures, and establishes the Far East as a strong and modernized region. Development of geopolitical structures allow for the Far East to establish deep ties with the distant Asia. Opening, and access, to Asian and European markets with efficiency could potentially place Russia in a position of asymmetric leverage to promote its interest on domestic, regional, and global stages.

Economically, Russian entrance into Asian and regional markets, excluding the EAEU, account for little actual intra-regional trade, but the economic interconnectivity not only presents potential growth opportunities, but relies heavily on the weight of the items exported. LNG and Petroleum thermal power generation are becoming primary resources needed by regional powers due to instability from “traditional” Middle Eastern sources, natural disasters, and the efficiency in obtaining geothermal fuel. Russian development of economic structures has the potential of simply developing a “raw appendage” market and should therefore be careful to build a system that diversely interacts with markets.

Securarily, the RFE will play a critical role in shaping not only Eurasia but also the global system and on international precedent. Russia’s access to sharing common borders, economies, and geography explicitly ties Asia within a regional security complex (RSC) with Russia. Shared security communities are not only shaped by the RFE, but are solidified by the interconnected policies of Regional powers. Russia can, and should, utilize the Far East as a method to establish a security complex for both intra and inter-regional security. Militarization should be employed not as a direct counter measure to regional powers but as a means of establishing Russian foreign policy projected via regional status.

The RFE is a critical aspect of Russian projection to the international community. Russian aspirations as an emerging power are built on a developing multipolarly framed world with regional complexes, or sub-systems, as primacy actors conclusively rest on the effective use of the RFE as a catalyst in developing Russia as a balancing state with high leveraging power. If Russia fails to develop the RFE in a manner that allows for its use in foreign policy projection, then Russia may become an external second-tier regional power with limited projection. Possessing only a singular gateway in the west opposed to the dual east-west gateways that provide for high capacity power projection of Russian interest. Analysts and academics should make no mistake—the multipolar world Russian diplomats speak of, and posture policy to, will only be possible with proper use of the Russia's Far East.

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