

Confidential

RUSSIA

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Published monthly in Russian and in English
by Trialogue Company Ltd.

Issue № 5 (221), vol.14. May 2015

May 21, 2015

Russia Confidential reports from Moscow:

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY TODAY: A VIEW FROM RUSSIA AND ABROAD

(Report based on materials of the IV Moscow International Security Conference held under the auspices of the Russian MoD)

ANNOTATION

As the international situation continues to deteriorate and the general crisis of the world order gathers momentum, it becomes especially important to exchange views and assessments of the international security challenges and threats. The IV Moscow International Security Conference held on April 16-17, 2015 by the Russian Ministry of Defense provided a venue for senior officials and leading experts from Russia and foreign countries to share their views of the most pressing problems in that area. Even though the number of foreign participants was limited because of the ongoing international tensions, the conference was attended by more than 400 delegates from 70 countries; 13 foreign delegations were led by ministers of defense.

In this issue of Russian Confidential we offer a review of the key topics discussed and conclusions reached at the IV Moscow International Security Conference.

What are the most pressing international security problems? The Kremlin's view, in the context of Russia's current concerns, was outlined by the Russian military-political leadership at an international conference held in Moscow on April 16-17, 2015. Below is a summary of the statements, comments and remarks made by senior military and security officials and experts from Russia and other countries.

- 1) Crisis of the world order and the conflict in Ukraine as one of its manifestations:**
✓ The international security system built after World War II is being eroded.

Conference participants spent a lot of time discussing one of the clear indicators of the ongoing crisis of the world order, namely, the situation around Ukraine. They focused in particular on the relevance of the existing security mechanisms amid the crisis in Ukraine.

Speaking on behalf of OSCE Secretary-General Lamberto Zannier, Amb. Marcel Peško said the crisis in Ukraine had demonstrated the importance of the OSCE as the organization that is best equipped to facilitate cooperative solutions.

Amb. A.V. Kelin, permanent Russian envoy at the OSCE, similarly emphasized that there is no alternative to the OSCE, as the crisis has shown, primarily thanks to that organization's multilateral format. The Russian diplomat noticed that "even though some countries are trying to take a rose-tinted view of Kiev's recent actions, reports by the OSCE mission give a fairly accurate and impartial picture of the violations of the Minsk Accords. The observers stationed in Ukraine have never detected a presence of Russian military hardware or regular troops there, belying claims by our Western partners." Amb. Kelin also insisted that the mission in Ukraine should remain civilian.

Jean-Pierre Chevènement, Special Representative for relations with Russia at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke of the possibility of signing a treaty that would formalize Ukraine's nonaligned status, and of the need for cooperation with such Eurasian security organizations as the CSTO and the SCO. "There are no moral or ideological grounds for a new Cold War," the French envoy said. "We must not give those who are nostalgic for the times gone by any excuse."

Irnerio Seminatore, President of the European Institute of International Relations (Belgium), in his turn, argued that "by means of the Ukrainian crisis, the United States hopes to use NATO to weaken Europe and Russia using the strategies of armed conflict and sanctions". He added that "the United States... is being driven only by its own interests, such as retaining control of the West and the Balkans, the Dardanelles, and the Middle East."

Yao Yunzhu, Director of the Center on China-American Defense Relations (China), focused on the need to build a new security architecture that would not be targeted against any individual country and would be free of ideology. She also stressed the need to "build a security architecture in Asia that involves China. Even though China is now the world's second-largest economy, and its armed forces are increasingly taking part in upholding peace on our planet, China has yet to be included in the Asian security system. Such a situation cannot continue indefinitely."

2) *The number of supporters of extremist ideologies is growing, and the threat of export of terrorism is on the rise:*

- ✓ *The growing scale of the activity of extremist organizations, especially in the Middle East, poses a real threat of terrorism being exported to neighboring countries.*

Gen. V.V. Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, offered a sober assessment of the growing threat of international terrorism: "In the 1960s and 1970s all the extremist organizations in the world had only about 2,000 members between them, according to various estimates. In the 1990s, however, that figure rose to 50,000, and by now it has grown to over 150,000". **The Pakistani Defense Minister, Khawaja Muhammad Asif**, voiced his concerns that the phenomenal rise of radical Islamism under the ISIS flag could lead to a break-up of several Middle Eastern and North African states, as long as "the ISIS activity had raised questions regarding efficacy of the post-world war borders."

The situation in Afghanistan also remained high on the agenda. The International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan has failed to eradicate the terror threat in that country. According to **Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu**, "this represents a real threat to Russia's neighbors, especially our allies in Central Asia".

Amb. Z.N. Kabulov, Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for Afghanistan, shared his view of the Islamic State problem. He said that the organization was gaining momentum in Afghanistan, primarily at the expense of the Taliban. The leaders of the Afghan wing of the IS regard the Taliban's lack of determination to wage a global Jihad as apostasy, and want to become the new leaders of all armed Afghan rebels. "ISIS political and ideological postulates are aimed at a 'global caliphate' building and openly deny the right of Muslims in the state and cultural identity," Kabulov said. "In practice, this means a re-transformation of Afghanistan into a hotbed, another support base of global terrorism, in which Afghans play the role of a faceless 'cannon fodder'. In the near future, the IS wants Afghans to clash with their Muslim neighbors who profess a peaceful Islam, and to plunge the whole Asian region into the abyss of fratricidal war."

Also **Evgeny Satanovsky, President of the Institute for Middle East Studies (Russia)**, emphasized the threat of instability being exported from Afghanistan to neighboring countries and Russia: "We are fast approaching a *Central Asian Spring*. This is an enormous problem not only for Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics but for Russia as well," Satanovsky said. The expert stressed, there is a need to make a distinction between terrorism, terrorist organizations and military-political movements.

Comments on the potential future role of Iran in fighting terrorism and building security in the Middle East were offered by **Vladimir Orlov, head of the Center for Global Problems and International Organizations at the Russian Foreign Ministry's Diplomatic Academy and PIR Center advisor (Russia)**: "It appears that Iran is still being perceived as a pariah and enemy, despite the progress made in Lausanne. On the other hand, if we begin to integrate Iran into international processes and in the international security efforts - in Syria, in the fight with the Islamic State, or in Afghanistan - Iran could become a constructive partner. The question is, should we see Iran as an exporter of threat or an exporter of security?" In his answer to that question, **Amb. Z.N. Kabulov**, said, "No, we do not regard Iran as an exporter of terrorism."

3) The problem of information security and cybersecurity; information wars being waged on a growing scale:

- ✓ *Hostile information campaigns in the world against Russia are viewed as an attempt to break up Moscow's historical and cultural ties with its neighbors.*

The Russian military-political leadership is greatly concerned by many countries' hostile information policies with regard to Russia. "Many European countries are using their media to peddle the idea that Russia needs to be contained, and that the alleged Russian military threat is growing and requires an urgent response from NATO, - noticed **Sergey Shoygu**. - Western envoys are scaremongering in the capitals of our neighbors and partners, telling them that they will be the next victims of 'Moscow's aggression'. Their main goal is to split away from Russia the countries that have strong cultural and historical ties with our country."

Also **the Belarusian minister of defense, Maj. Gen. A.A. Ravkov** focused on the problem of information security where he observed that "in the current circumstances, by winning the hearts and minds of the majority of the population, a country can be destabilized from within by provoking an internal armed conflict. We believe that this is a serious threat to military security," the minister said.

In addition to information security, the delegates also discussed the problem of cybersecurity. The **Iranian minister of defense, Hossein Dehghan**, stressed that "the creation and practical application of special forces, and America's unilateral dominance in cyberspace represent a serious threat to global security... Some of these threats could prove even more devastating than the consequences of the first and the second world wars."

4) Growing tensions on the Russian borders:

- ✓ *NATO's expansion and the deployment of its military infrastructure (including missile defense elements) in ever closer proximity to the Russian borders remain one of the key concerns for the Kremlin.*

"They are constantly trying to convince us that NATO's growth is purely defensive and not targeted against Russia," **Gen. Gerasimov** said. "But well-known facts tell a different story. NATO's enlargement since the 1990s has been going eastward, towards the Russian borders," said **Gen. Gerasimov**. He also highlighted the growing risks of armed conflict: "...as Russia's relations with the United States and Europe continue to deteriorate, there is growing risk of frozen conflicts flaring up again, with renewed fighting close to our borders."

According to **Gen. A.V. Kartapolov, head of the Main Operations Department at the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces**, "the deployment of NATO infrastructure in the vicinity of the Russian borders puts territories in the Russian heartland within reach of the NATO airstrikes, reduces the approach time, and potentially threatens the Russian deterrence capability."

Finally, **Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov** voiced that Washington's plans to deploy a missile defense system in close proximity to the Russian borders remained a matter of grave concern for Moscow: "This year Romania and in 2018 Poland will host ground-based BMD systems. The U.S. is increasing the number of ships equipped with BMD assets. We regard BMD as part of a global project that compromises Russia's strategic deterrent and upsets regional security balances."

5) Stagnation in arms control:

Some of the treaties and mechanisms have become obsolete and are no longer fit for purpose.

According to **Defence Minister Shoygu**, the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty has become obsolete, while other treaties designed to build confidence between the European states in the military sphere - such as the Vienna Document and the Open Skies Treaty - are not serving their purpose.

During the discussion, **Evgeny Buzhinsky, chairman of the PIR Center Council (Russia)**, commented on the outlook for conventional arms control in Europe, emphasizing the need for new weapons categories to be covered by the arms control system. "The entire experience of conflicts in recent decades demonstrates that military success is now achieved not through massive use of tanks, artillery, and armored fighting vehicles. Success is now achieved by means of unmanned aerial vehicles, sea and air-based cruise missiles, carrier-based aircraft, and land-based aircraft. These new categories need to be included in the new treaty, although I doubt that our Western partners will agree to that."

Amb. A.V. Grushko, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to NATO, highlighted the difference between the impartial assessments made as part of the implementation of some agreements and their political interpretations. "The results of impartial checks, inspections, and visits under the Vienna Agreement, and the results of flights under the Open Skies Treaty, have no impact on the political assessments of what is going on in various parts of Europe," Amb. Grushko said. "That disconnect between the results of impartial verification and political assessments is becoming a major problem; it diminishes the weight of those instruments and undermines the motivation to modernize them."

SEARCHING FOR A MODUS OPERANDI: HOW WILL RUSSIA RESPOND TO NEW CHALLENGES?

Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu, Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov, and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke about Russia's steps and initiatives to counter the aforementioned challenges and threats.

- ***To protect Russian territorial integrity, a self-sufficient military force has been deployed in the Crimea.***
- ***Settlement of the conflict in Ukraine on the basis of the Minsk Accords signed on February 12, 2015.*** Minister Lavrov said in his remarks that "there is no alternative to peaceful settlement of the [Ukrainian] crisis on the basis of the Minsk Accords of February 12. First of all, we need to ensure strict compliance with the ceasefire regime, a speedy completion of the withdrawal of heavy weapons, and verification of that process by the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission."
- ***Responding to challenges to strategic stability.*** The Russian armed forces are receiving the latest missile systems capable of defeating deeply layered missile defenses. A refresh of the Russian fleet of strategic bombers carrying cruise missiles is in progress. The latest generation of SLBM-carrying submarines is entering service. Further improvements are also being made to the Russian aerospace defense system.

Minister Shoygu reminded the delegates of President Vladimir Putin's ideas on deploying a non-strategic missile defense system in Europe, a system that would be economically feasible and which structure and capability would be commensurate to the actual risks facing Europe.

- **Providing assistance to allies, including assistance in fighting terrorism.** As part of Russia's long-term agreements with Abkhazia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and South Ossetia, Russia is building up the capability of its military bases stationed there and provides support to the national armed forces of these countries.
- **Strengthening security in the Asia Pacific.** In 2013 Russia, China, and Brunei proposed a plan of action on building a new security architecture in the Asia Pacific. In 2010 Russia and China also launched an initiative to build a regional architecture of equal and indivisible security. In cooperation with other countries in the region, a multilateral dialogue on this issue has been launched in the East Asia Summit framework.
- Representatives of the Russian military political-leadership emphasized Russia's openness for dialogue with all members of the international community based on mutual respect and the principle of indivisible security for all.

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

For all the variety of their approaches and positions, conference participants arrived at some shared assessments and understanding of the international security situation, which can be summarized as follows:

- *Unilateral decisions in the area of military security that fail to take into account other countries' interests are detrimental to global stability.*
- *International terrorism is rapidly transforming into an organized political force that seeks to come to power in various countries; that makes the struggle against the terror threat much more difficult.*
- *Growing extremist activity, especially in the Middle East, is posing a real threat of terrorism being exported to Europe, the CIS, the Central Asian states, and the Asia-Pacific countries.*
- *No country can defeat the terror threat on its own; this struggle requires international cooperation, even though the international situation has lately become more complicated.*
- *The existing legal and regulatory framework on arms control and crisis settlement is no longer fit for purpose.*
- *Thanks to the multilateral format of its work, the OSCE remains a relevant mechanism of safeguarding European and Eurasian security.*
- *The importance of regional security mechanisms is growing; by cooperating with each other and with the UN, they facilitate the formation of a new international security system that reflects the nature of a polycentric world.*
- *Active practical cooperation between the defense ministries of various countries will help to resolve problems on a regional and international scale.*

Edited by Julia Fetisova

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Moscow-Geneva, May 2015

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[...]

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In 2015, the Club members will continue to receive our exclusive information on the foreign policy priorities of the Russian Federation, and on current threats and challenges to the global security. **Five meetings of the Trialogue Club International** will be held (four in Moscow and one abroad); Club members will receive **12 issues of the Russia Confidential exclusive analytics bulletin**, our informational and analytical newsletters.

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Period	Individual membership	Corporate membership
01.01.15. – 31.12.15. (1 year)	30 000 rub.	47 000 rub.
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We would like to remind you that the corporate membership is based on **"1+1" scheme** when **two representatives** of the organization participate in the work of the Club.

Please, bear in mind that you can decide to pay the **two-year fee**, which would help you to get a better price.

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Sincerely,

**Chairman,
Trialogue Club
International**

Dmitry Polikanov