

# Introduction



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This handbook is a unique analytical endeavor coming out at a remarkable time. On the one hand, the Western part of the world is hell-bent on demonizing or keeping quiet about Russia's foreign, defense and security policies, trying to portray it as the *bête noire* of international relations, and muffling the voices of impartial Russian experts in the worst traditions of *suppressing dissent*. On the other hand, ironically, the demand for informed discussions of international security issues related to Russia and its policies runs as high as ever. People in the West, and particularly across the large non-Western communities that make up the Global Majority, are really keen to *understand* Russia's line of reasoning, its interests and perception of security.

This Yearbook is the successor to the *Security Index Journal*, which was earlier published by PIR Center under my guidance and editorial chairmanship for leaders and experts in Russia and around the globe. In line with our time-proven policy, we do not intend to *indoctrinate* our readers, force-feed them with our answers to complex questions or, for that matter, pretend to know all the answers. This would be highly unprofessional and presumptuous. On the contrary, we assume that, to quote the outstanding Abkhazian thinker and writer Fazil Iskander, *not every critique is essentially a thought, but every thought is essentially a critique*.

The book before you is a collection of reflections penned by the most prominent Russian experts on international security, foreign policy and global development. It is kind of an assortment of *rough* diamonds that as the Editor-in-Chief I make a point of leaving unpolished lest I should give them a misleadingly high gloss. Conversely, I want you to be able to see also their imperfections which appear as a result of our ongoing professional debates.

*He's blessed who visited this world  
In moments of its destination –  
Like for the feast or celebration,  
He was invited there by gods?*

This scintillating poetical observation was made by the great Russian poet Fyodor Tyutchev. The *moments of destination* can drag on for years... but its yet more important for experts and enlightened statesmen to behave as mindful guests *invited there* to partake in the conversation and listen carefully to the entire *diversity of opinions* and parse out key unifying themes which can help *resolve* problems that matter for security of the world or its regions, instead of dodging them by making excuses that these challenges are supposed to be dealt with by *future generations*. Global accountability is foremostly about being accountable to the *current generation* and adept at making the life our children safer and more predictable instead of placing on them the burden we fail to carry ourselves.

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Russia plays a unique role in building a new architecture of global security to replace the crumbling structures of the 20th century. The insightful Lev Gumilev, a Russian historian, saw Russia as a country with a *Eurasian* mission. Joseph Brodsky, Russian poet and Nobel Prize laureate, called it *Asiopa*. Some scholars in what we might now call old time studies referred to it as *Heartland*. However, by any reckoning, from the perspective of the ten-time-zones-spanning Russia the rest of Europe is nothing more than a *Far West*. The *Pro-Western* 19th and 20th centuries proved to be short in time. Our playing field is our country covering one seventh of the world's landmass and the world around us. This world is *not* Western. But it is *not Eastern* either... and it is *not non-Western*. It is the world that is *not closed or blinkered* towards Russia. It is the world that has not built barriers – be it walls or sanctions – against Russia. This means that our playing field is the biggest part of the world, the Global Majority which – according to Dr. Elena Chernenko, one of our Yearbook's authors – is *now on the rise*.

But Russia is on the rise too. After two decades of internal and external turbulence and having passed through the humiliating – though probably inevitable and necessary for self-education – period of fawning on the West and then through the years of the renaissance, Russia is becoming a reliable *exporter of security*. I am aware that in today's context this may sound defiant. But I really mean it. Russia has taken too long a time and wasted too many words *explaining itself*. Russia started doing it in the late 1990s when the United States mobilized their Western allies and satellites against Russia, their purported *partner* to whom, even then, they were in fact profoundly hostile. Russia did it early in the 21st century when it sent a strong signal to the United States warning it against crossing the red line and destroying the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) that Washington had previously called the cornerstone of international security architecture. And, finally, it was reiterated by President Vladimir Putin speaking at the Munich Security Conference in 2007<sup>[1]</sup>. In this edition of the Yearbook, you will find a whole section taking you back to that momentous inflection point in the world history when Russia through its President as well as its military leadership tried to reason with the West to preempt trouble: "Let's talk and come to terms. But not your terms alone. We are ready to be flexible, but not amenable to make just another concession. Let's reach a compromise. Mutual respect and indivisible security are the only possible basis". Not everybody wanted to listen. Just as they would not listen to our proposals for a new European security treaty.

Today, through its Special Military Operation in Ukraine Russia is laying the groundwork for building a new security architecture on the European continent and, broader still, to reconfigure the world order established in the 20th century. Dr. Dmitry Trenin, Dr. Dmitry Evstafiev and Dr. Andrey Kortunov contribute to the discussion of this tricky and long process on the pages of our Yearbook.

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Focusing on the relations with Europe or the *collective West* would be short-sighted and damaging for Russian interests. Russia is a Euro-Pacific, Eurasian power which embraces the whole world. Therefore, its *Pivot to the East* is not a tactical move, but further development of the strategic *vision*, outlined as early as the 1990s by Evgeny Primakov, a notable Russian politician, diplomat and scholar.

In 2024, Russia presides over BRICS. I remember how I happened to be taking part in preparations for the first BRIC summit (without South Africa yet) in December 2008. We were in the center of Moscow on a freezing day when shivering from cold my colleague from Brazil observed: "We are all here like in Pirandello's play: characters in search of an author". However, neither the discomforting weather, nor the initial doubts have swayed our commitment to the common objective: BRIC(S) has been designed *not against somebody* but *for the sake of creating* a new world in terms of financial and economic sustainability as well as global security. The ambitious expansion of BRICS (that Sergey Ryabkov writes about on our pages) to include Argentina, Egypt, Iran, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Ethiopia is both a sign that this group *has matured* and a serious claim to play a significant role in global affairs.

Another driver of the *expanding geography* is Russia's comeback to Africa (discussed in the Yearbook by Dr. Irina Abramova and Vsevolod Sviridov). From the Russian foreign policy perspective, this move is nothing new but rather long overdue. Such tardiness, however frustrating, is not disgraceful. What *is* really disgraceful is the comeback of the memories of the colonial rule and the neocolonial habits that the Africans can see with a naked eye in today's behavior of Europeans and Americans alike. The absence of such *toxic legacy* is a major advantage for Russia, opening up a range of opportunities to promote Russian technologies and education as well as to make a comprehensive strategic comeback to Africa without encroaching on the sovereignty of African nations and without the arrogance of a neocolonial mentor.

*Security Index Yearbook* consists of **eight Parts** and **29 Chapters**.

**Part I** focuses on particular aspects of **global security in the times of transition to a multipolar world**. This part includes nine chapters, which cover a wide range of issues related to war and peace in the context of the current Ukrainian crisis, nuclear nonproliferation with its three pillars and arms control, new types of conventional weapons, lethal autonomous weapons, outer space, international terrorism and cybersecurity. Do we really recognize all the threats we are currently facing? Are they new or, maybe, just have been pending for many previous years? Do we have the courage to deal with them? And where does Russia stand on this issue, and what it proposes to do in particular?

**Chapter 1** by **Dr. Dmitry Trenin** analyzes the implications of the crisis in Ukraine, including dramatic transformations for both Russia and the whole world. The author points out that the conflict in Ukraine has its root causes and prerequisites thus putting the hybrid conflict between Russian and the *collective West* onto the broader agenda of global trends. At the end of his deep analysis the author sets out the prospects for the future. Are they going to be bright or dark?

**Chapter 2** by **Dmitry Stefanovich** focuses on nuclear deterrence and arms control. The author discusses nuclear weapons modernization process, which includes delivery systems, nuclear warheads, nuclear command, control and communications, and also some developments in the field of doctrines and concepts. The author touches upon the possibility of a nuclear war among nations in the future as well as strategic arms control and risk reduction in the context of expiring in 2026 New START Treaty. What should be done to escape nuclear apocalypse?

**Chapter 3** by **Sergey Semenov** discusses the risks of the nuclear nonproliferation regime weakening in the future. Russia is being portrayed as an *outsider* in the nuclear nonproliferation sphere. But what is about others? Transferring of tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus, withdrawal from the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), suspension of the New START Treaty... Maybe, these are the signals that Russia is sending to the world in order to be heard? Or, maybe, Russia does not need nuclear nonproliferation and arms control anymore. But why?

**Chapter 4** by **Dr. Alexey Ubeev** focuses on peaceful nuclear technologies, on their development in the times of international tension escalation as well as the issues of politicization of peaceful atom. Attention is drawn also to the situation with Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) in the context of the Russian Special Military Operation in Ukraine.

In **Chapter 5** **Dmitry Stefanovich** presents the views on new types of conventional weapons as a strategic factor influencing current global security agenda in general and military potential of states in particular. The author explores the security dilemma and touches upon the problems of the comprehensive inclusion of strategic non-nuclear weapons in the arms control architecture. Have existing agreements, as well as those that are no longer in force, addressed the issue even partially?

In **Chapter 6** **Ambassador Mikhail Lysenko** tries to find an answer to the question whether outer space is the domain for peace or arms race. There are several aspects raised in the Chapter, including the challenges to long-term outer space sustainability and militarization of outer space. Special attention is given to legal restrictions on military outer space activities and international treaties' provisions imposing restrictions on military use of outer space.

**Chapter 7 by Dr. Andrey Malov** highlights the problem of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) in the context of multinational disarmament. It covers LAWS capabilities, describes legal frameworks, and outlines their future. The author also analyzes the issues of LAWS compliance with international humanitarian law.

**Chapter 8 by Dr. Elena Chernenko** concentrates on Russia's cyber diplomacy and its evolution amid the great powers rivalry and the shaping of a multipolar world order. The author examines cyber cooperation between Russia and foreign countries, where a premium is put on bilateral cooperation between Russia and the US. The history of their cooperation is characterized by ups and downs as well as achievements and missed opportunities. The author insists that nowadays Russia is experiencing a *Pivot to the East*, and Sino-Russian cooperation, including in the high-tech field, intensifies. But what are the prospects for cooperation in cyber field between Russia and the BRICS countries? Or between Russia and Africa?

**In Chapter 9 Leonid Tsukanov** assesses the threats posed by international terrorist organizations. The author analyzes the current state of affairs in the *jihadist movement*, identifies the most pressing challenges it is facing today. The author notes that despite deep crisis, the threat coming from radical Islamists may increase and spill over to other areas of security.

**Part II** focuses on specific regions and countries as well as their relations with Russia at the current stage of the world development, examining all the challenges and opportunities. The attention is paid both to *friendly* and *unfriendly* states.

**In Chapter 10 Dr. Vasily Kashin** analyzes the relations between Russia and China. Which format do they have – strategic partnership or alliance – and why? And what are the results already gained? Besides, the author examines China's stance on the current conflict in Ukraine and explores the development of Sino-Russian partnership over the past period. The two countries have built a strategic formation whose role in global affairs is difficult to overestimate. The author also shares his views on the prospects of cooperation between Russia and China in the future.

**Chapter 11 by Dr. Vyacheslav Belokrenitsky and Dr. Ruslan Mamedov** describe the evolution of Russia's Middle East policy. The authors analyze Russia's relations with the countries of the region, identify the top priorities for Russia and major security threats which draw the Moscow's attention to the Middle East making Russia one of the active geopolitical players there.

**Chapter 12 by Adlan Margojev** touches upon the establishment of strategic relations between Russia and Iran with a focus on both positive and negative aspects of cooperation between the two states, and its drivers. The author examines a variety of issues where Russia and Iran share positions, including policy, economy, and security domain. But are there any contradictions? The author also asks a number of questions the answers to which that may define the future of the Russia-Iran partnership.

**Chapter 13 by Vsevolod Sviridov** discusses the topic of Russia-Africa interaction, its evolution and current state. The author analyzes the role given to Africa in Russian doctrinal documents, sums up Russia-Africa cooperation results to date, and investigates mainstream Western narratives on this issue. The article discusses possible future directions of cooperation between Russia and African countries beyond the military sphere or food. A special place is given to disruptive technologies, as well as information and communication technologies, space, energy transition and critical minerals, capacity-building, and technology transfer.

**In Chapter 14 Dr. Boris Martynov** follows on the discussion of relations between Russia and other countries, this time with a focus on Latin America, as an independent and sovereign region with its own indigenous culture, and primarily on the attitude of the Latin American states based on their unique political philosophy and national identity to international law.

**In Chapter 15 Dr. Andrey Kortunov** analyzes European security (destroyed) architecture with special attention to the current crisis in Ukraine. The author emphasizes that the ambiguous relationship between the conventional and the nuclear dimension of European security is likely to remain one of the major complicating factors for future arrangements in Europe. What is the future of European security? And what role does Ukrainian conflict play in its (re)forming?

**Chapter 16 by Dr. Maxim Suchkov** provides a strong analysis of the current and future relations between Russia and the US. The author compares current relations with the period of Cold War, however, at the end of the day he emphasizes the fact that previous era is different from what is happening now. What is the key irritator in the Russia-US relations, and will they continue to deteriorate in the future?

**In Chapter 17 Elena Karnaukhova** provides insight into the nature of Greater Eurasia and Greater Eurasian Partnership. Among other things, she raises a philosophical question of the place of Russia between the West and the East (or maybe above?), analyzes the functioning of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in the current circumstances, the ambiguity of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Is it possible to build Greater Eurasia? How should we understand it? And what actually this concept can be all about?

**Part III** gives a detailed analysis of specific global and regional issues *under a microscope*.

**In Chapter 18 by Dr. Vladimir Orlov and Sergey Semenov** suggest the scenarios for the future of nuclear nonproliferation, in particularly dealing with the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation. The authors assess the effectiveness of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) as well as the scenarios of nuclear proliferation against the backdrop of an exacerbating global environment, notably the erosion of the US leadership. They point at nine states / territories which can acquire nuclear weapons: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan<sup>[2]</sup>, Ukraine, Türkiye, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Brazil.

**In Chapter 19 Vladimir Ladanov** analyzes the AUKUS deal and its interconnection with the general Australian defense strategy. Australia is capable of creating and sustaining an independent self-sufficient defense posture. But adopting it is undoubtedly a difficult policy choice and a clear break with the past which at the moment is far from enjoying the majority support. Can Australia defend itself? Can the joining of AUKUS deal jeopardize Australian national security in case of potential conflict between the US and China?

**In Chapter 20 Alexandra Zubenko** observes the status and the goals of the French nuclear doctrine at the current stage. She dives into the questions of the current nuclear policies, nuclear rhetoric and modernization program of France and its evolution after the start of the conflict in Ukraine. The Chapter also touches upon the prospects for France's engagement in multilateral arms control talks with Russia.

**Chapter 21 by Nikita Neklyudov, Dr. Andrey Baykov and Anatoly Shchekin** describes how an international crisis may contribute to ontological security. Authors argue that ontological security can paradoxically be achieved through escalating practices capable of provoking international crises. The authors deal with the concepts of practice turn in international relations, habitus (disposition), and field (environment). They use the demise of the INF Treaty as an example of a crisis which has become a source of ontological threat to both the US and Russia.

**Part IV** provides *dialogues* and *trialogues* with prominent Russian experts and high-ranking officials. These interviews are mostly done by junior Russian experts or students keenly interested in the future of global security and who never shy away from digging deep to find solutions to a problem.

**In Chapter 22 Hon. Sergey Ryabkov** provides insights into Russia's BRICS Chairship. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister stresses that BRICS is an innovative format of interaction rather than just a union of individual states. BRICS partnership is built on mutual respect for each other's interests and can be viewed as a basis for a fairer multipolar world order. Talking about Russia's Chairship in BRICS Sergey Ryabkov mentions a wide range of priorities with a view to enhancing cooperation within the forum.

**In Chapter 23 Ambassador Kirill Barsky** continues our discussions about Greater Eurasia and Greater Eurasian Partnership with a focus on security threats and possible responses to dealing with them. He gives a comprehensive view on the current state of affairs on the *European flank* of Greater Eurasia, ASEAN attitudes to enhancing security, top clashes in Asia-Pacific region such as the territorial disputes over South China Sea and the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Besides, he pays special attention to the Eurasian Heartland, the role of the Russian-Chinese cooperation and peculiarities of the US policy towards Eurasia. His thoughts and considerations based on his long-term diplomatic experience are accompanied by his understanding of the philosophy and destiny of Eurasia as a conflict between the Earth and the Sea.

**In Chapter 24 Dr. Dmitry Trenin** addresses *Pax Americana* and the evolution of the global order. Special attention is paid to the role and specifics of the functioning of the UN, the current Ukrainian crisis, the risks, and factors contributing to the erosion of the nuclear nonproliferation regime, the fear of nuclear weapons, nuclear taboo, the *escalate to de-escalate* concept among other things. Where is the world going? What does the crisis of the US-centered world order imply? How are the nuclear nonproliferation regime and American hegemony interconnected? What does the phenomenon of nuclear multipolarity mean? Are we moving towards the use of nuclear weapons on the battlefield? All the most important, relevant, burning issues of the global security agenda are covered in this Chapter.

**In Chapter 25 Dr. Irina Abramova** discusses the outcomes of Russia-Africa summits in 2019 and 2023. Further strengthening the relations between Russia and Africa – is this mission possible? Have all the agreements been fulfilled so far? And what are the obstacles to overcome? The author underscores that Russia and Africa pursue common interests which are of a strategic, not tactical nature. She also points out Russia's competitors in the region as well as stereotypes towards Africa and *Africa multi-faces* in our perception.

**In Chapter 26 Dr. Dmitry Polikanov** addresses the role of soft power tools that Russia uses in sustaining its posture on the global arena. Through the prism of values and national priorities, cultural and educational projects he considers the key mechanisms of the formation and implementation of Russian soft power. But is it a real tool or just a phantom? Does it have strong influence abroad? Attention is also paid to major impediments for the progress in this area.

We decided to supplement **Part V *Back to the Future*** with the two articles which were published in *Security Index* Journal in 2007. Why? Just in order to demonstrate that back then we made an effort to be heard and to signal that the world could go in a wrong direction.

**Chapter 27 by General Yuri Baluevskiy** discusses globalization and its forms and manifestations. The relevance of his thoughts has only increased over the years. The author puts into doubt globalization as a phenomenon and is concerned about its future. However, the author lays the focus on Russia's interests – which are determined on the basis of its historical development – in the changing world. The author examines Russia's role in global affairs, challenges that Moscow faces and prospects for this country. The article has become prophetic. It is worth reading, make no mistake.

**In Chapter 28 Dr. Evgeny Primakov discussed with General Gennady Evstafiev** the situation in the Middle East and assessed American role in the region. Despite the fact that the interview was conducted in 2006 and published in 2007, it remains extremely popular and relevant nowadays as well. Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Iranian nuclear program, the US policy in the Middle East and the prospects of multipolarity – all these issues were comprehensively analyzed by the prominent Russian politician, statesman and expert Evgeny Primakov. Global developments which took place in 2023 proved another time that political processes are much more complicated than we think.

**Part VI** takes the challenge to look into the near-term future. There is a risk that a reader opening it in 2024 or 2025 will compare it with the present-day realities... But **Dr. Dmitry Evstafiev** decided to take this challenge in **Chapter 29**. The author believes that the priority 2024-2025 objective for the key players is to place barriers to stop the escalation of political and military tension. This risk of uncontrolled escalation has significantly increased over the recent years and demands additional solutions that most likely go beyond the framework of the classic international law and post-1991 institutional architecture.

**Part VII** includes the reviews on new books and research papers published in Russia and by Russian experts and devoted to security issues.

**Part VIII** is a review of the top events in global and regional security in 2023.

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The *Security Index* Yearbook is a successor to the *Security Index* Journal which was published from 1994 to 2016 in Russian and English (initially, under the title of *YadernyyKontrol*) and distributed globally via the publishing houses of PIR Press and Routledge Francis & Taylor Group within the framework of the projects run by PIR Center. A total of 119 issues were published. From 2017 the *Security Index* has been published as a non-periodical series in the form of occasional papers with 38 issues produced by now. I am especially grateful to my colleagues and friends who have for all those years helped to sustain and develop our publication activities: Dr. Yuri **Baturin**, Dr. Sergey **Brilev**, Dr. Dmitry **Evstafiev**, Dr. Vadim **Kozyulin**, General Vasily **Lata**, Azer **Mursaliev**, Dr. Dmitry **Polikanov**, Ambassador Sergey **Ryabkov**, Ambassador Nikolay **Spassky**, Dr. Ekaterina **Stepanova**, and Albert **Zulkharneev**; and to those who have already passed away: Gennady **Evstafiev**, Evgeny **Maslin** and Roland **Timerbaev**. My special thanks go to Academician Anatoly



Torkunov who has always been generous in providing intellectual support and green light to a number of PIR Center's initiatives and joint projects with MGIMO University, dating back to 1996. His support of the idea of this Yearbook and of its concept has been key to the implementation of this project.

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[1] Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy // Official Website of the Russian President, February 10, 2007. URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>.

[2] Indicating Taiwan separately here does not imply recognition of its independent status. We consider Taiwan as a part of the People's Republic of China. – Editor's Note.

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