

**Confidential**

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# RUSSIA

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Russia Confidential reports from Moscow:

## RUSSIA AND THE WORLD OPPOSING NEW THREATS

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

### SUMMARY

*On 27-28 April 2016, the Russian MOD's V Moscow conference on international security (MCIS) took place. This year it was attended by more than 700 representatives from more than 80 countries and 7 international organizations; 19 delegations were headed by defense ministers. The growth of international community's attention to the Moscow event (to compare, last year's conference was attended by over 400 delegates from 70 countries, with 13 delegations led by the heads of foreign defense departments) is a clear indication of this forum becoming increasingly popular platform for discussing relevant security agenda by high-ranking officials and leading experts in the field.*

*The cross-cutting issue of the 2016 MCIS was international terrorism. An interesting discussion of the phenomenon of "color" revolutions was essential for understanding the reasons for its sharp growth in the world. Debates on new threats to global security and regional challenges put the emphasis on searching for ways to overcome the fragmentation of the world community, including current opposition of Russia and the West. Special attention was paid to the Asia-Pacific region where Russia obviously seeks to strengthen its position.*

*In this issue of Russia Confidential we have reflected the highlights of the V MCIS's presentations and debates.*

## COMBATING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM:

### CONTRIBUTION OF RUSSIA AND PROSPECTS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The fight against international terrorism has become number one topic at the V MCIS, with **Vladimir Putin's** read word of greeting becoming its leitmotif where the Russian president emphasized the need for international community's concerted action to combat this threat.

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*The Russian initiative to create a broad anti-terror front based on universally accepted international law and under UN auspices aims to resolve this issue, - Putin concluded.*

**Secretary of Russia's Security Council Nikolai Patrushev**, in his turn, put forward concrete steps of international cooperation to improve the situation:

- *boosting information exchange about terrorist movements;*
- *establishing mutual information channels on refugee issues;*
- *stopping terrorist recruitment and propaganda activities, including online;*
- *protecting states from external intervention using IT and communications technology; identifying and obstructing terrorist financing channels.*

**Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu** condemned dalliances with terrorism and any form of support for it, stressing that exterminating terrorists is the Russian Defence Ministry's top priority - as evidenced by Russian Air Space Force operation in Syria. This operation resulted in a *heavy blow* to terrorist groupings such as *Islamic State (IS)* and *Jabhat al-Nusra* (both banned in Russia) and created conditions conducive to the launch of a political conflict resolution process, opened up pathways for humanitarian aid to reach the Syrian people, and saw the start of de-mining work within Syria. The defence minister was positive about cooperation with the U.S. on the Syrian issue, however he noted their uncompromising stance on the retention of Bashar Assad as Syrian president.

**The Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov** particularly stressed the fact that terrorists had gained the technical documentation and production capacity to create chemical weapons, which they had already in use. Here Lavrov recalled the Russian initiative developed under the Conference on Disarmament, the International Convention for the Suppression of Chemical Terror Attacks, and the proposal to expand the convention's remit to include measures to counter bio-terror threats. The minister also noted Russia's proposal to accept a new edition of the Concept for a Security Framework for the Persian Gulf.

**Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov** noted that in the 1990s, Russia gained considerable experience in carrying out counter-terrorist operations on its own soil and came to several conclusions:

- 1) it is vital that the armed forces have time to prepare for counter-terror operations;*
- 2) you must strike pre-emptively against terrorism, when the threat is in the early stages of formation, and not give its ideology time to penetrate public consciousness, develop, and seize new ground;*
- 3) terrorism cannot be eliminated without the use of the armed forces, but it cannot be beaten with military force alone.*

The head of General Staff also touched upon the problem of external interference in sovereign countries' affairs and certain states' desire to exploit terrorist and extremist groups for their political ends. He noted that

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*the unfolding of events in Syria along the Libyan scenario would have led to the transformation of a country that had, until recently, been flourishing, into a source of terrorist threat contamination for the entire region».*

Russia's involvement prevented this. Gerasimov noted that Russian groupings are involved exclusively in counter-terrorist operations in Syria and are there entirely legally. Besides that, the conditions for states to cooperate to solve the Syrian problem have been created. Russia and the United States have prepared and signed a bilateral memorandum on flight safety over Syrian airspace; a four-party (Iraq, Iran, Syria, Russia) counter terrorism information centre is up and running in Baghdad; a mechanism for collaboration between defence agencies in Russia and Israel has been created; a peace-building centre for conflicting parties in Syria has been set up at the Hmeimim air base on Russia's initiative.

**Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces' General Staff Sergei Rudskoi** particularly emphasized constructive relations with the United States developed to effect and monitor a ceasefire between parties to the Syrian conflict. The situation in the country has stabilised, and thus part of the aviation group has been recalled to their permanent bases, although a substantial force remains at Hmeimin to monitor the ceasefire and assist Syrian forces.

*According to Syria's Deputy Defence Minister Mahmoud Shawa, the partial withdrawal of Russian forces followed their completion of set goals within Syria and in no way damaged the country. In his turn, head of the Hamid Karzai Foundation, former President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai noted that the only effective way to combat terrorism involves sincere cooperation between the United States, Russia, China, India, Iran and other interested parties.*

Views on the creation of a broad anti-terror coalition were also expressed by **General Secretary of the CSTO, Nikolai Bordyuzha**. In his view, it is vital to develop a network of cooperation between international organisations that specialise in security issues such as SCO, CSTO, OSCE, ASEAN, organisations involving countries in the Caribbean Basia and South America, the African Union, all coordinated by the UN. It is necessary to create a single list of terrorist organisations that all states must combat, without exception, and to consolidate international efforts around states that have proved themselves to be honest in their battle with terrorism, capable of carrying out these activities on a global scale - such as Russia and China. Answering moderator's question as to why NATO is not among the organisations listed, Bordyuzha said that,

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*ideally, all international organisations involved in security issues should be able to work together without setting out conditions. Russia and NATO are united by the imperative to fight terrorism, narco-trafficking, and organised crime. But the question of who has financed the "Taliban" and "Islamic State" also has to be asked, and these channels must be shut down. It is vital to cease support for terrorists, to define positions on key security questions and identify areas of common ground.*

#### HOW TO ARRANGE DIALOGUE BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN COMBATING NEW THREATS

**Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu** stressed that Russia-NATO cooperation has been frozen not on Russia's initiative. Simultaneously, NATO states have started expanding their military infrastructure along Russia's borders while also putting into practice dangerous strategic concepts, whereby he mentioned the development of anti-missile defence and *prompt global strike capacity*. "A harsh, uncompromising information war is being waged against Russia," Shoigu said, however attempts to isolate Russia have

failed. The minister said that one of his office's priorities is strengthening military cooperation with CIS and CSTO countries, deepening ties with states in Asia Pacific and expanding cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), whereby he mentioned Russia's proposal to create an institution of military representatives attached to the SCO.

Similarly, the **Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov** stressed that NATO's actions alter the military and political landscape in north-eastern Europe in a major way. Indicatively, lifting concerns related to Iran's nuclear program has not led to any adjustments to plans of placing BMD in Europe which are the subject of serious concern for Russia. The minister particularly stressed that

**“ It is necessary to finally turn off "the powerful generator" for tension in European affairs, which is the Ukraine crisis. The only way to go forward is to honestly implement the Minsk Package of Measures and, above all, force the Kiev authorities to honour their obligations.”**

The essence of the conflict between Russia and the West was described by **the Member of the German Council on Foreign Relations Alexander Rahr** in the following way: after the Cold War two power blocs developed in Europe, the EU and NATO; Russia initially accepted these organisations' expansion, but does not accept their expansion into Ukraine. The expert mentioned the idea of a common security space from Lissabon to Vladivostok that is popular in Germany, and that would require developing cooperation mechanisms between the EU, Eurasian Economic Union, NATO and the CSTO. Also, Rahr suggested to institutionalise a broad dialogue between Russia and Europe on values. And finally, progress is needed on European disarmament policy, namely on issues relating to missile defence and tactical nuclear weapons.

The former **BND chief August Hanning** noted that without Russia's involvement there is no chance of resolving the crises in Southern and Eastern Europe. It is also vital to find a way for providing security guarantees to Ukraine and Georgia without them joining NATO, and for the speedy lifting of anti-Russian sanctions.

Replying to **Senior Adviser's at the Atlantic Council (US) Harlan Ullman's** question as to how to prevent a military incident between Russia and the West that could lead to a serious crisis, **Academic Supervisor at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute for the USA and Canada Sergei Rogov** said that the way to prevent such incidents is to come back to the implementation of the Soviet-American Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas. However, he stressed, the risks of such incidents are also created by the strengthened NATO presence along Russian borders. If at the upcoming NATO summit in Warsaw the decision is made to further expand these forces, the situation will only be exacerbated. Also, it is vital to resolve the issue of the Agreement on the Elimination of Medium and Shorter Range Missiles, which both Russia and the US accuse each other of violating. Finally, Rogov said, it would be good to build on the positive experience of Russia-US cooperation in Syria.

In his turn, **Permanent Representative of Russia to NATO Alexander Grushko** noted that mechanisms such as the Russia-NATO Council and Strategic Partnership with the EU were suspended, which resulted in ad hoc cooperation only which is currently in place. Additionally, NATO has added a military dimension to relations between Russia, Poland and the Baltic States - where none previously existed. Finally, regarding moves to unite efforts by a range of international organisations in Europe, Grushko recalled the Platform for Cooperative Security formed in 1999, which could be brought into play in coordinating work carried out by all the different organisations in Europe and Eurasia.

**Chairman of the Federation Council's International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev** stressed that one more cause for concern are the plans to create closed US-led projects such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Also, while cooling relations between NATO and Russia are due to the Ukrainian crisis, cooperation between NATO and the CSTO never got off the ground, despite proposals for collaboration on Central Asia and Afghanistan. And this in the situation when the region sees threats from the *Taliban*, *Al Qaeda*, and *Islamic State*, with a potential probability of these forces to merge. In Kosachev's opinion,

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*Russia's military presence in Central Asia is a vital element in ensuring security so any talk of its reduction would be irresponsible at a time when it might be reasonable to even expand it. At the same time, the economic crisis impacts the situation in Central Asia and reduces opportunities for external players to provide meaningful assistance. "In five years Russia provided 4.5 billion USD in aid to the region (2.7 billion USD on a bilateral basis, 1.7 billion via international organisations)", Kosachev noted.*

#### RUSSIA AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

The day before the V MCIS opened, Moscow hosted the first ever meeting of the heads of the defense agencies of ASEAN states and Russian Federation, which gave birth to a new format of cooperation between Russia and Asia-Pacific countries - ASEAN+8+1 defense ministers meeting (ADMM-plus). In his speech at the conference **Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu** assessed it as a significant and important event in the run-up to the May Russia-ASEAN summit in Sochi. In general, the priority attached by Russia to the relations with Asia-Pacific region was highlighted by the very structure of the conference, and Shoigu articulated this priority, together with the importance of building architecture of equal and indivisible security in the region.

As noted by **Singapore's Minister of Defence Ng Eng Hen**, Asia Pacific region continues to witness a rise in defence spending: since 2013 Asian countries have overtaken Europe in it, and in the coming years they will presumably outstrip the United States in that indicator. In this environment, he stressed, Asia Pacific countries are taking measures to strengthen trust between their defence agencies through information exchange and joint training. This also applies to military cooperation with external partners, in particular with Russia.

**Laos Minister of National Defence Chansamone Chanyalath** reported that alongside Thailand and Russia, Laos arranges field exercises in delivering humanitarian aid, natural disaster relief, and military medicine - which will be held in Thailand in September 2016. Also, from 2017 to 2020 Laos and Russia will co-chair a working group on humanitarian de-mining action.

**Vietnam National Defence Minister Ngo Xuan Lich** welcomed Russia's intention to expand its participation in Asia Pacific region affairs and expressed his wish for Russia to play a more active role in regional security structures, such as the East Asia Summit, ASEAN+1, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus, and the *Shangri-La Dialogue*.

**Indian Minister of State for Defence Rao Inderjit Singh** praised Russia's involvement in Asia-Pacific region affairs as to strengthening security and developing cooperation. In India's view, regional security architecture should be based on dialogue within ASEAN and East Asian Summit countries, and that its agenda should include both traditional and non-traditional threats. Besides that, Singh responded to the question of **Maria Sultan, Director of the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (Pakistan)** who asked if the mass arrival of American military technology and equipment on the Indian market has to be expected due to India's recent signing of 59 agreements

with the United States on high-tech issues. **Rao Inderjit Singh** said that India is ready to cooperate on this with all countries, but its priority is developing its own defence technology production capacity.

#### INSTEAD OF CONCLUSION: WHERE THE WIND OF COLOR REVOLUTIONS BLOW

Regarding the main theme of the conference - international terrorism - its participants had the common understanding that this threat cannot be overcome by unilateral actions, and that utilizing terrorist organizations to achieve political ends by individual countries is unacceptable. For understanding the origins of international terrorism, **the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov** stressed the need "to learn all our lessons" and recognise the unsound actions and decisions that pushed the Middle East and North Africa into "a downward spiral to overall degradation with still unclear outcomes". That requires, in the minister's view, the recognition of the cultural and civilisational diversity of countries across the world, and to refrain from imposing values from outside.

In line with these words of the Russian minister, expressed at the very beginning of the conference, an interesting discussion of the *color revolutions* phenomenon arose at the conference's final stage.

- *"Reckless support for the "Arab spring" by a number of the world's leading countries for the sake of their short-term political interests became one reason for the breakdown of the historical balance of power that had developed in particular Muslim countries," the Deputy Head of the Chief Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Sergei Afanasiev said. The humanitarian catastrophe and power vacuum that arose from this were exploited by terrorist groupings.*
- *Deputy Defence Minister of Egypt Mohamed El Keshki talked in his speech about the role played by Egyptian Armed Forces in consolidating stability following the "Arab Spring" which El Keshki compared to a sandstorm: the military took measures to ensure control over the state's borders and to prevent militants smuggling weapons in from abroad, eradicated illegal arms stockpiles, and so on.*
- *Andrew Niikondo, Dean of the Political Sciences and Management Faculty at the University of Science and Technology (Namibia), said that many of the revolutions seen in Africa were sparked with participation of developed Western states who gave financial support to particular forces. He welcomed the positive role that Russia played in Syria, and expressed his desire for Russia to help resolve the crisis in Libya.*
- *Mars Sariev, an expert from Kyrgyzstan, stressed that Kyrgyzstan has lived through two "colour revolutions". He said that "colour" revolutions and terrorism are indelibly connected as soon as they are both organised from one centre.*
- *Director of the Centre for the Political Environment Sergei Mikheev said that the United States has used "colour" revolutions to achieve global dominance. Mikheev urged Russia's leadership, and that of other countries, not to react to Internet provocation that seeks to force states into a hasty response to chimeric threats.*
- *Political scientist and commentator Rostislav Ishchenko shared his views on "colour" revolutions as the continuation of war by other means. Their spread can be explained, he argued, by the fact that it has become expensive to wage traditional wars, and armed conflict between nuclear powers is impossible.*
- *And finally, political scientist, author and political consultant Dmitry Kulikov noted that as far as "colour" revolutions are war technology, they should be dealt with by military agencies.*

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In 2016, the *Triologue 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 global security. **Five meetings of the *Triologue Club International*** are planned for 2016 (four in Moscow and one abroad); Club members will receive 4 issues of the Security Index quarterly journal in electronic form and 2 issues in print (in 2016 only in Russian), **12 issues of the *Russia Confidential* exclusive analytics bulletin**, our informational and analytical newsletters.

As before, experts of the *Triologue Club International* and of its partner organization PIR Center are open to an exchange of views on key international problems.

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**Chairman,  
*Triologue Club*  
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**Dmitry Polikanov**