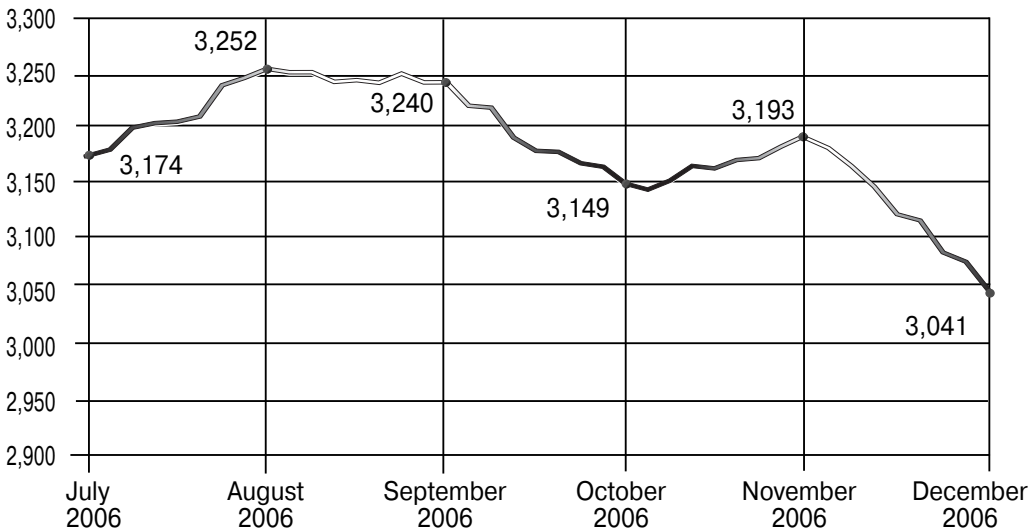


The *iSi* International Security Index (July–December 2006)



➔ ***Vera Gavrilova, Pavel Mansurov, Vladimir Orlov. iSi – A COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY INDEX***

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➔ ***Marian Abisheva, Sergio Duarte, Konstantin Eggert, Thomas Gomart, Ji Zhiye, Andrei Kortunov, Rama Mani, William Potter, Abdulaziz Sager, Evgeny Satanovsky, and Ekaterina Stepanova. COMMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERT GROUP***





***iSi* – A COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY INDEX**

The International Security Index (*iSi*) is a comprehensive index of the level of international security developed by the PIR Center through a project that has been ongoing for over a year. The project is currently undergoing an international assessment.

The aim of *iSi* is to provide quantitative indicators that reflect the dynamics of trends in international security. The *iSi* index is meant to demonstrate the extent to which the international security situation differs from the “ideal” at each point in time. It also indicates how various specific military and nonmilitary factors are affecting international security.

Without pretending to be a full and complete definition, *for the purpose of calculating the index we understand “international security” to be the integrated index of the state of the world today from the point of view of the presence or absence of threats to the physical security and economic prosperity of the citizens of our planet.* The value of this indicator is reflected in *iSi*, which is determined through our assessment of the scale of the threats in question, their duration, and the probability of their escalation from the local to the regional or global level. Furthermore, given the definition above, it is obvious that in calculating *iSi* we must take into account both military and nonmilitary factors, including those that affect the economic components of security.

The idea of creating an international security index belongs to *Security Index* editorial board member and deputy editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Kommersant*, **Azer Mursaliev**. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to him for so generously sharing his ideas and methods and for actively cooperating with us and assisting us to advance our project. A working group has been created for this project. Those active in the discussions at various stages of the project have included: Nadezhda Logutova, Anton Khlopkov, Sergey Mursankov, Alexander Bulychev, Vitaly Tsygichko, Ildar Akhtamzyan, Fedor Ladygin, Vladimir Dvorkin, Ekaterina Stepanova, Yuri Fedorov, Dmitry Evstafiev, Andrei Piontkovski, Yevgeny Satanovsky, Konstantin Eggert, Alexander Nikitin, and Julian Lindley-French. We would like to express our particular appreciation to **Alexander Saveliev**, head of the Strategic Studies Department, Center for International Security, Institute of World Economics and International Relations (IMEMO) and PIR Advisory Board member, for his analytical work in the final stage of the project.

We are also grateful for the contributions by many friends of the PIR Center at various stages of project development, and highly value their assistance and critical remarks. We should nevertheless emphasize that **the PIR Center takes complete responsibility for the final product—the methodology used to calculate *iSi* and its (for the time being, monthly) variation.**

Thus, *iSi* is determined in accordance with an original method developed by the PIR Center. It indicates the general level of the state of international security in the military, political, economic, and environmental spheres. It also takes into account the impact of nongovernmental actors (in particular, terrorist activity).

The most important characteristics of *iSi* are its **comprehensiveness, robustness, and clarity**. A great number of the factors that directly effect international security are reflected in *iSi* in a concentrated form. They include: the threat of global nuclear war, the number and intensity of local conflicts, the type of political relations between various countries and international organizations, the intensity and scale of terrorist activity, the stability of the global economy, and the threat posed by man-made catastrophes and epidemics.

The structure of *iSi* consists of two main parts. The first is the basic Index value. It is calculated on the basis of expert analyses of the probability of the occurrence of one or another global or regional event that would have a direct impact on international security. Each such event is given a certain score on the scale we have developed.

In our calculations, total points increase as the probability of various events that might disrupt international security decreases, and, correspondingly, they decrease with an increase in the probability of such events. The total of the points for each factor is the *iSi* base value, a quantity calculated once per year. Each type of factor (military, political, economic, man-made catastrophe, and terrorist) is “weighted” according to a scale of priorities and given an appropriate coefficient.

The second part of *iSi* is calculated by evaluating actual events that have an influence on international security during a particular month. Each such event is assessed both according to its positive or negative influence on international security and according to its degree of influence (weak, moderate, or strong) on the point scale we have developed. The degree of influence of each such factor is corrected depending on the country or region in which the event took place. In order to do this, we have developed a coefficient for the significance of particular regions (from 1 to 9). The number of positive points for each individual factor indicates the event’s contribution to international security; negative marks indicate the negative influence of a particular factor.

The *iSi* Index, therefore, is calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Comprehensive Security Index} = \sum_i k_{G_i} \times \text{factor} + \sum_i k_{R_i} \times \text{region} + \sum_i k_{L_i} \times \Delta_j \times \text{locality}$$

Where

k_{G_i} = coefficient “weight” of global factors;

k_{R_i} = coefficient “weight” of regional factors;

k_{L_i} = coefficient “weight” of local factors;

Δ_j = coefficient indicating the importance of an individual region.

The reader can learn more about the *iSi* methodology on the PIR Center website at: <http://isi.pircenter.org/eng>.

We have been calculating *iSi* on a monthly basis since July 2006. The increase or decrease in its absolute value indicates the trends in international security during the period in question, including both their direction and strength. The sum of all points provides the basic value of *iSi*, which shows how distant the global situation is at that moment from the “ideal”—when there are no threats at all.

The *iSi* methodology also allows us to calculate a value for shorter time frames. You can familiarize yourself with the current changes in *iSi* on the PIR Center website, at: <http://isi.pircenter.org/eng>.

We have taken the situation on **July 1, 2006** as the initial value of *iSi*. From that time forward, *iSi* has been determined independently and has begun to reflect changes in global conditions, indicating the security fluctuations in each following month. In accordance with our methodology, all significant events that occurred during the month in question are evaluated according to a set scale and given a numeric value depending upon their type, direction, strength, breadth, and the significance of the region that they affected. The sum of these numeric indicators of relevant events (which may be either positive or negative) is added to the initial *iSi* value, which on July 1, 2006 totaled **3,209 points**. This is how we calculated the index value for July. The August *iSi* value and that of subsequent months was calculated in a similar way, except that the total value of the numeric indicators for these months was added to the previous month’s total, not to the initial *iSi* value.



On **July 31, 2006**, the value of *iSi* was **3,174 points**, a **fall of 35 points** from the initial value. This means that during the month in question the international security situation was characterized by a relatively small predominance of negative factors over positive ones. *iSi* grew by **78 points** during the month of August, and as of **August 31** totaled **3,252 points**. The September Index differed only a little from that of August: **3,240 points**, or a **fall of 12 points** as of **September 30**. However, in October the value of *iSi* fell sharply, by **91 points**, and as of **October 31** was just **3,149 points**. By **November 30, 2006**, *iSi* had risen 44 points and equaled **3,193 points**, and on the eve of the New Year, on **December 31**, it sharply dropped down to **3,041 points**. A detailed chronology of the events from July through December 2006 that influenced *iSi* can be found on the PIR Center website at <http://isi.pircenter.org/eng>.

The PIR Center's monthly calculation of *iSi* is accompanied by interviews with our **International Expert Group**, which includes representatives from Russia, Kazakhstan, Brazil, India, China, the United States, France, and Saudi Arabia, among other countries. The evaluations of these experts in no way influence the calculation of the Index. Nevertheless, they make it possible for us to see how our calculations are viewed in a given month and, in particular, the dynamics of *iSi* over the course of several months at a time, in various regions of the world.

Vera Gavrilova
Pavel Mansurov
Vladimir Orlov



A VIEW BY A RUSSIAN LIBERAL: APPEASERS AND CROCODILES

The summer and the first months of fall 2006 will most probably enter into the history of world politics as a period of some of the most pronounced tensions on the global political scene, and one of its most critical, and perhaps even turning, points.

THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE?

During most of this time, the Middle East remained the epicenter of likely global conflict. The strategic architecture of this region has been considerably altered by the war in Lebanon. A new and previously neglected force, Hezbollah, with its close ties to the Iranian leadership,¹ entered the region's political and military arena. Following Tehran's refusal to accept a compromise proposed by the six parties to nuclear talks with that country, the Iranian nuclear problem escalated to an entirely new level. In the Palestinian territories, the two leading Palestinian forces— Hamas and Fatah—remained unable to reconcile their differences, resulting in sporadic armed clashes. A violent *bellum omnia contra omnes* continued in Iraq, raising ever growing doubts over the possibility of preserving a unified Iraqi state. The summer of 2006 witnessed the aggravation of the political and military situation in Afghanistan, particularly in its southern provinces where members of the Taliban, still not fully destroyed, intensified their terrorist activities in concert with al-Qa'ida cells.

The political and military environment in the Far East deteriorated sharply in early fall 2006 too. Even though the July 2006 North Korean nuclear tests failed, and the success of the nuclear test carried out at the Hwadaeri polygon on October 9, 2006, is dubious, the essence of the processes there are more or less clear: Pyongyang has set a course towards radically heightening tensions in an attempt to blackmail the international community and ultimately have its own desires satisfied. The consequences of these actions could be severe. A nuclear test is a "red line." If crossed, the North Korean regime could potentially provoke a "chain reaction" of events that, in the worst case scenario, could result in the application of a military solution to the North Korean crisis.

Civil violence in Darfur persisted as well, as did domestic and international conflicts in other regions of Africa. At the same time, the Sudanese government remained intransigent on the issue of the length of time the UN Peacekeeping Force might stay. Meanwhile, the conflict in Aceh continued, with the situation in Eastern Timor and a number of other world regions remaining quite complex. Latin America came under the growing influence of the left, informally led by Venezuelan president Colonel Hugo Chavez, who is benefiting from an international reputation that is quite controversial, to say the least.

Just as significant is the fact that political institutions and mechanisms meant to safeguard international security and “manage” conflict proved nearly impotent. Neither the United Nations, nor the Middle East Quartet, nor the Group of Eight, nor various roadmaps or semi-formal groups such as the “group of six” set up for talks with Tehran in an attempt to find a solution to the Iranian nuclear problem succeeded in precluding a new war in the Middle East or the North Korean nuclear tests, crushing Iranian nuclear ambitions in the bud, or halting other dangerous developments. It appears that the very conceptual framework used by these international institutions itself turned out to be untenable: the framework of approaching pressing international crises by seeking compromises, the policy of “engagement” that tend to favor “carrots” over “sticks” in interacting with forces and regimes like Hezbollah, the Iranian and North Korean ruling elites, and various extremist groups, a great number of which are actively pursuing their activities in vast areas of the “third” world.



Marian Abisheva (Kazakhstan), Deputy Director of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, by phone from **Astana**: *I consider the Index indicators for the most recent period to be quite realistic, since there were not and will be no great leaps in these indicators, as global institutions are clearly able to play their roles in stabilizing the situation during times of sharp crisis sufficiently well, despite criticisms. I would also like to comment on the August indicators, those of the calmest month. I believe that this sort of increase in the security level is tied, no matter how odd it may seem, to the vacation season, since the level of man-made danger and man-made incidents during this period were significantly reduced.*

The reaction of Western public opinion, the mass media, and several think tanks to the new war in the Middle East has been daunting. The fact is that Israel, a continual victim of terrorist aggression, has been put in the same league as radical Islamic terrorists who, by the way, threaten not just Israel, but all of Judeo-Christian civilization. Therefore, one gets the impression that Europe, and sometimes even the United States, simply does not want to hear what radical Islamic leaders have to say. U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman was right when he recently declared: “If we should have learned one thing from 9/11 ... it is that when somebody says over and over again, as Osama bin Laden did during the 90s ‘I hate you and give me a chance, I will kill you’ they may mean it and try to do it.”²

However, it is no less worrisome, and perhaps even more so, that in many cases even military instruments turn out to be ineffective. Israeli troops failed to defeat

the paramilitary tactical forces of one of the most dangerous and radical Middle Eastern terrorist groups, Hezbollah. The U.S. Armed Forces together with their allies have been unable to halt the continuing civil war in Iraq and bring order to Afghanistan. The impression that one gets is that the **international community or, more precisely, contemporary Judeo-Christian civilization is helpless when confronted with new threats and challenges. The imagination unwillingly draws images of the falling Roman Empire, crumbling under the blows of barbarian tribes.**

Thus, the events of summer and fall 2006 confirm that unless the world discovers and implements new and effective concepts, political principles, and legal norms, as well as capable institutions to guarantee international security, Europe, and then North America and Russia, will find themselves crushed by the “new barbarians,” and the world will enter a new Dark Ages, comparable to the early Middle Ages.



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Russia's current strategic and foreign policy does not engender optimism either. It seems that Moscow has finally abandoned the concept of a Russo-American partnership in countering terrorism and other new threats, enunciated by President Putin at the beginning of this decade. Today Russia's political stance instead calls for maneuvering between the United States, Europe, and extremist forces; forming informal coalitions and alliances opposing the United States; and, at the same time, cooperating to a limited degree with the United States and other Western powers when and where it fits Russian interests—as they currently are perceived in Moscow, of course.

Today, official Moscow emulates the political and diplomatic traditions it inherited from the Russian Empire, trying to use a strong hand to restore its influence and dominance in the southern part of the former Soviet Union and, most importantly, in the South Caucasus. The outcome of this trend has been a marked aggravation of Russo-Georgian relations, the future and potential implications of which are still unclear. Neither is there clarity regarding the extent to which Moscow's new ambitions are based on its real, and not assumed, economic and military resources.

THE NEW MIDDLE EAST

The war in Lebanon denoted a new period in the political and military development of the Middle East. The war was the result of a large-scale provocation initiated by the Iranian authorities, which was apparently thoroughly thought through in Tehran and successfully implemented by Hezbollah, which Iran sponsors. By unleashing this war, Tehran was apparently pursuing two objectives. The first was to distract the attention of the G8 away from the Iranian nuclear problem and prevent participants at the July 2006 G8 Summit in St. Petersburg from adopting a program of action should Tehran (as expected) refuse the compromise offered to it by the "group of six" shortly before. The second Iranian objective was to demonstrate that the country possesses powerful leverage for influencing the situation in the Middle East, and is capable of causing the international community serious trouble if the latter takes drastic measures against Iran. Both of these objectives were attained. Instead of discussing the Iranian problem at the St. Petersburg Summit, the leaders of the G8 states frantically tried to formulate a response to the events unfolding in Lebanon. At the same time, Iran clearly demonstrated its role as an important and active element of the strategic alignment in the Middle East.

The starting point of this new war in the Middle East, which this time was not in fact Arab-Israeli, as previously, but Iranian-Israeli instead, was the abduction of an Israeli soldier by Hamas militants in the Gaza strip. This incident drew Israeli political attention and its military and intelligence resources away from Israel's northern border, where Hezbollah had started to prepare for a major terrorist attack, which was carried out on July 12, 2006, just a few days before the G8 Summit. The abduction of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah and other terrorist acts triggered Israeli retaliation, to which Hezbollah responded with massive artillery strikes on Israeli territory.

Needless to say, both sides have been gearing up for war. After the Israeli Defense Forces (Tzahal) gave up their presence in south Lebanon following a 2000 decision by the Israeli government, led at the time by Ehud Barak, the entire territory between the Litani River and the so-called "blue line," which demarcates the border between Israel and Lebanon, found itself entirely under Hezbollah political and military control. The latter chose this mountainous territory to establish a sophisticated network of fortifications and bunkers, connected by underground tunnels and protected by mine fields with an extensive system of missile launch sites for Grad rocket systems. As a matter of fact, all of the Lebanese towns and villages in the fortified zone have been turned into Hezbollah strongholds. The civilian population and their homes were intended to be used as "human shields."

In answer, the Israeli Army had no choice but to prepare for a war aimed at restoring a *security zone* in south Lebanon, at the very least expelling Hezbollah from the area and regaining control over the territories that could potentially be used for missile launches against Israel. The

Israelis chose the U.S. strategy of “non-contact” war, which gives the air force the leading role, with the mission of demolishing the enemy’s main forces and suppressing its capacity to conduct war, and completing the mop-up operation using ground troops.

The new Israeli operation against Hezbollah proceeded according to this doctrine. During the first stage of the operation, which lasted approximately three weeks, the Israeli Air Force destroyed a substantial part of the Lebanese transport infrastructure in order to disrupt the Syrian and Iranian supply lines of Hezbollah troops operating in south Lebanon. Another goal pursued by the Israeli Air Force was the destruction of Hezbollah control centers, and the system of its strongholds and missile launchers in south Lebanon.

The first objective was generally met, but not the second one. Hence, Israeli territory kept being shelled by artillery up until the end of military operations, and the Tzahal’s major land forces, which entered Lebanon at the second stage of the operation, met fierce resistance from Hezbollah fighters, who relied on the remaining infrastructure of bunkers, tunnels, and so on. Further, the assault against the numerous Lebanese villages and towns that Hezbollah had turned into small fortresses was an extremely difficult military operation fraught with grave consequences. Israeli political and military leaders did not take the risk of pursuing the only possible option for reducing their own casualties: massive carpet bombings of the entire zone between the “blue line” and the Litani River, which would have turned it into scorched earth.

As a result, the military operation in south Lebanon in effect ended in a draw. Israel failed to expel the terrorist groups from the region and re-create a security zone there. Hezbollah suffered considerable losses and was forced to allow the deployment of large contingents of a UN international force and the Lebanese Army, which, naturally, limits Hezbollah’s freedom of action. From a political point of view, the unconditional winner of the war was Iran, which demonstrated its role as one of the key players on the Middle Eastern political scene.

However, this victory could backfire by making the Iranian position much more complicated, since most Arab regimes have not been happy to see the improved standing of both Tehran and the Shi’ite organizations allied with it. In the Middle East Tehran has long been viewed with some suspicion due to its great power aspirations and Shi’ite proselytizing. It could be interesting if Israel and moderate Sunni Arab states find themselves “in one boat,” united by a common enemy or at least a common adversary. It is not clear, however, whether the United States and its allies will use this situation to their advantage and create an effective opposition to Iran, which could also be used to contain its nuclear ambitions.

The political basis for the end of military operations was UN Security Council Resolution 1701, adopted on August 11, 2006. Both in wording and in essence, this document puts the blame for the crisis on Hezbollah (and therefore its patrons). In particular, it insists on the “*unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers,*” being at the same time “*mindful of the sensitivity of the issue*” of Lebanese prisoners and “*encouraging the efforts*” aimed at urgently settling this issue. But the main idea of Resolution 1701 is the necessity of disarming Hezbollah and the withdrawal of its forces from the zone between the *blue line* and the Litani River. Paragraph 8 of the Resolution clearly declares the establishment “*between the Blue Line and the Litani river of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL (the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon).*” In the same paragraph, the Resolution emphasizes the need for full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, and of Resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), that “*require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that, pursuant to the Lebanese cabinet decision of 27 July 2006, there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State.*”³

In order to implement these decisions, plans call for increasing the UNIFIL force to 15,000 troops, all of whom were to be deployed in south Lebanon by early November 2006. More than half of these troops were to be provided by EU member countries. Consequently, by that time the last Israeli soldier was to have left south Lebanon.



The adoption of Resolution 1701 led to the end to military operations in Lebanon. The Israeli troops have been gradually withdrawing from the south of the country. However, even though Hezbollah's leaders accepted the deployment of international peacekeeping troops in south Lebanon, they refused outright to disarm their squads and withdraw them beyond the Litani River. In other words, Hezbollah is openly ignoring key provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution. But what is most distressing about this situation is the fact that even the UNIFIL is not ready to implement the Resolution's provisions concerning Hezbollah's disarmament, since it may lead to clashes with members of terrorist groups, which the UN troops, many of who were sent by major European states, are simply not ready to face. According to press reports, most of the countries contributing troops for the UNIFIL would prefer to have their role limited to supporting the Lebanese armed forces. They are not prepared to accept the operation's mandate, which stipulates their possible deployment in combat operations and other use of force. Meanwhile, the Lebanese army is seen as weak compared to Hezbollah. Moreover, if it is deployed against Hezbollah it may simply disintegrate, as a number of its officers and soldiers are supporters.

Since the key demand of Resolution 1701—Hezbollah disarmament and the withdrawal of its forces from south Lebanon—is unlikely to be fulfilled, the probability of a resumption of hostilities in this region is rather high. Hezbollah, along with its state supporter, Tehran, may repeat the scenario of summer 2006 in one form or another if the circumstances related to the Iranian nuclear program are aggravated. In return, Israel will never allow a force that basically threatens the country's existence to remain anywhere near its borders.

This leads to the question of whether any lessons can be drawn from this situation, beyond the events directly related to the circumstances that came about as a result of the war in Lebanon. If so, what would these lessons be?

The main conclusion that Israel drew from the recent campaign is the necessity of thorough and in-depth strategic and tactical intelligence efforts on Lebanese territory and, most importantly, in its southern part, in order to have a clear understanding of the disposition and state of Hezbollah's political, military, and terrorist infrastructure. Principally, it seems that the key mistake of the Israeli leadership was its inability to establish an effective intelligence network in south Lebanon, as a result of which it failed to prepare for the type of combat activities it was obliged to undertake. The second, even tougher challenge facing the Israeli military command today is to develop a strategy and tactical measures for waging a new type of war against paramilitary terrorist units relying on a prearranged network of fortifications and shelters and with the support of a large part of the civilian population.

The most important political conclusion that the international community, and especially Western countries and Russia, should draw from these events is that Iran has become an active and dynamic opponent that is cunningly using all of the leverage and tools at its disposition in order to obtain its goals. If this conclusion is not made and practical steps to deal with the problem are not taken, then the threats emanating from extremist forces, including threats to Russian security, will mount.

This absolutely applies to the Iranian nuclear program. Iran continued its uranium enrichment activities through summer and fall 2006, actions viewed by the majority of experts and political analysts as preparatory steps for the development of a nuclear weapon. The inauguration in summer 2006 of a heavy water plant, intended to fuel nuclear reactors that produce weapon-grade plutonium, can be seen as additional proof supporting such conjectures.

Tehran's strategy includes not only the demonstration of force, as occurred during the war in Lebanon, but also diplomatic maneuvering: undertaking onerous, tiring talks, during which minor concessions alternate with strict ultimatums and the very agreement to conduct "talks about future talks" is presented as an important step towards cooperation. This strategy is understandable: Iran is seeking to avoid harsh international sanctions and at the same time pursue the development of a nuclear weapon. It is less clear, however, why major Western countries and Russia are ready to follow the rules imposed by Tehran.

On July 31, 2006, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1696, in which it noted *with serious concern* that:

"Iran has not taken the steps required of it by the IAEA Board of Governors, ... and which are essential to build confidence, and in particular Iran's decision to resume enrichment-related activities, including research and development, its recent expansion of and announcements about such activities, and its continued suspension of cooperation with the IAEA under the Additional Protocol." The Resolution demanded that Iran "suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the IAEA." The Security Council expressed "its intention, in the event that Iran has not by that date complied with this resolution, then to adopt appropriate measures under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations [this Article provides for the possible introduction of non-military sanctions - author] to persuade Iran to comply with this resolution and the requirements of the IAEA, and underlines that further decisions will be required should such additional measures be necessary."

This resolution failed to be implemented. Tehran simply ignored it. Its reaction came down to its agreement to hold negotiations during which it will perhaps agree to halt uranium enrichment for two months. It is possible that Iranian scientists need this time in order to eliminate various defects in their centrifuge cascade.



Sergio Duarte (Brazil), Ambassador, Chairman of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (2005), by phone from **Brasilia**: *I am not so certain that security is measurable. The security situation is influenced by many factors that cannot be measured, such as the behavior of political leaders. Nonetheless, I agree with the dynamics identified in the iSi Index during these months, even if I do not completely trust the numbers.*

Despite Teheran's obstructive stance, the EU3, made up of the United Kingdom, Germany, and France, engaged in preliminary talks with Iranian representatives. During these talks, Iran declared it was ready to discuss security guarantees, which it demanded from the major powers, as well as the details of building light water nuclear reactors in Iran. In exchange, Tehran promised not to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and potentially to allow IAEA inspectors to examine its nuclear installations.

It would appear that everything has its limits. In the end, the negotiations between Iran and the EU3 fell through in mid-October 2006, and the Iranian nuclear problem was once again sent to the UN Security Council, and a new resolution, containing modest sanctions, was adopted in December 2006. I have to admit, though, that I am absolutely certain that this time around Iran will also ignore the Security Council decision.

AN AFGHAN DEAD END

In summer 2006, the political and military situation in Afghanistan was quite aggravated. The Taliban troops that were not crushed, along with Al-Qa'ida cells based in Afghanistan and the neighboring regions of Pakistan, have completed their realignment, obtained additional financial resources (mostly from growing and selling drugs), and launched considerable guerilla activities in the country's four southern provinces. In carrying out their activities, the Taliban is helped by the total lack of government control in the Pakistani regions bordering on Afghanistan, the so-called "tribal zone," which has provided refuge to some of Al-Qa'ida's leaders including, according to some experts, Osama bin Laden himself. Hamid Karzai's government remains extremely weak and is only in control of a few of the country's regions.

This situation put considerable pressure on international coalition troops, led by NATO. The growing losses in Afghanistan are accepted painfully by the European public, while the European mass media is increasingly critical of participation in the NATO operation in Afghanistan. The request by the NATO command in Afghanistan for an increase in Alliance troops stationed there has still not been met.



Meanwhile, the success or failure of this operation is of utmost importance for NATO's future. If the operation in Afghanistan is successful, it will confirm NATO's ability to effectively solve security and stability problems in the regions far from its traditional zone of responsibility. Today, this is the epitome of current ideas about the Alliance's future. However, if NATO turns out to be incapable of fulfilling its performance targets in Afghanistan, the country will once again turn into a safe haven for Islamic terrorist and extremist groups. That would do considerable harm to regions bordering on Afghanistan, including Central Asia and Pakistan. More importantly, the future of NATO will be put in doubt and the organization may lose its significance.

The increase in terrorist activity in Afghanistan's southern provinces does not, however, alter the overall strategic situation in the country. This can be described as a military and political dead end. The Taliban troops and Al-Qa'ida cells, operating primarily in the south of the country, cannot gain control over the entire territory as long as international peacekeeping troops are stationed there.

But both foreign troops and Hamid Karzai's government are incapable of establishing effective control over the entire country and guaranteeing the central government's firm authority. The International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan that operates under NATO's command and totals 20,750 troops, together with the U.S. troops (21,200 soldiers) stationed in Afghanistan through Operation Enduring Freedom, as well as the armed forces of Hamid Karzai's government (which currently number 20-30,000 men) can only control major cities and principle roads.

In fact, the real power outside of Kabul and several provincial capitals is concentrated in the hands of warlords, clan heads, provincial leaders relying on the traditional power structures, and the like. The situation is aggravated by the fact that it has been impossible to cut Afghanistan's production of opium poppy, the principle source of income for the majority of the rural population as well as a gold mine for local clan elites and tribal groups.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that there is no consensus within Karzai's government itself on a development strategy for the country. Top government officials include individuals who left Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation and spent a long time in the West before returning to the country; military and political figures who were once close to the most influential Afghan resistance leader, Ahmad Sheikh Massoud, who controlled the Panjsheri Valley, as well as leaders of organizations that carried out religious jihad against Soviet troops—Burhannudin Rabbani, Yunus Khalis, and others. They have access to considerable financial resources and still have significant armed forces at their disposal. All these groups and leaders compete with one another, making the already complex political situation in the country even more complicated.

The situation described above does not provide the grounds to expect that the number of military personnel stationed in Afghanistan will decrease in the near future. On the contrary, a certain build-up in troop presence is more likely. That means that Afghanistan will live with a foreign military presence for a long time. Therefore, the United States and a number of other Western countries are likely to maintain their military presence in Central Asia as well.

IRAQI QUICKSAND

By early 2006 it seemed that some signs of stabilization in Iraq had finally appeared. The formation of new Iraqi ruling institutions was progressing in a relatively orderly, albeit slow, fashion. In particular, 63 percent of the Iraqi electorate participated in a referendum that took place on October 15, 2005. More than 78 percent of those who voted supported the constitution. On December 15, 2005, the election of a full-fledged parliament was conducted in accordance with the new constitution. The majority in the new parliament, however, was obtained by Kurds and Shi'ites, who received 218 out of 275 seats.

The parliamentary election was the last step in the implementation of the *road map*, developed earlier by the U.S. administration to establish legitimate political institutions in Iraq. By summer 2006, the government had been successfully formed and featured a more balanced representation of the major ethnic and religious groups than the parliament; the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Jalal Talabani, was elected president of Iraq, with two vice presidents—one Sunni and one Shi'ite, a Shi'ite prime minister, and two deputy prime ministers—a Sunni and a Kurd. The Interior and National Security Ministries are led by Shi'ites, but the Minister of Defense is a Sunni. This would seem to support the formation of a more or less stable system of political institutions, free from previous political figures such as Ba'athist functionaries, agents of Saddam's security services, and other elements closely tied to the past regime.

However, after the February 2006 explosion of a Shi'ah mosque in Samarra by Sunni terrorists, the Iraqi civil war sharpened, becoming more chaotic and completely uncontrollable. In summer and fall 2006 the scale of terrorist attacks and political assassinations reached their apogee. September 2006 in Baghdad alone local terrorists from a variety of religious and political movements took nearly 2,670 lives, or 400 more than during the previous month. Over all, international organizations estimate that on average nearly 90 people lose their lives in Baghdad each day, while this number reaches 500 people a day for the country at large.

The key sources of chaos and instability in Iraq are the following:

- ❑ The activity of former officials in the Hussein regime, especially Ba'athist functionaries, the security services, and some military personnel, who have not been able to find a place in the newly formed political institutions. These groups rely on the Arab Sunni minority, which accounts for approximately 20 percent of the country's population.
- ❑ Radical Islamist movements, both Sunni and Shi'ah, including groups linked to al-Qa'ida and other international Islamist terrorist networks, are of particular importance.
- ❑ A multitude of minor religious, political, and openly criminal groups, interested in preserving the chaos and maintaining weak state institutions so that they may pursue their own illegal activities unhindered.

There are no solid grounds for expecting a rapid stabilization of the situation in the country, and particularly the suppression of terrorist and criminal activity there. The new Iraqi Armed Forces and security services are going through a slow and painful development process. The integration of paramilitary units, such as the Kurdish Peshmerga, units receiving orders from the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the Mahdi Army, the Badr Brigade, and other smaller militia groups, into the official security and military institutions that started after both the parliamentary elections and the formation of the government, has far from always been helpful in stabilizing the situation. There have been quite a number of cases when members of former paramilitary units, acting under official mandate, have pursued their political enemies and continued to engage in religious and other clashes.

The U.S. contingent in Iraq (numbering approximately 150,000) can guarantee the physical protection of top government elites, the major political institutions, principle lines of communication, and economic assets; suppress civil unrest; and prevent destructive forces from obtaining power. However, it is incapable of ensuring effective law enforcement and halting terrorist activity. Military units are not meant to address this type of challenge: this is most effectively handled by the local police and special services, which, in the best of all worlds, should be national and not international. Only local personnel can be fully aware of the specifics of a situation and capable of developing an effective network of intelligence sources and the other conditions indispensable in combating terrorism and crime.

Iraqi developments in summer and fall 2006 bring into question the stabilization strategy developed by the international coalition, the United States in particular. The coalition presumed that normalizing the situation in Iraq is directly dependent on the speed of establishing effective political institutions capable of maintaining vital infrastructure and restoring law and order. In





Konstantin Eggert (Russia), Editor-in-Chief of the BBC Russian Service Moscow Bureau, by phone from **Moscow**: *The war in Lebanon, North Korean nuclear tests and tension over Iran, as well as the panicky reports by British scientists about the threat of climate change and the U.N. statement on the spread of venereal diseases in developing countries all should have caused experts to experience a surge in anxiety; however, this did not occur. The Index indicates that the global situation as a whole is not causing significant worry. This seems somewhat odd, since after the nuclear explosion carried out by Pyongyang the possibility of a nuclear conflict in Asia grew measurably.*

fact, the American strategy in Iraq is to contribute to this process, by gradually transferring an increasing proportion of the responsibility for maintaining security to Iraqi law enforcement authorities.

The aggravation of Iraqi conditions increases doubts regarding the possibility of preserving a unified Iraqi state. A number of U.S. allies in the international coalition, including the United Kingdom, are increasingly in favor of withdrawing their troops from Iraq, since their continuing presence there contributes to the country's instability. In particular, Sir Richard Dannatt, the current head of the U.K. Armed Forces, declared at the end of October 2006 that British troops should get out "sometime soon because our presence exacerbates the security problems." He also added: "I don't say that the

difficulties we are experiencing round the world are caused by our presence in Iraq but undoubtedly our presence in Iraq exacerbates them."

It seems that western political circles are starting to consider seriously the idea of withdrawing from Iraq and dividing the country into three separate states – Kurdish, Shi'ite and Sunni. Academic and political circles have already begun fierce discussions of what would be more dangerous: a civil war in Iraq that would be impossible to stop, or a full withdrawal from Iraq leading to an acute outbreak of domestic violence comparable to the Indo-Pakistani war of the late 1940s, which resulted in the establishment of two separate states.

So far the idea of a military pullout from Iraq has faced harsh opposition in Washington. Both the Pentagon and the White House adamantly reject the possibility of reducing the U.S. military contingent deployed in Iraq. President Bush insists that "the war we fight today is more than a military conflict. It is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century."⁴ He is right. Withdrawal from Iraq would not constitute a victory of "patriotic resistance of the Iraqi people to foreign occupation"—it would be the triumph of the most odious and "dark" forces in the Muslim world, forces that are destroying their countrymen and coreligionists with even greater zeal than they employ in eliminating foreign soldiers.

The withdrawal of U.S. and allied troops from Iraq would irrevocably ignite the Middle East both politically and militarily. Specifically, the north of Iraq would see the emergence of a Kurdish state that would naturally become the center of gravity both for Turkish and Iranian Kurds. The former would not correspond to U.S. interests, since it would undermine the territorial integrity of the most important American ally in the region, Turkey. But the latter could potentially be used to contain the Iranian regime, especially if the United States decides to solve the Iranian nuclear problem through the use of force. Predicting the consequences of the establishment of Sunni and Shi'ite states, on the other hand, is a task that no serious specialist would be likely to take on.

PYONGYANG'S NUCLEAR CONVULSIONS

In summer 2006, the North Korean regime took the risk of significantly aggravating the political and military situation in Northeast Asia. On July 5, 2006, just a few days before the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg, several ballistic missiles were fired from a North Korean missile test site but failed to reach their target. Nevertheless, the political repercussions have been quite noteworthy. The missile tests constituted proof that Pyongyang had decided to move

from words to action and essentially begin blackmailing the international community. The latter was ill-disposed to accept the North Korean interpretation of the joint statement of the states involved in the six party talks, which, in brief, stated that the DPRK must first receive a light water nuclear reactor and would not be prepared to eliminate its nuclear capabilities before it receives such a reactor. In addition, the other countries involved in the six party talks would have to lift some of the economic sanctions directed against North Korea's top leadership.

Indeed, Pyongyang was extremely irritated by the fact that the United States froze the bank accounts of persons and entities suspected of contributing to the proliferation of nuclear technologies and weapons of mass destruction, including 13 North Korean companies. Washington simultaneously took measures against banks that were caught laundering North Korean funds earned through the drug trade. It is known that at least part of this money goes toward providing top Pyongyang elites with the luxurious lifestyle they so much enjoy. Quite possibly, freezing the funds turned out to be the last drop that made the cup of Kim Jong-Il and his intimates' patience run over, which led them to decide to take the risk of forcing North Korea's partners in the six party talks to make concessions to Pyongyang by moving the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula to an entirely new level.


The missile tests did not get the results for which Pyongyang was aiming. Instead, they provoked the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1695, which expresses "grave concern at the launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)." The Security Council also manifested a harshness that was atypical and condemned the North Korean nuclear tests, while requiring all Member States to "exercise vigilance" and "prevent missile and missile-related items, materials, goods and technology being transferred to DPRK's missile or WMD programs." The Russian diplomatic community, acting in its usual spirit of forgiving violators of the NPT regime, tried to soften Resolution 1695 as much as possible, and to eliminate any reference to potential sanctions against the DPRK. Vitaly Churkin, Russia's UN ambassador, spoke against "punishing" North Korea. In his opinion, the prospects for a resumption of six party talks on the North Korean nuclear program should not have been undermined by bringing up the sanctions issue.

Even though the missile tests have remained unpunished, Pyongyang has not achieved any of its goals, including lifting the freeze on North Korean funds. This caused the North Koreans to decide on another, much riskier step. At 10:36 a.m. on October 9, 2006, North Korea carried out an explosion in an abandoned underground mine, which Pyongyang declared to be a successful nuclear test.

It is still not entirely clear what exactly exploded at the North Korean Hwadaeri test site. Estimates of the explosion's strength do not even coincide. According to U.S. estimates, its strength was 200-800 tons of TNT equivalent.



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 **Thomas Gomart (France)**, Director of Russia/CIS programs at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI), by phone from **Paris**: *I generally agree with your data so far as the difference between the August and October indices are concerned, although even here they are not absolutely accurate. August was a month of decreasing tension after the events in Lebanon, whereas by October stresses were increasing in Iran and North Korea and, of course, a feeling of "nervousness" was growing in connection with the approaching U.S. elections.*

South Korean specialists believe the strength of the explosion was 550 tons of TNT equivalent. If these estimates are valid, then it most likely means that a nuclear reaction took place in only a relatively small part of the nuclear explosive material. Based on their estimates, American military experts suggested that the North Korean nuclear test had failed. The Russian military, proved to be even more pessimistic than its American and South Korean colleagues. Russian Minister of Defense Sergey Ivanov reported to President Putin that a bomb with the strength of 5 to 15 kilotons went off in North Korea. As the Russian press noted, "defining the strength of the explosion in

the 5 to 15 kilotons range is equivalent to openly admitting a monstrous technological backwardness.”⁵

One way or another, the North Korean nuclear test confirmed that the DPRK not only longs to possess a nuclear weapon, but is also ready to cross the “red line” beyond which its actions could trigger a harsh reaction from the international community, including Russia and China. To date, these latter states have used all possible means to repel even the slightest allusion to possible international sanctions, justifying their position by the need not to irritate Pyongyang and, instead, to use all possible ways to take the security interests of North Korea into account, as well as the “concerns” of its government, which often turn out to be paranoid. The test, however, caused the UN Security Council to adopt harsh Resolution 1718, which not only condemns North Korea and requires it to renounce the acquisition of any type of WMD and its missile program, to return to the NPT and guarantee the transparency of its nuclear activity, but also imposes certain sanctions against North Korea. These sanctions include:

- ❑ Prohibition of any transfers to or from the DPRK of heavy weapons and related materials, including spare parts;
- ❑ Mandatory establishment of a list of other materials and equipment that may contribute to the North Korean nuclear and missile programs;
- ❑ Prohibition of the export of all luxury goods to the DPRK (which should be particularly unpleasant for the ruling elite);
- ❑ Obligatory freezing of all funds and other financial assets and economic resources that are owned or controlled by people or entities who will be designated by the special committee established by the United Nations;
- ❑ In order to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons, all UN Member States are called upon to take cooperative action, including inspection of cargo to and from the DPRK.⁶

According to media reports, the draft of Resolution 1718 proposed by the United States was considerably toned down at the insistence of Russia and China. For example, a general reference to Chapter VII of the UN Charter, providing for the imposition of sanctions, including military sanctions, was replaced by a more precise reference to Article 41 of the same chapter, which only lists those sanctions that do not require the use of force. It is not clear how exactly the inspection of North Korean cargo would be conducted without the use of force if, for example, the DPRK carries out acts of violence in order not to allow such inspections to take place.

My guess, however, is that the softening of the U.S. position during the drafting of Resolution 1718 was not so much due to the Chinese or Russian positions as to the fact that the United States itself is not prepared to use force against North Korea, given the large US military contingent already deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, while the possibility of military action in Iran cannot be excluded. Given these circumstances, the U.S. delegation likely leaned towards the option of relatively soft sanctions without excluding, of course, the possibility of adopting a tougher alternative if the measures called for in Resolution 1718 turn out to be ineffective.

The adoption of Resolution 1718 naturally raised the question of whether or not it would be implemented, and whether a strict control regime over transfers to and from North Korea could be applied in reality. The answer to these questions largely depends on China, since North Korea’s major trade routes pass through its territory.

North Korea’s nuclear test was a serious diplomatic defeat for China and Russia. It was thought that the key to resolving the North Korean nuclear problem should be sought in Beijing. In particular, there was a belief that the North Korean authorities would not dare to commit an act that China might view extremely unfavorably. It is easy to see why China might have such a view. The *nuclear domino effect* in Northeast Asia as well as the growing interest of Japan and Taiwan in U.S. anti-missile systems and, generally, for military cooperation with the United States go against Beijing’s strategic plans. Therefore, the North Korean nuclear test indicates that

Pyongyang is not disposed to listen to advice coming from Beijing. It turned out that the Chinese tactic, shared by Russia, of “appeasing” or “pacifying” Pyongyang (including by curbing the adoption of harsh UN Security Council resolutions) fell through. Instead of preventing North Korea from taking hasty action, the patronage of Russia and China convinced Pyongyang that it could challenge the international community with impunity.

The realization that China may lose face and have to deal with the undesirable consequences of “nuclear dominoes” apparently encouraged Beijing to take decisive action. News that China had cut all oil supplies to North Korea began to surface. This action turned out to be more powerful than any declarations or UN resolutions, causing Pyongyang to agree to return to the six party talks. However, as has often been the case, this cooperation does not mean that North Korea will renounce its attempts to obtain nuclear weapons. It is far more likely that Pyongyang will apply these arguments in a new grueling discussion in an attempt to eliminate or soften the sanctions and buy time.

A SUMMIT IN THE SHADOW OF LEBANON

The aggravated political and military situation in the Middle East and Afghanistan, escalating nuclear crisis in Iran, and North Korean missile launches drew the attention of global political and economic elites away from the St. Petersburg Summit that took place in July 2006. Just one month before the Summit took place, it had been expected to become the central international event of 2006.

The Summit preparations were not easy. It is true that reaching consensus on two of the issues Russia included in the agenda—education and infectious diseases—was relatively simple. No one doubts that both education and public health are issues of the utmost importance and require international cooperation. Thus, all that had to be done was to find appropriate the diplomatic procedures to formulate a common point of view.

It also became clear that reaching a real consensus on the third topic proposed for the discussion of G8 leaders—energy security—was impossible. After the winter 2005-06 gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine, European countries made a clear choice to begin minimizing their dependence on natural gas supplies from Russia, while Moscow, on the contrary, aimed to solidify its position as Europe’s major gas supplier. Combining these two opposing positions is impossible. That is why among the task entrusted to the diplomats undertaking the Summit preparations was to draft a document that would give the impression that some progress had been achieved, even though both parties’ approach was and remains contradictory on the majority of specific problems related to energy security.


Given these circumstances, the most interesting question at the Summit was whether it would be possible to *trade* Russian support for the Western stance on Iran and some other issues in exchange for a promise by the leaders of the world’s major democracies not to publicly criticize

Kremlin for hampering democracy and unleashing the gas war against Ukraine. But because of the war in Lebanon, neither Iran nor the future of Russian democracy were discussed seriously. A much more profound and complicated issue—that of the political nature of the G8—also remained unresolved.

Originally, this institution was designed as a mechanism where pressing global issues were discussed and a coordinated response developed by the seven leading western states, united by common values and a shared vision of the world. Russia’s



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 **Zhiye Ji (China)**, Director of the Institute of Russian Studies, by phone from **Beijing**: *On the whole the Index quite accurately depicts the trends during these months, particularly insofar as the drops in October are concerned. As a Chinese citizen, I certainly view the events related to the North Korean nuclear tests as the most negative of the past year. And as for the increase in the Index during August, it reflects the period of "political vacations."*

accession to the group has been, in a certain sense, an advance for the country: the participation of Russia was expected to solidify the democratic forces in Russian society. However, the recent curtailing of those democratic processes and the formation of a new Russian foreign policy, largely stemming from strategic policies that differ from those of the western countries, brings a question to the table: how is the G8 really different from the UN Security Council? Despite the absence of meaningful results, the St. Petersburg Summit once again drew attention to Russian foreign policy.

RUSSIA: A NEW PHILOSOPHY AND THE PRACTICAL RESULTS OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY

Eurasian security, especially in those regions bordering on Russia, is highly dependent on Russian policy choices. The events of summer 2006 demonstrated that Russia has embraced a new strategy that has a number of significant differences from the one proclaimed by President Vladimir Putin after September 11. The new foreign policy philosophy was broadly outlined by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov in a speech he delivered at the Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO) on September 1, 2006.⁷ It comes down to the following key points.

Lavrov indicated that overcoming the period of economic instability and political turmoil that Russia went through in the last decade of the past century made “our foreign policy more purposeful and productive, and Russian diplomacy more called for in world affairs.”⁸ The minister insisted that “not a single problem of some significance is tackled without our participation; the number of our partners and allies is growing.”⁹ Overall, the key thought running through the minister’s address has been the idea that today Russia has regained the power it sought, allowing it to play a weighty role in world affairs as an independent force. The idea of Russian foreign policy independence became the second key insight of Lavrov’s conceptual speech.

“Russia has again acquired the ability and political will to pursue a truly national policy based on Russian interests,” he declared. ...“The foreign policy independence acquired by Russia is the main achievement of recent years and an absolute imperative corresponding to the political and diplomatic tradition of Russia.”¹⁰

Such a declaration immediately brings forward two matters of principle. The first one is the inherent meaning of “a truly national policy”—a term that is generally less common in democratic politics than in an authoritarian political discourse saturated with nationalistic ardor. The second is the meaning of the term “foreign policy independence” in an interdependent and increasingly globalizing world.

The third conceptual insight presented by Lavrov is the idea that world politics is about to live through

“the most crucial, and inevitably contradictory moment. ...The unpredictability of world development will persist. ...Salvation can only be collective.” At the same time, the head of Russian diplomacy proposed the idea of creating a new *concert* of major world powers. “Russia perceives no reasonable alternative to the formation in a globalizing world of a new collective leadership of major countries which would be geographically and civilizationally representative. The Group of Eight could become an important element of that ‘orchestra.’”¹¹

Finally, Lavrov explicitly spoke against the course of action pursued by the United States:

“Attempts to destabilize whole countries and regions under the slogans of ‘democratization and freedom promotion around the world’ cannot but evoke concern,” declared Lavrov, clearly alluding to U.S. foreign policy. “Not only not irreproachable in terms of international law and common sense, but also counter-productive is the line on isolating some or other players on the international scene. As a rule, that approach yields results directly opposite to those sought. That is why we cannot join the ultimatums which drive everybody into an impasse and lead to an escalation whose logic always works for force-based variants.”¹²

Lavrov is certainly right speaking about the beginning of a new and quite challenging period of world development, which requires collective action. However, the challenge lies not only in making decisions that would be acceptable to all members of the group, but also in the nature of such decisions. In Russia's experience, "a truly national foreign policy" is understood in today's Moscow as flirting with terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, and with leaders such as Hugo Chavez, the Iranian leadership, and other unsavory players on the world political scene.

Moreover, as the events of summer and fall 2006 demonstrated, the new Russian foreign policy includes exercising pressure on Georgia and Moldova. One cannot but notice that while Russian diplomacy actively protests against using force in North Korea, Iran, and other similar regimes, in Georgia's case Moscow is ready, at least verbally, to apply military force. For example, in mid-October 2006, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Air Force Vladimir Mikhailov openly declared that Russia would not remain indifferent in the event of a military conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. "If the minister of defense said that we [Russia] would certainly take adequate measures, then he probably meant the use of air, naval, and land forces," General Mikhailov noted the Russian position in a sharp, military manner.¹³

However, such double standards are only one of the weaknesses from which the new Russian foreign policy philosophy suffers. Equally alarming is the fact that the perception of Russia regaining power and influence is based solely and exclusively on the revenues obtained through growing world oil prices. In the meantime, not a single one of the true challenges facing the Russian economy and society has been resolved. Military reform has not been carried out, and the Russian army is still in a desperate state. No new sources of economic growth other than revenues from energy exports have been discovered. The demographic crisis has not been overcome. Russian electricity and transportation infrastructure is in need of immediate modernization. Thus, Russian prowess is largely exaggerated, which means that a foreign policy based on Russia's self-perception as a newly reborn major power cannot be productive. Zbigniew Brzezinski was right when he wrote in June 2006:

"Russia's 'sovereignty' is an obsolete stereotype. Its influence pushes the Russian Federation to implement unilateral actions towards Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, but such actions do nothing other than undermine Russia's reputation and unveil its complete helplessness; in other words, they can do nothing to Russia but harm."¹⁴

The events of summer and fall 2006 confirm this conclusion. The government of the Kyrgyz Republic allowed the United States to maintain its airbase in Manas despite Moscow's pressure. In August 2006, after Uzbekistan's return to the CSTO, Uzbek President Islam Karimov met with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher and probably discussed the issue of reestablishing ties with the United States, which were nearly reduced to zero after the bloody events in Andijan. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit that took place in summer 2006 did not see the renewal of last year's statement calling for a timeline for the closure of American military bases in Central Asia. It is unlikely that the election of Vladimir Yanukovich's government in Ukraine can be seen as a major Russian diplomatic victory. That government's main political support is big business in eastern Ukraine, a major competitor of Russian business. The aggravation of Russo-Georgian relations and our flirting with separatist groups in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria could draw Russia into conflicts that would be difficult to pull out of, and could definitively complicate Russia's relations with Europe and the United States.


President Putin's attempt to establish some sort of "special relations" with Germany in the energy field has not been successful either. German Chancellor Angela Merkel rejected the Russian president's seemingly tempting proposal concerning a strategic energy partnership involving guaranteed gas supplies for Germany in exchange for giving Gazprom access to German gas distribution networks. Instead of the energy alliance with Russia, the German chancellor signed an energy declaration with France, something not at all in Moscow's plans.




RECAPPING THE RESULTS OF THE PAST FOUR MONTHS

The events that took place on the world political scene in summer and fall 2006 demonstrated that reliable international security cannot be based on earlier approaches. The forces confronting the civilized world today see the policy of engagement, the search for compromises, and mutual concessions as an explicit sign of weakness in their partners, and they are ready to take full advantage of this weakness. Here one cannot but remember Winston Churchill's observation: "An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile hoping it will eat him last." Neither should one forget the lessons of history: the downfall of the Roman Empire was preceded by attempts to buy the loyalty of the chiefs of nearby barbarian tribes by paying them tribute. However, that strategy did not save Rome. The more tribute tribal chiefs collected, the more their mouths watered, and the greater was their longing to invade the empire and take away everything that their caravans could carry.

 Ekaterina **Stepanova (Russia)**, Senior Researcher and Director of the Group on Nontraditional Security Threats at the Center for International Security, Institute for World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IMEMO RAN), by phone from **Moscow**: *The calculation of the index implies developing a so-called "early warning" system. I have doubts about the calculations and the attempt to express international security in a single number. More likely, this is an index made up of forecasts and evaluations.*

Nonetheless, cynical historians who have spent their entire lives in dusty archives are sure of one thing: the only lesson that history can give us is that nobody ever pays attention to its lessons. 

Nonetheless, cynical historians who have spent their entire lives in dusty archives are sure of one thing: the only lesson that history can give us is that nobody ever pays attention to its lessons. 

Yury Fedorov



A VIEW BY A RUSSIAN CONSERVATIVE: APOCALYPSE? NO!

Summer and fall 2006 turned out to be among the most active periods in recent international history in terms of military and political developments. During the second half of 2006, all of the potential for conflict that had long been accumulating in the world came to light as if at the wave of a magician's wand. As a result, instead of the static picture of a *new world order* – in which only a few marginal individuals expressed doubts about the "general line" – in one wave of a hand both politicians and average citizens began to see the small number of states known as the "axis of evil" as something like a "new world disorder," or at least the general view of the world became quite fragmented.

New historical eras arrive, as a rule, gradually, but they begin unexpectedly. At first, events that do not fit into the previous paradigm are ignored, later they begin to be considered phenomena. After that, one begins to get the sense that this has all happened before, but on one beautiful day we wake up in a new world, which—surprise!—does not resemble the one to which we have become accustomed. So now, as the wheels of history move down the rails of the post-bipolar era, when all *civilized* people support friendship (although to different degrees—from ecstatic convergence to tough partnership) with the west; where there is no alternative to liberal market economics; and where political liberalism is undisputed as the only correct ideology (just like Communism in the Soviet Union); now on this smooth route some pebbles have appeared, which are beginning to not just crunch under the wheels, but to seriously impede the progress of humanity. During the last six months the number of these pebbles has exceeded the level at which one could simply ignore them. Discussing the events of summer and fall 2006, we will examine how the wheels of international politics squealed as they passed over the pebbles of a new historical era.

A NEW NUCLEAR POWER

Let's begin with North Korea's detonation of a low-yield atomic bomb in October 2006. What did we observe?

First of all, we observed that the North Korean leadership is resourceful and completely rational. They realize that a new era has begun and that very proud North Korea is great not because of its poor resources, but because of the inspirational ideas of *juche*. Otherwise, Pyongyang would not have conducted its nuclear test in such a demonstrative manner.

The North Korean nuclear test, conducted in defiance of Chinese opinion, shows the desire of Pyongyang to get out from the shadow of its "older brother." North Korea also wanted to demonstrate the futility of any hopes that Beijing could use North Korea as a chip in its strategic bargaining with Washington. The lesson for all of this is clear: North Korea is an independent state, and nobody can control its behavior.

The most important accomplishment of North Korea is not that it was able to conduct a nuclear test, and not even the fact that this nuclear explosion was produced by a device that North Korean delivery systems could carry over a significant distance—almost to the United States.¹⁵ The main accomplishment of North Korea is that Pyongyang was able to create a situation of strategic uncertainty about not the status, but the scope of its nuclear program among the regional powers. And in a situation of strategic uncertainty, even the United States will not take any very decisive action against North Korea, despite overwhelming U.S. military superiority.

And believe me, we will observe many more "inconsistent" moves by Pyongyang, which will sometimes give hope, and other times lead to stupor. But the keys to the game will not be held in Washington, nor in Brussels, Moscow, or even in Beijing.

But if the facts indicate that the actions of the North Korean leadership are rational, carefully considered, and clever, then perhaps it is time for the other participants in the six party talks (including Russia) to reject the previous perception of the northern part of the Korean peninsula as a permanently starving country led by a maniacal communist? Maybe it is time to recognize the North Korean leadership as serious partners who have their own perception of the situation, their own goals and resources? Then, you see, at least some level of trust and understanding might be established, the absence of which has turned the much-heralded six party talks into an exchange of slogans and accusations.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HEZBOLLAH: THE FIRST WAR OF THE NEW ERA

The war between Israel and Hezbollah is one of the main factors that will shape the international relations in the medium term, and not just in the Middle East. It was the first serious armed conflict, almost a full-scale war, which was conducted under religious slogans and by a state against a non-state actor.

Considering these factors, although the asymmetrical nature of the conflict was noticeable, it was not as strongly marked as many specialists had predicted. The picture of the successful attack on an Israeli patrol boat by an unmanned aerial vehicle designed and constructed by Hezbollah, as well as the ability of Hezbollah to strike (although not with much accuracy) targets up to 70 km inside Israel, demonstrates the qualitatively new military capabilities of non-state actors. While undoubtedly the capabilities of Hezbollah remain unique, it cannot be ruled out that other similar actors could soon acquire the ability to produce technically advanced types of weaponry in limited quantities.

The Israel-Hezbollah War will also have a long-term impact because it was the first Arab-Israeli war that Israel did not win. While one cannot claim that Israel lost, the fact that it did not achieve victory is also obvious. Owing to political and historical factors, the failure to achieve victory is the same for Israel as defeat.



The main point is not that Israeli generals directed the war with a strange combination of self-assuredness and fear, looking to their political leadership. And it is not even the fact that the military campaign did not achieve a single one of its declared goals and the Israeli soldiers whose capture provoked the conflict remained prisoners of Hezbollah. It is not even that the Hezbollah rocket attacks instilled in Israelis a sense of strategic vulnerability that had not existed even during the worst periods of Arab-Israeli confrontation, at least since 1967. More important was that the anti-Hezbollah consensus inside Israel quickly broke down as soon as the first signs of difficulty with the military campaign emerged. In other words, Israeli society, famous for its ability to unite in times of danger, clearly demonstrated to the entire world and to Hezbollah that it is not ready to sacrifice in the name of maintaining Israeli military and political hegemony. Israel remains ready to fight Hezbollah (and any other opponent), but it wants to do so in a way that minimizes the economic costs to its citizens. This is an important message for the entire Middle East that can be interpreted in only one way: Israel is moving from strategic dominance of the region to strategic defense. Of course, one can now justify this policy and blame Russia, Syria, anyone who could possibly have aided Hezbollah. For example, if only Moscow hadn't given those Islamists intelligence information, everything would have been fine. Without resorting to the well-known joke about a poor dancer, one can simply remind our Israeli friends that during the entire Cold War the Soviet Union energetically and effectively assisted the Arab countries in every way it could—weapons, money, and advisors. However, that did not prevent Israel from decisively defeating the Arab armies every time.


By the way, only the most naïve could fail to link the results of the Israel-Hezbollah war with shifts in the tactics of the Iranian leadership in the negotiations over the Iranian nuclear program. In response to the almost hysterical provocations of the United States and Israel, Iranian President Ahmadinejad—who himself represents not a unique phenomenon, but a trend in contemporary international relations—shifted to an increasingly refined exploitation of the contradictions between the European Union, the United States, and Russia. The cause of this shift is quite simple: the results of the war in Lebanon showed that the United States lacks the resources for a major geopolitical project (and the defeat of Iran is such a project), because Israel has ceased to exist as an offensive military political factor. Yes, of course the Israelis could bomb Iranian nuclear facilities, but such a course is clearly inadequate for a major long-term geopolitical strategy. And without being able to rely on Israel as an offensive force, the United States is hardly ready to begin a direct confrontation with Iran, much less use military force against it.

One thing is now clear: with its non-victory in Lebanon, Israel significantly exacerbated the situation in the Middle East and possibly created an entirely undesirable dynamic. The major lesson for all world political leaders is that there are situations in which it is better not to start a war, even if you are completely sure that of your victory.

In many analyses of the situation in Lebanon, including those by both western and Russian specialists, there are a lot of distortions of the actual situation in Lebanon, which interfere with sober assessment of the situation. Hezbollah is not the mythical al-Qa'ida (there are few who will now disagree that al-Qa'ida is more of a "phantom umbrella" uniting separate relatively independent groups). Hezbollah is an organization that has won the battle for the hearts and minds of Lebanon not so much by issuing calls to jihad as by adequately and effectively directing political and social-economic processes. We also often forget that Hezbollah is the result of a completely democratic development of the Lebanese political system. This organization is a force that draws its strength from civil society, excellently mastering its mechanisms and becoming an integral part of it. In this regard, the path of Hezbollah may become much more attractive to other similar organizations than the sectarian anti-Semitism that guides al-Qa'ida, Islamic Jihad, and Hamas, which has proven completely incapable of managing the microscopic Palestinian autonomy.

One can disagree with the methods of Hezbollah and its actions during the war with Israel, although it is also necessary to note that from the point of view of humanitarian purity, the actions of Israel during the war did not differ much from the efforts of the Hezbollah fighters firing rockets. It is even possible to continue considering Hezbollah a terrorist organization. However, it is impossible not to acknowledge Hezbollah as a powerful factor which defines and will continue to define the development of the military-political situation in the Middle East.

Then who exactly lost the Israel-Hezbollah war? The current leadership of the majority of Arab states proved to be if not politically, then ideologically bankrupt, refusing to lift a finger to help the people they publicly declared to be brothers. It is clear why they took no action: many leading politicians in the Arab countries, and even some of their leaders, are among those who declared for years that they were prepared to drive Israel into the sea but were always defeated, leaving behind battlefields littered with fragments of Soviet weaponry. In their souls is an almost superstitious fear of Israel and an almost mystical desire, while hating Israel, to avoid even the shadow of conflict with Tel Aviv. These leaders are capable of neither a solid peace settlement with Israel (even Hosni Mubarak, although Egypt does have a full peace treaty with Israel) nor a decisive final war. The war in Lebanon showed that Arab nationalism has no future as a political platform. The question of when these regimes will be replaced by more Islamist oriented ones is just a matter of time.

 **Andrei Kortunov (Russia)**, President of the New Eurasia Foundation, by phone from **Moscow**: *I believe that an index should be calculated with a long-term perspective in order to look at trends over the long run. There are many small, insignificant factors that in future could distort the current results. But generally I would say that I do not see any divergences with the trends I have felt intuitively that would contradict the numerical indicators of this period.*

Hezbollah does not suffer from this fear of Israel, and the new generation of Arab youth was raised not on stories about how many Arabs died in vain or were taken prisoner in wars against Israel, but instead were taught that serious defeats can be inflicted on Israel, even if it cannot be entirely conquered. Hezbollah, whether one likes it or not, is now the ideological leader on the Arab street. The question now is whether to ignore this factor, declaring it a “terrorist organization,” or to try and understand it. Hezbollah—unlike Arab nationalists, who are classmates and share the views of Saddam Hussein—is capable of both serious confrontation with Israel, and long-

term peace with it. Hezbollah is strong enough to pursue either course. The question is only whether Israel is capable of reappraising its position in the Middle East and understanding the new reality. At the moment, there is little hope of Israel adopting such a policy. It hurts to be weak, and the rather morally corrupt Israeli ruling class looks imprudent.

A GEORGIAN GAMBIT?

The significant increase in tensions in Russian-Georgian relations is one factor which to some degree supports the hypothesis about the emergence in international politics of a new wave of conflicts (linked with the expectation of an intensifying struggle for natural resources). U.S. policy, which is pushing its satellite Mikhail Saakashvili toward confrontation with Russia, does not at all differ from the classics of the genre of natural resource competition during the 19th and 20th centuries. A great power sometimes sacrifices a pawn in order to gain a better position for the next geopolitical move.

The direction of U.S. geopolitical moves is clear—to establish a base for direct military access to the eastern shore of the Black Sea from Azerbaijan to Georgia. And if this does not succeed, to turn the region into a zone of permanent instability, like Iraq (which would be easier). With these moves the United States would not so much strike a blow at Russia as create for itself the possibility to permanently and without much additional effort control important oil transportation routes.

Both the (proposed) Transcaspian Oil Pipeline and the Blue Stream Pipeline lie within either the zone of permanent military instability or within range of the most basic strike systems of the U.S. military. And this situation will be an additional instrument of influence not so much on Russia as on the European allies of the United States, for whom energy security is critical.

As a result, Russia is faced with the unpleasant prospect of either losing political face in polemics with Mikhail Saakashvili—a typical populist-obscurantist—or directly confronting the



United States and Europe. Of course, in the medium-term our European partners are just as interested as Russia in replacing Saakashvili with a more responsible figure, but considering the inherent anti-Russian solidarity of “progressive humanity,” Europe will hardly raise its own voice on this issue.

From this situation, Russia can draw one of the principal lessons of recent years for its foreign policy: one can endlessly play virtual games and engage in information warfare. In this regard, Russia long ago beat Saakashvili on points. However, the gain from this type of victory is small, since our main opponent (if not enemy) in this case is the United States, not Saakashvili. And once one recognizes this unpleasant reality, it becomes clear that victory will not belong to the one who more cleverly smears his opponent with rhetoric, but the one who has a stronger set of actual moves and significant resources, including military resources. And the United States is much stronger in these resources than Russia, even before considering freedom of action.


In the era of the Global War on Terrorism and the Orange Revolution our country’s lack of real resources and occasional lack of the political will to use them was acceptable. One way or another the War on Terrorism and the Orange Revolution were mostly “virtual” projects. But if the prediction that the next era will be one of a struggle for natural resources is justified, then the retention of this type of approach will become suicidal. The era of natural resource competition will not acknowledge victories on points, but only by knockout.

The case of Saakashvili is also significant because it shows the utter uselessness of trying to increase influence in the west by improving our image. Even in the case of a confrontation between Russia and an obviously irresponsible personality like Saakashvili the sympathies of the West are entirely not with Russia. Reading the U.S. and European press is sufficient to confirm this proposition. The moral of this story is that we should think less about our image and more about how one or another action impacts our interests. In the final analysis, the West will deal only with those who are capable of implementing their plans without getting distracted by polemics with the surrounding world. As they say, don’t cast pearls before swine...

Nevertheless, it is necessary to take our relations with the United States on the issue of Saakashvili and what is called Georgia seriously. Here is the logic and attractiveness of resource competition with the use of potential satellites: with rare exceptions—which are usually connected either with personal factors or with the domestic politics of particular countries—this approach allows the resolution of global problems in localized and insignificant areas. And the confrontation between Russia and Georgia, if Russia continues to make mistakes, and if the radical hysterics don’t take control in Washington, will develop as if abstracted from the Great Game

of the 19th century. Most importantly, it won’t require major expenditures by the United States, with the exception of financing Saakashvili’s supporters, who are generally undemanding.

Sometimes one has the impression that for the United States, Georgia plays the same role that Finland did for Great Britain in the 1930s. Finland was a sort of sacrificial lamb for Stalin, who had already indicated his readiness to restore the influence of Moscow along the borders of the former Russian Empire. From the British point of view, it wouldn’t be bad if Finland was crushed under the heel of Stalin’s boot—because Russia would then find itself in complete international isolation and Hitler would turn his gaze to the east. If Finland wasn’t crushed, Britain would also benefit: the prestige of the

 Rama **Mani (India)**, Executive Director of the International Center for Ethnic Studies, by phone from **Colombo**: *During the period of Summer to late Fall 2006 the iSi Index was, we see, fairly stable: its drops and rises did not even exceed 100 points. There were small changes, in my view, due to the unstable situation in Iraq and the unpopularity of George Bush junior, related to misfortunes both in the United States and abroad. During the fall months the situation really began to cause a lot of questions, thanks to the upcoming U.S. legislative elections. Whether the democrats will bring more stability, however, remains an open question. We will have to wait for the new iSi indicators.*



William Potter (USA), Director of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, by phone from **Monterey**: *I do not think that the international situation changed substantially during this period, as far as international security is concerned. However, I believe that the formation of a democratic majority in U.S. Senate and House of Representatives could accelerate the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, which would likely have a very positive effect on regional and global stability.*

Soviet Union would suffer a serious blow, and the Red Army would be discredited as a serious military force. The problem is that Russia is not the Soviet Union, Georgia is not Finland, and Saakashvili—forgive me—is nothing like Mannerheim. But Russia has to prove these facts to the world, while the Georgian leadership, as we already discussed has all the advantages of total innocence in the eyes of “progressive society.”

It is hard not to admire the willingness of the United States to be drawn into a serious conflict over Georgia—if not a Great Game—while the problems related to the occupation of Iraq are not resolved; when

the situation in Afghanistan, to put it lightly, has intensified; when the authority of the United States in the developing world has fallen to its lowest level since the Vietnam War. However, they understand in the United States that the stakes in the competition for natural resources are very high, and it is necessary to take risks, including sacrificing unnecessary allies, like suitcases with broken handles. It also seems that our friends in Washington are almost certain that they can use the conflict with Georgia to neutralize the Russian factor in Transcaucasia and the Black Sea region, at least for two-three years.

AFGHANISTAN: LITMUS TEST FOR THE CHANGE OF CENTURIES IN WORLD POLITICS

By the way, what about Afghanistan? I deliberately say “by the way,” since for five years the war in Afghanistan was clearly forgotten, and it was believed that this state would easily become an example of how to build a prototype democracy in a complex society dominated by Islam. On the other hand, about a year ago it became clear that intelligent people in the United States were counting on a very soft exit from Afghanistan and the transfer of primary responsibility for the situation there into the hands of the Europeans, who wanted to show their geopolitical independence and ability to implement a force projection and stabilization operation on an almost global scale. In other words, in Washington they wanted to implement an idea from the Vietnam War: “Declare Victory and Leave.” This approach was understandable, considering that the author of this famous phrase was none other than U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. But it didn’t work out; the plan didn’t succeed. Already by September 2006 NATO casualties in Afghanistan for the year exceeded those of the past five years. Even more important, U.S. casualties did not decline.

But this is not the main problem: the Taliban, over whom victory has repeatedly been declared, have moved from small-scale terrorism and rear-guard actions against the multinational forces in inaccessible mountain regions to offensive operations and attempts to seize populated areas. In other words, the Taliban is trying to reestablish control over territory. This is a major change, which indicates that the Afghan population, even if it doesn’t support the Taliban, at a minimum does not feel sharply negative about them. And that is the source of the problems facing the United States and its allies: over an extended period of time they have not been able to create a social-political paradigm that is attractive to Afghan society. In effect, the United States has recreated the pre-Taliban social situation: banditry, trade in narcotics, and warlordism. In other words, the same conditions from which the Taliban emerged. The situation in Afghanistan will not necessarily come full circle (anti-Taliban forces are still fairly strong). However, Washington will not succeed in rapidly quitting the Afghan mountains, and Afghanistan will certainly remain a resource drain on the United States and NATO for a long time to come.

But here we see the emergence of resource competition and clear signals of a change of centuries in world politics. Indeed, the operation in Afghanistan and the American military pres-



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ence in Central Asia began in 2001, the period—notwithstanding the events of 9/11—of the greatest expansion of American political globalism. This was a time when the United States—even in its worst nightmares—did not believe that it would be forced to engage in a struggle for natural resources, when it dominated. At that time even the most restrained American leaders were certain that the United States would eternally play the role of a global stabilizer that ensured the security of friendly regimes.

Recall that after the fall of the Taliban, only three regimes hostile to the United States remained: North Korea, Cuba, and Iran. Somewhere in the background there was also “Uncle Lukashenko,” a scarecrow used to frighten nervous European politicians. At that time the establishment of a stable and reasonable (in religious terms) regime in Afghanistan was not just a matter of political prestige, it was a question of faith in the American technology of political management, and in addition there was the possibility of control over one possible transportation route (although it is unlikely that the trans-Afghan route was ever seen as a realistic project). Now the situation is different. The number of regimes which openly ignore U.S. opinions has increased, but more significantly, the nature of international processes has changed.

In the framework of a struggle for natural resources a state must concentrate on its principal areas of activity. Afghanistan is not such an area for either the United States or Europe. Until Central Asia is stabilized, it would not be bad for the United States if the region again turned into a full-scale “hot spot.” In the final analysis, Russia currently has more influence in the region than the United States, and the overall dynamic is not in favor of our American partners. As a result, instability in Central Asia is a problem for Russia, which has influence in the region, but not for the United States, for which these countries not to mention their populations, are not important (despite all the rhetoric about Tulip Revolutions and human rights).

This context allows one to understand the flood—it can’t be described otherwise—of Americans into Pakistan, which outwardly appears illogical. According to the logic of the previous era, stubbornly destabilizing a generally pro-American regime in an anti-American society that has nuclear weapons is completely incomprehensible. But it makes perfect sense considering the logic of a struggle for resources. By turning not just Afghanistan but also Pakistan into a boiling skillet doused in neo-Taliban sauce, the United States, sacrificing questionable and, I might add, expensive resources, can easily earn a much more important resource: India. India, which finds itself squeezed between China, which no longer hides its ambitions, and an aggressively Islamist Pakistan, will simply be forced to agree to American terms of partnership, although in principle these might turn out to be perfectly acceptable. In any event, only one step remains before the full legalization of India as a nuclear power.

A NEW ARMS RACE: ARE CURRENT FEARS REALISTIC?

A lot has been said in the past six months about the possibility of a new arms race. To some extent these discussions reflect reality, but only to some extent. For example, many forget that one of the main causes of the current arms race is the United States. Not having managed to implement a full economic and political conversion of its military-industrial complex, and having exhausted the strategy of “skipping a cycle” in the development of that complex, the United States is now compelled to return to arms procurement. Indirect increases in the purchase of arms by the United States demonstrate that in the U.S. economy—which appears healthy from the outside – industry is beginning to face a crisis and defense industries are starting to have excess capacities. Earlier, these problems were successfully ignored. As a result, the United States now has to shift from short-term, or almost trial purchases to large-scale, serial acquisition of modern types of armaments and military hardware.

If one examines the other characteristics that are supposed to indicate the beginning of an apparently new arms race, in reality they have a local character, and can often be explained as the result of “delayed demand,” that is the replacement of weapons that have outlived their useful lives. For example, Algeria and Syria received their last weapons during the twilight of

the Soviet Union. But there are significant exceptions. Principally, the military programs of India and China, which have the same nature, but different contents.

Both states have set themselves the goal of significantly increasing their status in the international arena. However, if India is trying to create effective means of power projection and influence on a regional scale, China has probably defined its strategic goal as attaining rough strategic parity with the United States. As a result, we can regard the current growth in military expenditures as a result of the formation of full-scale multipolarity, in other words, the process that was politically declared six or seven year ago, but has only now begun to adopt practical and comprehensible forms.

And if the hypothesis about the current increase in interest in arms purchases is an indicator of preparations by a whole series of new centers of power to develop under conditions of genuine multipolarity, then it is worthwhile to conclude that considering the new era from the point of view of military-political aspects, the development of international relations will be the era of resource competition.


WASHINGTON AND THE NEW ERA: FEARLESS DESPITE DIFFICULTIES

Some in Russia harbor naïve hopes that the United States will retreat into isolationism in the face of increasing foreign policy challenges, renounce the concept of exporting democracy by force (the basis of Bush administration foreign policy), and begin to respectfully listen to its partners. But one need only read the pronouncements of Democratic Party leaders, vainly criticizing Republicans for the war in Iraq and for plans to intervene in Iran, to realize that fundamental changes in U.S. foreign policy are unlikely any time soon. In fact, the emphasis on the export of democracy by force might even expand. After all, the Democratic Party is historically more inclined than the Republican Party to support humanitarian interventions and other similar adventures.

As a matter of fact, President Bush is quite correct when he says that the Democratic Party has no plan for Iraq. In September 1993, the current favorite of radical Republicans, Senator John McCain, who spent the worst months of his life as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, told a large audience the following story. When McCain worked as an assistant to then Senator Barry

Goldwater, who opposed expanding the U.S. presence in Vietnam, Goldwater said: "John, if I had become president, you would never have ended up in a Vietnamese prison." "Exactly," answered McCain, "I would have ended up in a Chinese prison." As is well known, Goldwater supported a war against China. It seems to me that the Democratic alternative to current U.S. foreign policy is something similar: climb out of the Iraqi frying pan and fall into the Syrian or Iranian one.

The United States now faces a critical decision about changing the paradigm that guides its international actions. Already today one can suggest, heretically, that pragmatic and political motives lie behind the whipping up of fears about a new arms race, a trend that began about

 **Abdulaziz Sager (Saudi Arabia)**, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, by email from **Dubai**: *The July Lebanese crisis definitely increased worries that a regional war would be unleashed in the Middle East, which should have been reflected in the August indices as well. When these fears did not materialize, the situation stabilized. Nevertheless, the increase in violence at the end of October in Iraq and worries about an increase in sectarian clashes in the region caused the barometer to rock towards a more pessimistic view once again. On the whole, I agree that the Index numbers reflect the general state of the security situation.*

six months ago, and the proposal that the whole civilized world must work to restrain it. The general struggle for arms control is intended to replace the previous paradigm guiding international relations, the global war on terrorism. In reality, by its fifth anniversary, the global war



on terrorism had proved a political failure—although it succeeded from the point of view of the security of the United States itself, as the fighting with terrorists is taking place in other countries, not the United States. Of the broad coalition which supported the United States after 9/11, only the United Kingdom and a few satellites—which can only with difficulty be termed independent states—remain. The global war on terrorism has exhausted its potential as a unifying concept and must naturally be replaced with something new. A struggle against a new arms race, especially considering that this process involves states to which the United States is not that sympathetic, could earn Washington additional support in the world. Of course, creating a new paradigm will also require formal mechanisms that have international legitimacy, so a role will be found for the United Nations.

This change in paradigms is illustrated by the ease with which the United States allowed Israel to drown the Lebanese “orange revolution” in blood. Naturally, after the Israeli actions in Lebanon, American clients have hardly any prospect of electoral victory in Lebanon. And no small sum was expended in support of the Lebanese “orange forces,” which were expected to deliver serious results. In other words, “orange forces”—not just in Lebanon—will most likely be used as pawns in power politics. Washington is in principle no longer interested in the political prospects of the former “hopes of progressive humanity.”

Such is the logic of the new era, which will most likely be an era of competition for resources: natural resources, transportation resources, information resources, and geopolitical resources. The drive of some countries for resource control was already evident earlier. For quite a while it has been noted that the maintenance of U.S. global hegemony requires more than control of international finances and dominant military power. The United States has long sought indirect political control, not just economic control, over resource-rich territories. However, these little alarm bells, or as we termed them earlier, pebbles, were attributed to the eccentricity of individual U.S. leaders, who were too enmeshed in economic issues. For example, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, who in Russian eyes has acquired the characteristics of an international evil-doer, strongly reminiscent of either Osama Bin Laden or Boris Berezovsky. It seems to me that the rage against Cheney—although he is a powerful global lobbyist—is pointless. The wheels of history have simply started to turn in a direction that makes it very important to possess not just ideals of freedom and democracy, but also reserves of oil, gas, and coal, control over transportation corridors, etc. And powerful battalions of troops will be the most critical instrument for achieving these goals, more important than quotes from George Washington.

As a result, the victory of the Democratic Party in the November 2006 congressional elections—despite its importance—will not change much in U.S. foreign policy. New actors will simply emerge, who may turn out to be somewhat less pleasant interlocutors than the now comfortably familiar neo-conservatives, who seem almost Russian at times. In general, we need to forget the idea that short-term changes in U.S. domestic politics can shake the foundation of foreign policy. Of course, there are precedents which show that elections can determine the international course of the United States. But not now, since this is a period in which the system of international relations is changing its overall character, and the U.S. elite cannot afford to waver. And if one looks closely, behind the fence of rhetoric about democracy, the efforts of the United States to concentrate its resources on critical tasks are already visible. Washington is concentrating on tasks that are important in terms of the coming era, the era of resource competition.

Looking at this pattern, it becomes clear why the United States is reacting relatively moderately in response to the antics of its Latin American neighbors like Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales. Some 20 years ago, in response to the much sharper moves of pro-Cuban leftists, a group of expeditionary *Sonderkommando* was formed, which cleaned out Grenada. Less than 15 years ago, George Bush Sr., largely out of considerations of personal prestige, conducted a geopolitically unnecessary military operation and sent Manuel Noriega to a U.S. prison. And now his son—not just his son, but the President of the United States—is insulted from every soapbox in Latin America, where they are forming geopolitical blocs and purchasing weapons which might change the regional balance of power. Right in the backyard of the United States, in Mexico, a leftist radical almost became president. Nevertheless, the United States exhibits a suspicious cold-blooded indifference. What explains this stance? Has the imperial essence of U.S. policy

changed? No. Has George W. Bush ceased to believe in his messianic destiny? This is also hardly likely. The paradigm of international relations has changed. Now the United States is unconcerned with personal grievances and preserving the psychological comfort of its leaders. At the moment, the U.S. needs to deal with the most critical resource centers, and realistically, Latin American does not fall into this category. As a result, the United States tolerates crude attacks, replying, at the most, with some harassment of the Venezuelan foreign minister, for which it later awkwardly apologized. These Latin American leaders will be dealt with demonstratively and forcefully later, so that others don't copy them. But that will happen only after the United States has resolved the major challenges that face it in more critical regions of the world.

RUSSIA AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW ERA

What about Russia? Ideally, it would not be bad to survive the new era on the periphery of world events, but geography dictates that Russia will simultaneously be a participant in the struggle for resources and a resource for which other serious players on the world stage will not hesitate to compete under the right circumstances. As a result, the beginning of the new era is not only an opportunity for Russia to right some specific wrongs of the 1990s, but also a major challenge. It will in fact be a test of Russia's ability to be an actor in international politics, not just an object. And this challenge has become increasingly obvious in recent months.


We need to not only understand the essence of the era of resource competition, but also think through the methods we use on the international stage. One way to put it is that Russian foreign policy should become a policy of enlightened cynicism, and Russian military policy should become a policy of power accumulation. Cynicism in the sense that while digging ourselves out of the ditch of virtual politics, we should deal with real forces, engage in real projects, seek real allies, and stop wasting time on what might politely be called *foreign policy propaganda*. Enlightened, meaning that we should not just live by our short-term interests, but should understand the dynamics of the situation and structure our policy to take the future into account.

Power accumulation means that already very soon, sooner than we want or imagine, we will need a full-fledged military force, one that is capable of controlling territory, not just chasing Basayev and other bandits through the mountains and forests. These forces don't need to be that big. For example, in order to sustain a large and intensive operation in Iraq, the United States has used only about 300,000 troops in rotation. This number could be considered an indicator of the number of well-equipped and trained forces—cut-throats, if you will pardon my cynicism—that Russia should seek to create in the nearest future.


And from this point of view, it may be worth taking a new look at the situation in Georgia. In the final analysis, no matter what they say in American newspapers and journals, Georgia is absolutely not

a critical geopolitical resource. It is a territory of doubtful economic value, the control of which does carry with it a certain amount of foreign policy prestige. However, it would be better to concentrate on preparing for the struggle over resource-rich territories, and not waste already scarce political and military capabilities on an effort to settle accounts with a mentally unstable and bankrupt political leader. Of course, we will deal with Saakashvili, but later, when we can do so without hindering our progress toward our main goal—achieving control, preferably direct control, over the maximum amount of resource-rich territory. In the end, George Bush will tolerate Hugo Chavez (who is, by the way, an almost perfect clone of Saakashvili, but Chavez, as



 Yevgeny **Satanovsky (Russia)**, President of the Ariel group and President of the Institute for Israel and Middle East Studies. by phone from **Moscow**: *A security index is a very notional, "slippery" concept, and quite debatable. It is hard to determine a single number to characterize international security, since it is hard to make comparisons. What is insecurity or security? The determination of insecurity or security could be the subject of much discussion. But on the whole the Index is interesting and leads to a good amount of discussion, which is probably its most important value.*

they say, “is *our* son of a bitch,” or at least “almost ours”), and we can easily tolerate Saakashvili. It will be even easier to tolerate him if we stop subsidizing him directly and indirectly, and treat his appearances on television as if they were analogous to a show by some stand-up comic.

Lev Gumilyev once noted that centuries do not always coincide with their date on the calendar. Sometimes, they start earlier. For example, the 19th century began with the horrific Napoleonic Wars and the European revolutions, which literally started during the 18th century. Sometimes they start later. The 21st century, like its predecessor—the 20th, which started in 1914—began later than the sprays of champagne that celebrated the millennium. And maybe it still hasn’t started yet. Perhaps the 21st century, the contours of which political scientists and politicians have long been trying to guess at, is only approaching our door. But we should remember that in the end, all centuries have begun with a major event, sometimes with a catastrophic change in the character of war and role of military force in the world. And only later, after some time has passed, does a new political picture of the world form. It will hardly be otherwise this time. Now, based on the experience of the past half-year, we are discussing not something abstract, but issues relating to the formation of a new role for military force in the world, new means of its application, and new perceptions of its role by the major players in the system of international relations. And so the 21st century begins.... 

Dmitry Evstafiev

Notes

¹ Hezbollah is a Shi’ite terrorist organization based on Lebanese territory. It was created by and is financed by the Iranian leadership. It has about 6,000 men in its military units. Hezbollah provides weapons and trains fighters in the Palestinian terrorist groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad. It hates the United States and Israel every bit as much as al-Qa’ida does. See Mark Shteynberg, “Strikes from the North and from Inside,” *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, March 7-13, 2003.

² Jackson Diehl, “Bush’s Choice on Iran,” *Washington Post*, January 30, 2006, p. A17.

³ UN document S/Res/1701 (2006), paragraph 8.

⁴ “The war we fight today is more than a military conflict. It is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century,” *Financial Times*, September 1, 2006, p.7.

⁵ Viktor Myasnikov, “We have a nuclear neighbor,” *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, October 13, 2006, <<http://www.ng.ru>>, last accessed November 15, 2006.

⁶ “Resolution 1718 (2006), Adopted by the Security Council at its 5551st meeting, on 14 October 2006,” S/RES/1718 (2006), United Nations Website, <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions06.htm>, last accessed November 16, 2006.

⁷ Transcript of Address by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at MGIMO University on Occasion of Start of New Academic Year, Moscow, September 1, 2006.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The Russian Air Force will help Abkhazia and South Ossetia if Georgia attacks them. Rambler Mass media, October 13, 2006, <<http://www.rambler.ru/news/events/russiageorgia/8896383.html?print=1>>, last accessed January 12, 2007.

¹⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, “In the Eyes of a Chess Player,” *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, June 27, 2006, <<http://www.ng.ru/printed/68930>>, last accessed November 16, 2006.

¹⁵ The editors of *Security Index* would like to point out that while North Korea has been developing missiles that may nearly reach the United States, there is as yet no evidence that they have developed a small enough nuclear warhead to mount on such a missile.