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Russia's Stance on Current International Security Issues: A View from Moscow

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Russia has strengthened its international positions over the past decade (2001-2011), in contrast to the weakness and decline of the Russian state in all traditional aspects of power throughout the 1990s. After a period of hectic, unsystematic reforms, Russia has returned to the international scene as an exporter of global and regional security, not as its importer.

Russian national interests may be defined as follows:

- A strong, influential (geopolitically, geoeconomically and geostrategically) and democratic state.
- The sovereignty and independence of Russia
- National unity and harmonious relations between Russia's peoples
- A developed, democratic civil society that participates in the defense of the citizenry's rights and freedoms
- A high living standard for Russia's citizens
- Safeguarding the historic, moral and cultural values of Russia's peoples

In international affairs Russia's national interests are:

- A world order that takes into account the variety of interests of nations and states, including those of Russia.
- Equal and mutually beneficial relations with all states and international integrationist groupings, structures and organizations.
- Strategic stability and international security, strict international arms and non-proliferation control regimes
- Integration with CIS states in all spheres of activity
- Respect for Russia and respect for the rights and freedoms of its citizens and compatriots abroad

In its defense and security policy, Russia's interests are the following:

- A rational and modern structure of the state's military
- Sufficient deterrence potential and level of military preparedness
- Integration with allies and cooperation with partners in the sphere of security and defense
- Russia's armed forces must be one of the principal instruments for securing, upholding and defending national interests and state security

Russia's global strengths, sources of power, and stable development are based on three pillars:

- Nuclear weapons – being among the largest nuclear-weapon states
- Energy resources, and
- High technologies, particularly in space, defense, and nuclear industries, combined with traditionally high educational level.

The key global security threats to Russia's interests include:

- Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery
- New, increased role of violent non-state actors, primarily international terrorist organizations
- Violation of global stability by building a global strategic missile defense system which would lead to a renewed arms race and a new arms race in outer space
- Illicit drug trafficking, particularly around Russian borders and penetrating into Russia
- Cyber wars and cyber crime, including DDDOS attacks on information software of strategic installations; and
- Demographic trends

The key global security challenges to Russia – which may turn either into threats or into opportunities for development, if addressed, include:

- Migration patterns
- Climate change; and
- Corruption, and organization.

How will Russia build its political, economic, and foreign policy move, President Vladimir Putin's priorities. The ranking of international priorities is rather interesting. Following the Russian media, the economic bloc known as the BRICS, the future unified economy of Brazil, India, China, Africa, and South Africa, will be one of the most important elements of Russia as a Participant...
Climate change; and Financial crimes, including money laundering, corruption, and organized crime

How will Russia build its security and foreign policy to respond to these threats and challenges during the next 5–7 years? On May 7, 2012, in his first foreign policy move, President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on foreign policy priorities. The ranking of international diplomatic priorities stated in the decree is rather interesting. Following the UN, which plays the central role in world affairs, is the economic bloc known as the BRICS, then the G-20, and lastly, the G-8. As it stands, the future unified economic stance of the BRICS members – Russia, China, Brazil, India and South Africa, which are also members of the G-20 – will be one of the most important elements of Russia’s foreign policy.

Russia as a Participant of Key International Forums

A key pillar of Russian foreign policy is economic integration with CIS countries. In this regard, one can highlight the ratification of the CIS Free Trade Zone Agreement and the framework for the Union State, a coalition between Belarus and Russia, the development of the Customs Union and the Uniform Economic Space of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan with the goal of creating the Eurasian Economic Union by January 1, 2015. These new multilateral economic structures are to gradually replace the CIS structures. Moreover, the first country Vladimir Putin visited in his third presidential term was Kazakhstan on May 25, 2012.
As far as relations with non-CIS countries are concerned, the President's decree primarily touches upon economic cooperation with the EU. Relevant topics include, "the creation of a single economic and human space from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean", a visa-free zone, and realization of the "Partnership for Modernization" program, including an energy partnership aimed at creating an integrated European energy model.

In Russia's view, the existing system of international relations in Europe still contains a number of rudimentary elements inherited from the Cold War period. This system cannot satisfy Russia. Attempts to transform some of the elements did not bring any tangible results. Despite numerous efforts to adjust NATO to the existing realities, its security policy still remains the source of serious problems in the Russia-West relationship.

On November 30, 2009 the Russian leadership sent a draft treaty on European security to the leaders of countries in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space from Vancouver to Vladivostok and to selected international organizations. President Medvedev said the treaty will "finally do away with the legacy of the Cold War." The treaty called for mutual cooperation between signatory countries "on the basis of principles of indivisible, equal and undiminished security."

Touching upon Russia's policy in the Asia-Pacific region, Putin's 2012 decree emphasizes the need to promote "accelerated socio-economic development of the Eastern Siberia and the Far East regions." He also highlighted strategic cooperation with China, India, Vietnam, Japan, and other key countries of the Asia-Pacific region. In recent years, Moscow has strengthened its relations with the individual countries of Southeast Asia. This trend is abundantly clear in four major spheres - arms deals, energy sector, innovative technologies, and people-to-people contacts. Another important development has been the continuing growth of Russia's importance to Southeast Asian energy security. In fact, Russian companies which are planning to carry out projects in Southeast Asia are represented by the leaders of Russia's energy sector. The projects under negotiation are no less impressive - Russian business is looking forward to cooperating in the construction of the TransASEAN pipeline and nuclear power plants, development of electric power stations networks in a number of countries, and assisting the Southeast Asians in using energy-saving technologies.

At APEC 2006 held in Hanoi, Vietnam, Russia put forward a proposal to host the 2012 summit. As a Euro-Pacific nation, Russia is pursuing an important strategy of restoring the balance between the European and Pacific strands of its foreign policy.

Regarding relations with the US in the 2012 presidential decree, post equal rights and non-interference is an issue that is an irritant in bilateral relations.

The strategic dialogue between the United States and Russia on the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons has been a major focus of the new administration. The Reducing Strategic Nuclear Arms Treaty (New START) was signed in April 2010 and entered into force in August 2011. The treaty formalizes and extends the provisions of earlier arms control agreements, including the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) of 1991.

As for resolving global crises related to regional conflicts, the US continues to be a major player in the UN process of conflict resolution and the maintenance of international peace and security. The 2012 presidential decree calls for the US to "fully engage" in efforts to "solve the problems of our region, and to maintain our global leadership and role in the UN."

This foreign policy stresses the importance of solving the problems of post-conflict countries and the need to "fully engage" in efforts to "solve the problems of our region, and to maintain our global leadership and role in the UN."

Under the NPT (1970) an Iran assumed legal obligations to not pursue any nuclear activities under international law. With the inspection team determined that Iran had "removed" the activities for a period of 18 years, the NPT Agreement. Thus, Iran had failed to provide Safeguards agreement with the requirements. These violations in the nature of the Iranian nuclear pro...
Regarding relations with the United States, which are not considered a priority in the 2012 presidential decree, political problems prevail. There is an emphasis on equal rights and non-interference in internal affairs as well as on missile defense, an issue that is an irritant in bilateral relations.

The strategic dialogue between Russia and the United States remains focused on the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons just as it was 30 years ago. In 2002, the United States denounced the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), undermining in fact the whole regime of limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons. In his decree, Putin emphasized that Russia would need to defend its interests as the United States plans to create a global AMD system. The issue of strategic cooperation on security is viewed from a new angle by the decree. It clearly states that negotiations on further strategic offensive weapons reductions are possible only after taking into consideration all factors affecting global strategic stability.

As for resolving global crisis situations, the decree approves the practice which is already being used by Russian diplomacy - "politically diplomatic settlement of regional conflicts" on the basis of collective action. This course was implemented to its fullest during the Syrian crisis. Its main instruments are blocking attempts of external interference in the UN Security Council and establishing a negotiation process between conflicting parties under international mediation on the basis of a UN mandate. On the other hand, the decree aims to prevent situations that allow a repeat of the Libyan tragedy, when the UN Security Council's mandate was in fact used for a quasi-intervention and regime change.

This foreign policy stresses on dialogue and multilateral negotiations as the basis of solving the problems regarding the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs.

Under the NPT (1970) and Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA (1974), Iran assumed legal obligations not to acquire nuclear weapons and to place its nuclear activities under international control. In 2002, an undeclared and extensive nuclear program in Iran going back to nearly two decades was revealed. The IAEA inspection team determined that Iran had been conducting clandestine nuclear activities for a period of 18 years, including various sensitive aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle in violation of its obligations under the NPT and IAEA Safeguards Agreement. Thus, Iran had failed to comply with a number of provisions of its Safeguards agreement with the IAEA; in particular, it failed to meet its reporting requirements. These violations undermined international confidence in the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program.
North Korean nuclear tests and attempts at developing long range missiles constitute a grave challenge to the global nonproliferation regime and a threat to peace and stability in North and East Asia and beyond. In addition, Pyongyang may be willing to proliferate anticipating an international market for its bomb technology, fissile materials and hardware. The strict observance by all members of the world community of tougher sanctions provided by UNSCR 1874 would substantially hold back North Korean attempts at developing its nuclear-missile capability.

To evaluate these and other international issues, the PIR Center developed the International Security Index (iSi), a comprehensive index of the level of international security.

Every day dozens of events from different regions of the world come to the notice of the media, but only the most significant ones are mentioned. Even if they are not mentioned in the media, information about these events can influence the international security climate. For navigating the overload of information, decision-makers need a compass. For example, we monitor the movement of the economy on the stock market and use such indices as Dow Jones, Nikkei, or MICEX.

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” (assumed as 4210 points, according to our methodology) at each point in time. It also indicates how various specific military and nonmilitary factors are affecting international security.

Each event is assessed both international security and accordingly strong), on the point scale we have factor is corrected depending on place. In order to do this, we have particular regions (from 1 to 9). This factor indicates the event’s contribution to the negative influence of global security. Thanks to the iSi Index, the PIR Center can monitor the level of global security. The iSi rate is calculated and published on Tuesdays in the commentary explaining the fluctuation of the index. Measurements are published on the Center website, www.pircenter.org, and can be published in the Security Index journal.

The PIR Center’s monthly report, with our International Expert Group from Kazakhstan, Brazil, India, China, and South Africa among others, helps us to see how our calculations are portraying the dynamics of iSi over the course of the year. Today the International Security Index composition of INTEG now includes...
Each 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.

Thanks to the iSi Index, there now exists an opportunity to monitor changes of global security. The iSi rate is calculated weekly and monthly. The weekly iSi rate is published on Tuesdays in the leading Russian daily Kommersant with a brief commentary explaining the fluctuations of the Index. The results of the iSi monthly measurements are published on the first working day of every month on the PIR Center website, www.pirccenter.org. The results of the Index calculations are also published in the Security Index journal, published by PIR Center.

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, South Africa among others. The evaluations of these experts 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. Today the International Expert Group represents all continents and the composition of INTEG now includes representatives of all of the BRICS states.