

COMMENTARY BY MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERT GROUP (MAY 2007)



Marian **Abisheva**, Deputy Director of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, **Astana, Kazakhstan**:

To tell the truth, I expected that the iSi figure for the month of May would be lower. In spite of a number of international summits held in May, international security level was far from perfect. Among the major events in May, I would name the following: deterioration of Russian-Estonian relations and reaction of international community to the events in Tallin; visit of the US Secretary of State to Moscow that did not lead to any unification of the countries' positions on the AMD deployment in Eastern Europe; Iran's nuclear problem and controversies over it. With respect to the situation in Central Asia, I would mention the permanent political crisis in Kyrgyzstan. And the positive event in the region is the agreements in the energy sphere achieved during the meeting of the presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.



Mustafa **Alani**, Director, Security and Terrorism Studies Department, Gulf Research Center, **Dubai, United Arab Emirates**:

I do not agree with the growth of the iSi figure in May. There were three factors that affected the situation in the Middle East region negatively: situation in Lebanon, armed conflict in Palestine, and the absence of any progress in adjustment in Iraq. And if we add to these three factors Iran's refusal to fulfill the UN SC requirements to cease its nuclear program, we would see that the situation in the world is far from improving. I think that iSi will go down in June as a result of the factors mentioned above. I am not optimistic about the current global security situation. As the only positive factor in events that took place in May, I can outline the US "intention" to meet the Iranians in Iraq.



Sergio **Duarte**, Ambassador, Chairman of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (2005), **Brasilia, Brazil**:

The figures probably reflect the situation. Things have not changed substantially since last month. Focusing on my region, South America, I would say that the security situation there is also generally stable. There are several factors in the world that affect world security negatively. One of them is the situation between Russia and the US (deployment of missiles in Poland). About the projections for June 2007, I think that iSi will probably not change much either positively or negatively.



Konstantin **Eggert**, Editor-in-Chief of the BBC Russian Service Moscow Bureau, **Moscow, Russia**:

From my point of view, the international security situation in May has not changed much compared to April 2007. Among events that I am very concerned about I would outline increasing tensions between Russia and the West (primarily the US), and the deterioration of situation in Gaza. I can hardly name any positive events taking place in May. There were, at least, the settlement of political crisis in Ukraine and announced simplification of Russia-EU visa regime. I believe that the iSi dynamics in June will be affected by the factors I mentioned above, so I think that the figure will be a bit lower.



Andrey **Kortunov**, president, New Eurasia Foundation, **Moscow, Russia**:

Slight growth of the iSi figure can be explained by the fact that no expected international crisis occurred in May. All the major factors in global security were still the same: Russian-American discussions on the AMD deployment, crisis in Iraq, Russian-Estonian and Russian-Polish tensions, political situation in Ukraine, international tensions over Iran and Kosovo. As positive events I would emphasize the visit of US secretary of State C. Rice to Moscow and the Russia-EU summit. I also do not think that the situation will change significantly in June.



Evgeny **Satanovsky**, President of the *Ariel* group and President of the Institute for Israel and Middle East Studies, **Moscow, Russia**:

I think that no positive events happened in May. Stable crisis situation in Iraq, Afghanistan, deteriorating – in Nigeria, Palestine, Lebanon. The flow of refugees from Iraq to Syria and Jordan has intensified. The Iranian problem seems to be solved with the use of force, because Tehran has not implemented the demands of the UN SC resolution adopted in March 2007. I think that the only positive factor in May was the fact that we did not quarrel with the Europeans during the Russia-EU summit.



Alexander **Saveliev**, director, Department for Strategic Studies, Center for International Security (Institute for World Economy and International Relations Studies), **Moscow, Russia**:

The general impression that the global security situation in May leaves is that of "alarming stability". One of the problems that affected international security in May was the growing tensions in the US-Russian relations. Among other factors I would mention the problem of Iraq (which is unfortunately becoming permanent), and the situation over Iranian nuclear program. Concerning the NDRK nuclear problem, there were several events in May that suggest a growing trend for its improvement. With respect to the prospects for the month of June, I can hardly forecast evolution of the situation. The international security climate will continue to be determined primarily by relations between Russia and the United States. I hope that friendly relations between the two presidents would be projected on relations between the two countries. On the whole, I do not think that current trends will be much different in June, so this month international security is going to remain "negatively stable".