

**"Security-Development Nexus in Eurasia from the Russian Perspective"**

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The last decade has seen an emergence and 'mainstreamification' of 'security-development nexus' paradigm in political and academic discourses on international cooperation. This process has culminated in an inclusion of peace, security and governance targets in the new global development agenda for 2015-2030 under the umbrella of Goal 16 "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". A recent broadening of a spectrum of ODA-eligible peace and security-related expenditures (including some preventing violent extremism (PVE) activities) at the OECD DAC High-Level Meeting in February 2016, also reflected this general trend.

The Goal 16 was vigorously opposed by the BRICS countries and Group 77 countries, with Russia being one of the most outspoken opponents. A wide range of the critics' reservations contained a concern that the inclusion of this goal will provide the Western powers with new incentives to intervene in the internal affairs of fragile but sovereign states. However, while firmly refraining from 'failed/fragile states' agenda, Russia clearly understands an importance of stable and resilient governance institutions and the complex linkages between security and development. This understanding was codified in the Concept of the Russian Federation's State Policy in the Area of International Development Assistance of 2014, where conflict mitigation along with countering and preventing transnational threats, such as terrorism and drug trafficking, was set as a primary goal of Russia's development cooperation policies at the regional level. Since the adoption of the Concept this objective has become even more relevant because of a recent outburst of jihadism in the Levant with far-reaching implications for Russia and its neighbors, especially in Central Asia.

The Russian authorities agree that radicalization, terrorism and trafficking in drugs and arms and terrorism represent grave threats to stability of Central Eurasia affecting Russia's and its key SCO partners' national security. However, Russian officials rarely voice the idea that these challenges might reverse the development gains of the last decades and hinder progress of the current and prospective Eurasian integration initiatives, and, as such, should be duly addressed also in the context of international development cooperation policies.

Russia has been a quite harsh critic of the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Plan on Countering Violent Extremism of 2016, its focus on 'good governance', support for civil society, ignorance of subversion-extremism nexus etc. It remains, probably, the only major donor concentrated in its counterterrorism policies almost exclusively on security assistance, and tends to prioritize a direct approach focused on hard-security and short-term gains over indirect approach, aimed at ensuring 'soft security', long-term-oriented and emphasizing provision of traditional development assistance.

Russia, undoubtedly, has unique competitive advantages in this sphere which it is willing to share with other partners, including the North East Asia countries. This kind of cooperation takes place under the umbrella of the SCO with China, and in innovative triangular mechanisms, where Russia acts not as a donor, but as a program implementing partner. One of the best examples of this kind is Japan-UNODC-Russia partnership in training the drug enforcement agencies' officers from Central Asia and Afghanistan in one of the institutions under the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs.

While clearly giving priority to the CIS countries, and, primarily, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, in its development policy, Russia seems to lag behind other donors in terms of implementing or sponsoring programs aimed specifically at job creation, youth de-radicalisation, promoting social inclusion etc. There is indeed a huge potential for pooling resources with other North-East Asian countries in this area.

To fulfill the potential of cooperation among the NEA countries in addressing the issues lying at the junction of security and development across the Eurasian space, Russia and its partners need to start a constructive dialogue over conceptualization of terrorism and extremism and share more widely their unique experiences in countering these threats that can help secure Eurasia and

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achieve Sustainable Development Goals in the most vulnerable parts of the continent within an agreed timeframe.