

*The Presentation on
The Joint Russian-Chinese Initiative on Strengthening Security
in the Asia Pacific Region*

The global financial and economic crisis has accelerated a whole series of trends that can before long shift the balance of forces in global politics and economics, entailing a profound transformation of the entire system of international relations. A new polycentric world structure where the most important role belongs to regional cooperation has been emerging.

The crisis has highlighted that the Asia and Asia-Pacific region with its blooming economy rapidly becomes a key world region. Powerful resources, financial, industrial, and technological potential are concentrated here. New economic powers and centers of political influence are on the rise. The gravity center

of political activity is likewise shifting towards the Asia-Pacific. The region itself is also undergoing major changes. These include, above all, an unprecedented growth of interdependence and interconnection between the countries of the region, and in acceleration of multi-level economic integration.

Under the impact of global transformations a process of reshaping the regional architecture has started in the Asia-Pacific. In addition to the well established regional organizations and fora, such as ASEAN, SAARC, ARF, CICA and APEC, there have recently appeared the SCO, BRICS, «ASEAN plus Three» and East Asia Summits, ADMM Plus, Japan–China–Korea and Russia–India–China trilateral fora, the ACD and some others.

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At the same time the Asia-Pacific region suffers from the impact of the challenges of the globalization era. They include terrorism, drug trafficking, transborder organized crime, piracy, cyber crime, pollution and natural disasters. The recent Fukushima disaster proved once again that the region remains extremely vulnerable to the threats and challengers of modern times. It would be also appropriate to recall that there are three nuclear powers in the Asia-Pacific region while some others are building up their nuclear capacities. The danger of nuclear arms proliferation is also here. The uncontrolled conventional arms race is unraveling here. There are also threats coming from long-lasting but potentially explosive regional conflicts and territorial disputes.

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It becomes increasingly obvious that the existing security architecture in the Asia Pacific region which is based upon the non-transparent military alliances does not correspond to the modern realities of the multipolar world as well as to the nature and scale of multiplying threats and challenges the region is facing. The region still lacks a well-structured system of institutions and legal instruments able to guarantee peace and stability at this vast area.

These factors highlight the urgency of elaboration of additional measures to strengthen the security in the region. The increasing role of the Asia Pacific region in the global economy and politics, collision of interests of key players objectively require the collective efforts and joint responsibility for addressing topical problems and increasing the efficiency of regional level of global management.

The future regional architecture should be open, transparent and equal. It should be based on the non-bloc principle, the rule of international law and due consideration of legitimate interests of all countries. It is exactly what the leaders of Russia and China proceeded from during the Russian-Chinese summit in September last year in Beijing when they came out with the «Joint initiative on strengthening security and cooperation in the Asia Pacific region».It was proposed that all the states of the region reaffirm their commitment to the principles of equal and indivisible security, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use of force or threat of force, and other universally recognized norms of international law, renounce confrontation and efforts to enhance their national security to the prejudice of that of the others, and launch a broad discussion and practical implementation of measures aimed at ensuring security and economic well-being of all the countries. Both

presidents also called to create a network of security in the form of a well developed system of partnership links among multilateral regional groupings.

And this process has already started. The SCO has established official relations with the UN, ESCAP, ASEAN and a number of other organizations. There are links between ASEAN and APEC, between ASEAN and Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. CICA has established official contacts with UN, OEC, IOM, EurAsEC. Other structures like counter-terrorism, counter-drug, counter-piracy and disaster relief centers that operate in the region are starting to establish partnerships.

In our joint efforts to strengthen the security in the Asia Pacific region we don't need to invent anything new. We may use the already existing best practices in implementing CBM within the bilateral relations of many CICA member-countries as well as within such regional structures as ASEAN, SCO, ARF and CICA.

In this regard let me refer to the multilateral agreements signed in 1996 and 1997 by Russia with its neighbors - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China and Tajikistan, on strengthening confidence in the military sphere in the border areas. It is worth noting that in conformity with these agreements a number of CBMs including the exchange of general information on military forces, military activities and exercises, mutual invitation of observers, exchange of military inspections has been successfully implemented. And it contributed substantially to the creation of a good neighborly atmosphere between five countries. Some elements of these agreements could be utilized in a broader regional context.

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Conclusions

It is no doubt that CICA could make a valuable contribution to achieve the goal of building new architecture of security and cooperation in the Asia Pacific region. The forum is in a good position to launch the practical implementation of principles and CBMs agreed upon and contained in the Declaration on the principals guiding relations among CICA member-countries of 1999 and CICA Catalogue of 2004 which go fully in line with Joint Russian - Chinese initiative.

It would be reasonable to move in this regard gradually on a voluntarily basis, beginning from such general steps as confirming the strict commitment to the generally agreed principles, exchanging information on military doctrines, sharing vision on threats and challenges to security, exchanging experience in implementation of bilateral and multilateral CBMs, inviting observers to military

exercises etc. As appropriate plans may be developed. Each stage of work may result in drafting of relevant documents.

Summing up it would be worth noting that by launching joint initiative Russia and China did not mean to propose any “ready-made” recipes or formulas to strengthen security and stability in the region. There is no hidden agenda about it. It was just considered appropriate and timely to address a call to regional community to initiate Pan - Asian dialog on the issues of vital importance for the whole region to make the region more safe and stable. Hopefully this initiative will meet the support and cooperation from all the partners in the region. How we use this initiative in the course of promotion of military and political dimension in CICA is fully in the hands of its member-states.