

Russian Perceptions and Prospects for Nuclear Weapons Reductions in Northeast Asia

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Russia considers the Northeastern part of Asia a very important area. Two of Russia's largest federal regions – the Siberian and the Far East regions – represent about 2/3 of the whole Russian territory (see Table 1). The territory of these regions is larger than that of the United States or China. At the same time their population is relatively small and comparable with that of North Korea or Taiwan.

The Eastern part of Russia is rich with natural resources including oil, natural gas, metals, etc. In particular, proved oil resources in the region are estimated as 1.3 billion tons,² which is almost 20% of the total Russian proved reserves. At the same time, the territory of Eastern Russia is not well explored yet, so that some experts believe that oil resources are larger by an order of magnitude.³ Production of oil in this area is also comparatively low. Only 0.5% of the total Russian oil is produced here.⁴ If oil production is increased and an appropriate transportation system is created, the Siberian and the Far Eastern oil could become an attractive import option for China, Japan, and South Korea, as demand for energy resources grows in these countries.

The situation with natural gas is similar (see Table 3) – rich resources, a scantily explored territory, low production, and a great potential for export to other countries in Northeast Asia.

What is the level of economic cooperation of Russia with its neighbors in this region?

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States considered Northeast Asia as well as any other part of the world as an area of competition for projecting their influence. For different reasons there was very little economic cooperation between the Soviet Union and Japan, South Korea, or China. Meanwhile, the situation has changed and eco-

nomics relations are improving. The total mutual commodity circulation that reflects economic cooperation has grown rapidly (see Table 4). On

The demographic situation in the Russian East is growing ever more complex (Table 5). Even at the time of the Soviet Union, the region was not

	Territory (thousand km ²)	Population (million)
The World	134,288	6,314
Russia	17,095	144.2
Including		
Far East Region	6,215.9	6.63
Siberian Region	5,114.8	19.9
United States	9,640	291.5
China	9,584	1,288.7
Japan	378	127.5
South Korea	99	47.9
Taiwan	36	22.6
North Korea	121	22.7

Table 1. Territories and population of Russia, the US, and countries in Northeast Asia¹

	Proved reserves (billion tons)	Production	Consumption	Export	Import
The World	140.4	3,767	3,791		
Russia	7.016	364.3	130		
United States	3.075	402.7	983		
China	3.664	165	229	7.6	60.4
Japan	0.004	-	265	4.6	273
South Korea	-	-	107	40.3	148.3
Taiwan	-	-	49.4		
North Korea	-	-	4.25		

Table 2. Proved reserves, production, consumption, export, and import of oil of Russia, the US, and Northeast Asian countries (million tons a year) in 2001⁵

	Proved reserves (trillion m ³)	Production	Consumption	Export	Import
The World	161.2	2,578.0	2,555.0	712.0	697.5
Russia	47.86	580.8	408.1	205.4	32.7
United States	5.195	548.1	640.9	11.2	114.1
China	1.290	30.3	27.4	-	-
Japan	0.02	2.519	80.42	-	77.7
South Korea	-	-	20.9	-	21.1
Taiwan	0.038	-	6.6	0.41	6.3

Table 3. Proved reserves, production, consumption, export, and import of natural gas of Russia, the US, and countries of Northeast Asia (billion meter³ a year) in 2001⁶

the other hand, figures for total commodity circulation show that neither the countries of Northeast Asia nor Russia consider each other as major economic partners. There is still a great potential for joint cooperation.

economically self-sustained. The federal center subsidized the region, but the investments were halted after the collapse of the Soviet Union, so that the population found itself in a very complicated situation. As a result,

many people chose to move to the Western regions of Russia. The population of the Siberian and Far East regions dropped by nearly 12% during the last eleven years, and it is very difficult to stop this tendency, because the population of Russia as a whole is diminishing. In particular, it dropped by almost 4 million people since 1992.⁸

At the same time, a high demographic pressure comes from China, where the density of population is much higher. Depending on the area taken into account, the density of population to the south of the Russian-Chinese border exceeds that to the north by a factor from 15 to 30.¹⁰ In particular, about 100-120 million people live in the Heilongjiang province alone, which neighbors the Primorsk Krai and the Khabarovsk Region. The majority of the population is relatively poor, and the unemployment rate is high. Since the Russian border has been opened for Chinese at the end of the 1980s, many have traveled to Russia as merchants or temporary workers.

The decline of the population and the Russian government's inability to change this tendency gave rise to public concerns over the potential sinofication of the Eastern regions of Russia. Although there are different views on the seriousness of the problem and how to deal with it, experts in general agree that on the longer term Russia may face a Kosovo-like scenario if migrants from neighboring countries eventually make up the majority of the population and therefore dominate the local political power. Thus, Russian politicians frequently raise concerns about the possible loss of control over the Eastern part of Russia not as a result of general war with China or another country, but as a consequence of demographic changes in the region. It should be mentioned that Chinese authorities understand the problem and currently act responsibly. However, it is quite clear that any joint development of the regional resources like oil and gas will require an additional workforce. China is a very attractive source of cheap labor for the region. At the same time, the Russian authorities will have to find ways of keeping control over the migration process.

The Role of Nuclear Weapons and Prospects for Reductions

The level of military confrontation between nuclear powers in the region has substantially decreased since 1980s. The bulk of today's military forces is a legacy of the history. Both Russia and China continue to downsize their forces. Even though military

host strategic submarines once the last Delta-III nuclear submarines will be retired. Thus, perhaps, the only place where strategic forces will remain in this part of Russia is Ukrainka, the home of strategic bombers.

As deployment of strategic nuclear forces in the Eastern part of Russia is curtailed, non-strategic nuclear weapons in the region may be assigned

	Russia		World
	1996	2003	2003
China	7	15.8	833.4
Japan		~ 6	793.7
South Korea	1.1	4.2	376.9
For comparison: Russia			209.2

Table 4. Commodity circulation (export + import) (billion US\$)⁷

	1993	1998	2004
Primorskii Krai	2,302	2,214	2,051
Khabarovsk Krai	1,621	1,535	1,427
Yevreiskaya Autonomous Region	219	203	190
Amursk Region	1,062	1,016	894.5
Chita Region	1,376	1,274	1,144
Buryatia	1,057	1,043	974
Irkutsk Region	2,872	2,768	2,561
Total	10,509	10,053	9,241.5

Table 5. Dynamics of population of the Russian regions that have a common border with China (thousand)⁹

budgets are increasing, modernization still continues, although at a slower pace. At the same time, inferior by quantity but thus far superior by quality of its arms, Russia feels that it needs nuclear weapons to maintain a balance of forces.¹¹

Currently, about 20% of the deployed Russian strategic nuclear forces remain in the Eastern part of Russia (see Table 7). As strategic forces shrink, the pace of reductions in the region is the fastest. In particular, three of the four divisions of the Russian Strategic Forces that have been disbanded since 2000 were located here. And the reductions will continue. Most likely, the SS-18 base at Uzhur will be closed down after 2010. The future of the SS-25 mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) is also uncertain, as they are getting older. The submarine base on the Kamchatka peninsula will likely no longer

play a stronger role. According to the author's assessment, nearly one third of the 3,300 Russian non-strategic weapons¹⁵ are assigned for deployment with general-purpose forces in the Siberian and Far Eastern military districts (see Table 8). All of these weapons are currently kept at central storage facilities of the 12th Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces. In case of hostilities they can be deployed with surface-to-surface, surface-to-air, air-to-surface, anti-ship, antisubmarine missiles, and other dual-use means of the Ground, Air, and Naval Forces.

Estimates of deployed nuclear forces of China are largely speculative and variable. According to U.S. experts, China deploys about 400 nuclear warheads.¹⁷ Russian expert estimates of the total Chinese arsenal are about two times higher (about 700 warheads).¹⁸ The nuclear forces of

	Russia (total)	United States (total)	China	Japan	South Korea	Taiwan	North Korea
Defense budget in 2003 (billion \$)	(~10.6)	(456.2)	22.4	42.8	14.6	6.6	1.6
Active, x 1000	145 (1,212.7)	106 (1,433.6)	2,255	240	686	290	1,106
Army	70 (360)	32 (502)	1,600	148	560	200	950
Air Force	35 (184.6)	30 (380)	400	45.6	64.7	45	110
Navy	40 (155)	44 (552) ¹³	255	44.4	63	45	46
Tanks	8,370 (22,800)	116 (8,000)	7,580	1,000	2,320	>920	3,500
Attack aircraft, Air Force	518 (1,630)	183 (3,600)	1,900	280	538	479	584
Attack aircraft, Navy	50 (266)	>600 (1,700)	700	80	16	32	
Nuclear attack subs	10 (32)	27 (54)	5				
Conventional subs	5 (15)		62	16	20	4	26
Carriers	0 (1)	6 (12)					
Major combatants	8 (26)	54 (106)	63	54	15	32	3

Table 6. Conventional military forces in Northeast Asia¹²

System	Launchers (total)	Warheads (total)
SS-18	46 (126)	460 (1,260)
SS-19	0 (144)	0 (864)
SS-24	0 (15)	0 (150)
SS-25	126 (312)	126 (312)
SS-27	0 (36)	0 (36)
SS-N-23	0 (96)	0 (384)
SS-N-20	0 (100)	0 (1,000)
SS-N-18	64 (112)	192 (336)
Tu-160	0 (14)	0 (168)
Tu-95MS16	15 (32)	240 (512)
Tu-95MS6	25 (32)	150 (192)
Total		1,168 (5,214)

Table 7. Russian strategic forces in Northeast Asia¹⁴

	1998	2004
Ground Forces (Army)	0	150
Navy	300	250
Air Forces (attack aircraft)	650	500
Air and Missile Defenses	400	100
Total	1,350	1,000

Table 8. Estimates of Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons assigned to forces deployed in Northeast Asia¹⁶

China will likely grow numerically in response to the buildup of the US missile defense systems.

Fortunately, the current situation in the region is quite stable. Russia reduces its strategic forces deployed in Eastern Siberia and the Far East. There are no signs that Russian non-strategic forces would grow there either. If China builds up its nuclear forces, the current pace is slow. However, it is quite clear that the current state of affairs cannot be preserved indefinitely. In particular, the existing situation reduces chances to open a productive dialog on transparency of non-strategic nuclear weapons between Russia, the US, and NATO.¹⁹ A way to break this deadlock could be to initiate talks between

Russia and China on possible bilateral confidence-building measures in the nuclear area. Such discussions could involve both governmental and independent experts and become an important step toward improving security in Northeast Asia.

Conclusions

Several observations can be made from the above:

1. Russia is interested in a stable and peaceful development of its Eastern territories. It does not see an immediate external military threat from China or other countries in Northeast Asia, but Russia is concerned with the potential emergence of such a threat in future.

2. There is a great potential for growth of mutually beneficial economic cooperation between Russia and countries in Northeast Asia. However, the development of natural resources in Siberia and the Far East may create a complex demographic situation and provoke distrust and tensions in the region.

3. With respect to the regional situation in Northeast Asia, Russia considers its nuclear forces as an equalizer in a balance of military forces and as a “hedge” against potentially undesirable developments in the future (e.g. a Kosovo-like conflict or war).

4. In order to support a regional military balance, Russia may place more emphasis on non-strategic nuclear weapons assigned to its armed forces in Northeast Asia while its strategic forces shrink.

5. There is a need to start developing transparency and confidence-building measures between China and Russia on nuclear forces in order to achieve further reductions of nuclear arsenals.

1 The figures for the population of Russia are taken from official data of the State Committee on Statistics (www.gks.ru) and correspond to January 1, 2004. Figures for other countries are taken from: Naseleniye i Obshchestvo (Population and Society), N 74, August 2003, Information Bulletin of the Center for Demography and Human Ecology at the Institute of National Economy Forecasting, Russian Academy of Sciences.

- 2 *New Projects for Production and Export of Oil: Northern, Southern and Eastern Directions on the Russian Oil Compass*, Analytical report, The Center for Policy Issues, 2003.
- 3 V. Yakubovskii, *Prospects for the Formation of Multilateral Cooperation on Energy in Northeast Asia: The Role of Russia*, Presentation at the Moscow Carnegie Center, February 19, 2004; www.carnegie.ru/ru/news/69818.htm.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook*, <http://www.cia.gov>.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 The table is compiled from data published in Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs official statements; www.mid.ru; Vilya Gelbras, *The Chinese Factor of Russian Internal and External Policy*, in: G. Vitkovskaya and D. Trenin (ed.), *Prospects for the Russian Far East: Crossborder Cooperation*, Moscow Carnegie Center, Moscow, June 1999; CIA, op. cit.
- 8 The population of Russia was estimated at 148 million in 1992; see: *Dire Demographic Trends Cast a Shadow on Russia's Future*, RAND Study, RB-5054, 2001).
- 9 The data for 1993 and 1998 were taken from: Galina Vitkovskaya and Zhanna Zayonchkovskaya, *New Stolypin Policies in the Far East: Hopes and Realities*, in: G. Vitkovskaya and D. Trenin, op.cit. The figures for 2004 are taken from official data of the State Committee on Statistics; www.gks.ru.
- 10 Galina Vitkovskaya and Zhanna Zayonchkovskaya, op.cit.
- 11 See for example: Alexei Arbatov, *Russian Security and the Western Connection*, in: John Newhouse (ed.), *Assessing the Threats*, Center for Defense Information, Washington D.C., July 2002, pp. 69-84.
- 12 *The Military Balance, 2004-2005*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2004.
- 13 Includes Marine Corps.
- 14 Data from START I Memorandum of Understanding of January 31, 2004.
- 15 More detailed information can be found in: Anatoli Diakov, Eugene Miasnikov, and Timur Kadyshev, *Non-strategic Nuclear Weapons. Problems of Control and Reduction*, Center for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies at MIPT, Dolgoprudny, May 2004; www.armscontrol.ru/pubs/en/nsnw0406.htm.
- 16 Data for 1998 are taken from: William M. Arkin, Robert S. Norris, and Joshua Handler, *Taking Stock, Worldwide Nuclear Deployments 1998*, March 1998. Data for 2004 are author's estimates.
- 17 *NRDC Nuclear Notebook: Chinese Nuclear Forces, 2003*, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, November-December 2003.
- 18 Vyacheslav Baskakov and Alexandr Gorskov, *Beijing's Nuclear and Missile Arsenal*, *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye*, July 12, 2002.
- 19 This topic is discussed in more detail in: Anatoli Diakov, Eugene Miasnikov, and Timur Kadyshev, op.cit.

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Report on "Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons"

The Center for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology released an English translation of on "Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons. Problems of Control and Reduction".

The report analyzes place and role of Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons (NSNW) in Russian, US, and NATO nuclear doctrines, assesses their NSNW arsenals, studies their approaches towards problems of NSNW control and reductions, and suggests possible solutions to these problems.

The Introduction analyzes the current state of affairs in the sphere of control and reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons. Particularly, it is concluded that after the 1987 INF Treaty and the 1991 Presidential initiatives, no noticeable steps have been made.

Chapter 1 is devoted to problems of classification of nuclear weapons. There is no common view among nuclear arms control experts on what tactical (non-

strategic) nuclear weapons are. One of the reasons is that objectively, it is rather difficult to choose criteria that would help differentiate between strategic and non-strategic arms unambiguously. Other reasons that make classification difficult are also considered. Classification used in the report is based on provisions of the START-I Treaty, and according to it strategic nuclear weapons are the US and Russian ones that are covered by START-I limitations, including nuclear warheads attributed to them, while non-strategic nuclear weapons are US and Russian weapons that are not considered to be strategic.

Chapter 2 analyzes place and role of NSNW in Russia's nuclear doctrine, gives an assessment of the Russian NSNW arsenal, and briefly describes nuclear safeguard measures.

Chapter 3 provides an assessments of the US NSNW, analyzes place and role of NSNW in the present-day American

nuclear policy, the current status of the US non-strategic nuclear forces, and planning issues; also considered are current US discussions that question the need to maintain NSNW, as well as issues related to development of new non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Chapter 4 analyzes the NATO nuclear doctrine, provides assessments of NATO nuclear forces and of the US nuclear forces in Europe, and considers legal aspects of its deployment and use. The Chapter also analyzes contradictions of the NATO nuclear strategy in view of its extension to the East and in connection with provisions of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Chapter 5 analyzes US and Russia's attitudes towards controllable reductions of NSNW and discusses why progress in the sphere of control and reductions of NSNW would be in the interest of all concerned; suggested are possible ways to solve this problem.

The full report is available as a PDF file at www.armscontrol.ru.