



Russia's New "Look East" Policy and Relations With North and South Korea

——The Putin Administration's Geopolitical Approach

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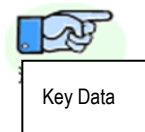
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[Key Points]

- Since the beginning of this century, Russia has started to attach greater importance to the strategic and geopolitical aspects of Far Eastern development. In that context, it has formulated a new "Look East" Policy and is devoting considerable energies to bolstering relationships with Asia-Pacific countries, including North and South Korea. Cooperative relationships with the Korean Peninsula are key on the economic front, while in the realm of security, Russia supports the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.
- Russia's trade with North Korea is extremely small in scale and its economic policy in respect of the Korean Peninsula is heavily dependent upon its relations with the North. The 1990s saw a freeze in trade, but following the restoration of the relationship and resolution of debt issues in the 2000s, the launch of development projects involving Russia, North Korea, and South Korea at last came into view in the 2010s. However, trilateral economic cooperation has been at a complete standstill since February 2016, due to repeated acts of provocation by North Korea.
- Progress with plans for rail, energy, and other infrastructure projects involving the Korean Peninsula will be essential to boosting Russia's presence in the Asia-Pacific region. Political issues are the crucial factor in achieving this and it is hoped that new developments in Russia's relations with the USA and Japan will have a positive influence on Russia's Korean Peninsula policy.



Russian Trade With South Korea and North Korea (Russian customs statistics, \$1 million)

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
輸出					
ロシア合計	63,687	89,269	241,219	336,959	343,543
北朝鮮	70	38	228	82	78
韓国	747	972	2,361	10,435	13,492
輸入					
ロシア合計	33,117	22,275	98,577	197,439	182,719
北朝鮮	15	8	7	16	6
韓国	502	359	4,003	7,273	4,560

Exports

Russia (total)

North Korea

South Korea

Imports

Source: Federal Customs Service of Russia