

MAPPING A ROUTE

I am writing these lines soon after the annual meeting of the PIR Center Executive Board – our supreme body approving all key decisions related to organizational development. I am pleased to say that this time the meeting has passed in high spirits – the PIR Center is rich with exciting plans for the next two years and my colleagues have supported them with enthusiasm.

Now it's time to share these plans with the readers of the journal.

First of all, the PIR Center becomes an **international** organization.

Let me note (albeit for those who know well PIR's activities, it is obvious) that our headquarters will continue to be in Moscow. The PIR Center will remain to be the Russian-based organization. However, our work becomes more and more international by nature.

We have opened the European branch of the PIR Center in Geneva. It is branded as *Centre russe d'études politiques (CREP)* and is boosting with activities. It would be enough to say that the international edition of the *Security Index* journal is promoted and disseminated via Geneva – the journal has readers in 92 cities in Europe and all over the world. Having independent legal status, *Centre russe d'études politiques* comprises individual and corporate members from Switzerland, Russia and 14 other countries and international organizations – from Latvia to Australia, from Jordan to Canada. Evidently, the activities of our European branch are intertwined with the projects of the Moscow-based PIR Center. I assume such approach will stay.

PIR's representative office has been operating in the United States for over 10 years now. Members of the Advisory Board and the International Expert Group (INTEG) cooperate with us in 11 countries – from Italy to China, from Germany to Sri Lanka. Representatives of *Security Index* help us in maintaining dialogue with the audience in 12 cities outside Russia – from Algiers to Wellington, from Vienna to New Delhi. The *Triologue* international club affiliated with the PIR Center unites diplomats, businessmen and media from 28 states – from Poland to Turkey, from Israel to Japan. We have numerous alumni of Summer Schools and internships – these are young specialists representing 14 nations – from Armenia to the U.K., from Azerbaijan to the U.S.A. Finally, for several years now our projects have been beyond the domestic framework, while conferences and roundtables held by the PIR Center (independently or in cooperation with our academic partners) took place in Almaty and Havana, Gstaad and Bishkek.

We will continue to expand our international activities, strengthen cooperation ties with our foreign academic partners, resort to the experience of internationally-recognized



experts and widely use the capabilities of the European branch in Geneva.

Secondly, the PIR Center extends the **range of applied research projects** and consultancy. Step by step we approach thorough analysis of such complex issues, as global energy security or strategic challenges in Central Asia. We start with publications in the *Security Index* journal and continue with the series of roundtables and seminars. We keep an eye on the prospects of Sino-Russia security relationship. Another important matter is the control of small arms and light weapons, especially in potential conflict zones.

There is always a risk of *dispersion*, if too many juicy topics are dealt with. So we have to show restraint and think twice before adding new projects to PIR's portfolio. The criterion for setting priorities is simple – how crucial this or that issue is from the point of Russia's national interests, its national security agenda.

PIR's traditional focus on nuclear nonproliferation and arms control does not evade. The evidence of it is a thought-provoking discussion that we had this May in Geneva during the session of the Preparatory Committee of the NPT Review Conference. We follow the evolution of challenges to the international nuclear nonproliferation regime, especially in the countries and regions adjacent to Russia. Hence, no wonder that the first priority is and will be the analysis of the situation around nuclear and missile programs of Iran.

We develop research and consulting related to multilateral approaches towards nuclear fuel cycle, discussing this issue with our colleagues from the United States, Japan, Kazakhstan, Europe, and the Gulf region. Among other meetings I remember fruitful Rosatom-sponsored debate that we had on this matter during the extended meeting of the *Security Index* editorial board in the premises of this federal agency.

We would like to ensure more systemic approach to the future of nuclear weapons in the world, to their role in the arsenals of leading nuclear weapon states – we will try to concentrate our vision not even on years, but on decades ahead.

Thirdly, *Security Index* successfully passed its first year under the new title and in new format and now occupies well-deserved niche – a **Russian journal on international security**. Now that the work on quarterly issues of the Russian and international editions goes on smoothly and in accordance with the plans, we have to accomplish three consecutive tasks.

The first goal seems easy – we have to learn more about our target audiences. This does not mean that we don't know them at all. Our readership contains civil servants and experts, professors and students, businessmen and journalists. They are interested in getting information on international security developments and for 12 months we have been forming this audience ourselves providing them with copies of the journal. I am glad that most of them remain our devoted readers and their number is growing thanks to new subscribers, e.g. through our *Dialogue* and CREP membership systems. Now it is important to hear the voice of the readers who are well aware of the journal – to get their feedback, criticism, comments, requests, response to the articles. We plan to use our interactive Website – *pircenter.org* – for that purpose, but we also realize that nothing can be better than live communication. Therefore, we intend to conduct a series of readers' conferences in Russia and abroad, in the organization of which we are assisted by regional representatives of the journal.

The next task is to keep the format of the journal, but adapt the topics of the articles, so that we may fully take into account the requirements of our readers and their comments.

Finally, another mission is to increase further the number of contributions by young authors.

Fourthly, we will ensure the progress of our **training projects**, above all the International Summer School on Global Security and internships.

The Summer School, along with the *Security Index* journal, has become one of the most successful, most remarkable projects of the PIR Center in the last few years. During the first two weeks of July, young experts from Russia and other former Soviet Union countries get together in the Moscow region and plunge into details of the most urgent international security issues – from nuclear nonproliferation to cyberterrorism. The student-lecturer ratio is normally one to one. We get about 8 applications per seat. And this statistics is eloquent – there is a growing interest in the participation in the Summer School on the part of young civil servants and post-graduates from Moscow and the regions, and even greatly – from the ex-U.S.S.R.

Shall we increase the number of participants of the Summer School? I would say, no. Otherwise we may affect the quality. Shall the program be extended? Yes, but only in the future. It is an open secret that such training programs are quite expensive. And I am happy that in 2008 substantial part of support comes from the Russian state – it is a grant provided under the presidential order of June 30, 2007. If and when such trend becomes stable, we will be able to make our training

programs longer. Thus, in 2008-2009 we intend to raise the quality of our course and launch the process of establishment of the Russian Training Center on Global Security on the basis of current PIR's training programs.

Finally, we plan to engage more actively the impressive resource of the **alumni community**. Obviously, we mostly speak about alumni of our training programs, but there are also many ex-PIR Center's staff members. As far as emotions are concerned, we naturally feel sorry when an employee decides to leave the organization and go on with his own career. However, I am often glad to see the names of our former colleagues among the staff of large international organizations, or business entities... Many are scattered around the world. And many come back to the PIR Center again – they take part in the work of the *Dialogue* Club, or represent *Security Index* abroad... Or simply attend our New Year parties. It would be a good idea to have such virtual and real meetings in a more frequent mode.

I started this article with the recollections of the recent PIR's Executive Board meeting. At the end of it, one of the Board members, Col.-Gen. Yevgeny Maslin inspired us with a few songs. And, not surprisingly, we finished the session with the choir of distinguished experts singing a famous travelers' song – about mapping new routes and conquering new heights.



Vladimir Orlov,
President of PIR Center,
Editor-in-chief of the *Security Index* Journal