

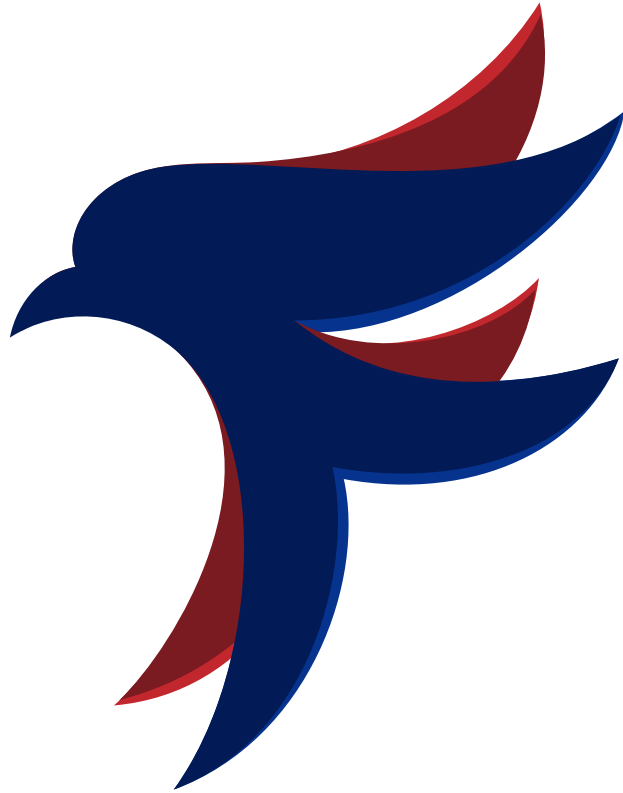


FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE



EURASIA PROGRAM

2019 Year End Report



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EURASIA PROGRAM

FPRI's Eurasia Program includes 27 affiliated scholars, five thematic initiatives, and seven regular publication series. In January 2019 we appointed two Black Sea Fellows and three Baltic Sea Fellows, and named Dr. Stephen Kotkin our special Eurasia Fellow for 2019.

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EURASIA PROGRAM INITIATIVES



**RUSSIA POLITICAL
ECONOMY PROJECT**



BMB RUSSIA



CENTRAL ASIA INITIATIVE



DEMOCRACY AT RISK



BLACK SEA INITIATIVE



BALTIC INITIATIVE

2019 IN REVIEW

The Eurasia Program was founded in 2015 with the aim of examining the political, security, economic, and social trends shaping the region. It has a multi-year focus on the Baltic and Black Seas, emphasizing how geography, economics, ideology, and history continue to shape politics and security in both areas. The program publishes analyses of Russian foreign policy, including Russia's role in Europe, the Balkans, and the Middle East. The Russia Political Economy Project, along with BMB Russia, analyzes the linkages between Russia's economy and its political system. The Central Asia Initiative is our newest project dedicated to examining the geopolitics and geoeconomics of the rapidly changing region and informing U.S. policymakers and policy influencers on matters that affect U.S. national interests.

The Eurasia Program includes 25 affiliated scholars, five thematic initiatives, and seven regular publication series. In January 2019, we appointed two Black Sea Fellows and three Baltic Sea Fellows, and named Dr. Stephen Kotkin our special Eurasia Fellow. In 2019, we published 45 articles, 16 special reports, held 20 public and private events, launched the Central Asia Initiative, and inaugurated **BMB Ukraine**, a companion brief to our long-standing BMB Russia newsletter.

We expanded our work on Russia's political economy by mapping Moscow's economic influence abroad and examining the Russian military-industrial complex. We enhanced our focus on the Black Sea region by adding regular video-commentary to the special Black Sea reports, and placed a spotlight on the conflict in Ukraine through field research, public lectures, and private briefings.



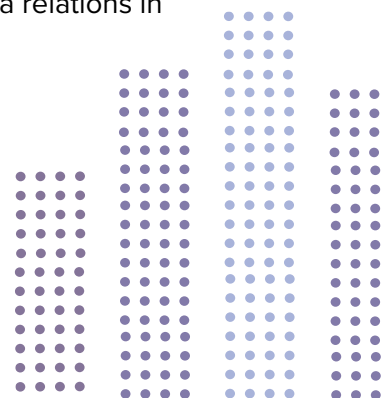
Europe on the Edge: The Politics of the Grey Zone conference in Vilnius

We also deepened our Baltic Initiative work by collaborating with the Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis and co-organizing a conference in Lithuania. We partnered with the Baltic Security Foundation in Latvia, and laid groundwork for exciting new initiatives to more closely analyze Baltic security issues in 2020.

The Baltic Initiative

The Baltic Initiative analyzes the geopolitics, geoeconomics, and security issues of the Baltic Sea region, and their implications for Europe and the United States. The monthly Baltic Bulletin and Baltic Roundup newsletter, authored by Dr. Indra Ekmanis, Editor of the Baltic Bulletin, analyze major political, cultural, and economic events in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

In January 2019, we appointed three Baltic Sea Fellows. Una Bergmane, Indra Ekmanis, and Lukas Milevski are driving the initiative's focus on political and security issues in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and on NATO-Russia relations in



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Indra Ekmanis is the editor of the Foreign Policy Research Institute's Baltic Bulletin and a Baltic Sea Fellow in the Institute's Eurasia Program. She is the author of the monthly **Baltic Roundup**, an FPRI newsletter covering developments in the region.

She is an Editor for PRI's Global Nation through the ACLS/Mellon Public Fellows Program, where she works primarily on worldwide migration and European issues. Dr. Ekmanis recently completed a fellowship as a Kennan Institute Title VIII Research Scholar at The Wilson Center. She has a PhD in International Studies from the University of Washington and her academic research looks at social integration, minority rights, nationalism, civil society, and democratic transition, with an area specialization in the Baltic Sea Region and post-Soviet space.



the Baltic Sea region more generally.

Dr. Milevski is an American scholar based at Leiden University, where he writes and presents regularly on Baltic defense, grand strategy, and strategic studies. In January, Dr. Milevski briefed our Philadelphia audience about NATO-Russia relations and the role of the Baltic states. Based at the London School of Economics, Dr. Bergmane is developing a research project entitled "**How to Confront Ukraine's Oligarchs: Lessons from Latvia.**" Her Baltic Bulletin work focuses on Latvian domestic politics and Russian disinformation efforts. Earlier this year, we launched the **Baltic Roundup**, a monthly newsletter authored by Dr. Ekmanis; it reaches over a thousand subscribers per month.

In addition to this research, we continue to expand on Baltic-related partnerships in the U.S. and Baltic Sea region. In October, FPRI co-sponsored a conference with the Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis, titled **Europe on the Edge: The Politics of Grey Zones**. The event, which took place in Vilnius, Lithuania, emphasized the destabilizing role that China and Russia play in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Black Sea Initiative

The Black Sea Initiative recognizes that the challenges of the Black Sea region influence all of Europe and Eurasia. The region is home to frozen conflicts in Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine, and is surrounded by major geopolitical actors, such as Russia and Turkey.

This year, we named Dr. Robert Hamilton of the Army War College and Dr. Nicholas Gvosdev of the Naval War College as Black Sea Fellows. In May 2019, Dr. Hamilton traveled to Ukraine for field research in Kyiv and Donetsk. Upon his return, he briefed scholars, policymakers, and Ukraine-watchers in Washington, Philadelphia, and Boston. The resulting report draws lessons from the **Russia-Ukraine war in the Donbas** in the five years since that conflict began.

Dr. Gvosdev's work has analyzed Russian foreign policy towards its Black Sea neighbors, and Russia's impact on regional security and geoeconomics. Furthermore, Dr. Gvosdev regularly writes on American foreign policy more generally in a period of increased great power competition. In November, Dr. Gvosdev wrote a report on **Russia's Southern Strategy**, examining Russia's pursuit for reasserting and

strengthening its dominant position in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions and beyond.

Russia Political Economy Project

In late 2017, we inaugurated the Russia Political Economy Project, which publishes reports that provide a clear-eyed assessment of Russian political economy trends. The project is based on the notion that American analysis of Russia has too often projected its own ideas and politics onto Russia rather than understanding how Russia's leaders think.

Rather than trying to maximize their population's wealth, Russia's leaders see economics as a tool for projecting Russian power on the international stage. The Russia Political Economy Project provides deep research on key themes on Russian political economy. In 2019, the project produced a series of reports mapping how Russia uses economic tools to achieve foreign policy leverage. These reports examined Russia's interests in Asia, the history of Russian propaganda and interference in other countries, Russia's economic ties to Venezuela, Russia's energy politics, Russia-Belarus relations, and Russia's history of imperial expansion.

BMB Russia

BMB Russia provides news about Russia's economy, politics, business climate, and political-risk environment. It features a twice-weekly news brief and strives to be a resource for specialists and generalists; a platform for analysis, particularly for emerging area experts and academics; and a space for even-handed, fact-based conversations in hopes of improving Russia/Eurasia analysis and coverage.

BMB Russia is meant for anyone who wants to understand the politics and economics in one of the **world's key emerging markets** as well as a peek into the broader post-Soviet space. The brief is a resource for those looking for business opportunities to make sense of one of the U.S.' most significant bilateral relationships and to cut through the cacophony to find the important signals few outlets cover. **The project is led by Fellow and BMB Editor-in-Chief Stephanie Petrella.**

In 2019, we expanded this initiative by adding **BMB Ukraine**, which is led by Associate Scholar **Fabrice Deprez**. At the end of 2019, we launched the **BMB Podcast**, which is hosted by Fellow and founder of BMB Russia **Aaron Schwartzbaum**.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT



Maximilian Hess is a Central Asia Fellow in the Eurasia Program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. He is the Head of Political Risk Analysis and Consulting at AKE International in London, where he also heads the Europe and Eurasia desks. He is a graduate of Franklin & Marshall College and SOAS, University of London. His research focuses on the relationship between trade, debt, international relations, and foreign policy, as well as the overlap between political and economic networks. He is currently researching the impacts of Uzbekistan's post-Karimov economic reforms, including comparing the development of the state's credit networks to foreign direct investment. Hess is also researching the politics around the hydrocarbon strategies of various states, the Turkmen economy and its relation to Russian-Chinese "great power" politics in the region, and finally how Russian-Kazakh relations are set to develop over the coming years.

Democracy At Risk

Does the health of democracy abroad matter to the security of the United States? Do democracies make safer neighbors and better allies? How should the United States deal with the democratic recession of the past decade and the authoritarian counteroffensive that has reversed some of the spectacular democratic gains of the 15 years following the fall of the Berlin Wall? The Democracy at Risk Initiative aims to address these questions through publications, events, study groups, and partnerships with other institutions. In 2018, we worked with the University of Pennsylvania's Andrea Mitchell Center, Center for Ethics and Rule of Law, and Department of Russian and East European Studies to co-sponsor an event series called **Democracy in Trouble?** The final conference was held in March 2019, assembling 15 researchers for a day-long event entitled **Is Russia Undermining Democracy in the West?**

The Democracy at Risk Initiative places special emphasis on contemporary political developments in Central and Eastern Europe, with recent publications focusing on the protest movement in the Czech Republic, Ukraine's elections, unrest in Georgia, and politics in Moldova.

Central Asia Initiative

In June 2019, we inaugurated the Central Asia Initiative, inspired by concern that America was losing focus on the region even as it was becoming a center of geopolitical competition. As the region's old post-Soviet dictators leave the scene, a new generation must reckon with Russia and China, both of which are trying to shape the region's politics and economics. Both Russia and China also have competing integration schemes for the region, with Moscow pushing the Eurasian Economic Union and Beijing advocating the Belt and Road Initiative. **This initiative will provide objective analysis of trends in Central Asia, informing policymakers and the public on matters that affect U.S. national interests,** including energy; the Belt and Road Initiative; terrorism and extremism; and competition between powers, such as China, Russia, Turkey, and Iran.



PLANS FOR 2020

While we intend to continue our existing work on the Eurasia region in 2020, the following thematic areas will take special priority:

Develop the Central Asia Initiative

As the United States continues its long drawdown from Afghanistan, American attention toward Central Asia is reaching its lowest point since the countries gained independence from the Soviet Union. The Eurasia Program launched a Central Asia Initiative on the contention that America's loss of interest in Central Asia is dangerous. Given rising Chinese influence, Central Asia will be a testing ground for understanding the new era of great power competition. How does Beijing interact with its neighbors? How will Russia respond as Chinese influence grows? How will this shape the durability of the Sino-Russian entente?

Strategic competition in Central Asia comes as the region itself is changing. A long-dominant older generation is preparing to leave the scene. For example, Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev—who first came to power as a Soviet-era Party Secretary—stepped down earlier this year as he tried to manage a transition of power. Our goal is to help strengthen U.S. policymakers' and

policy influencers' understanding of the region. **In 2020, through a series of special reports, briefings, and a conference in Washington, we aim to consolidate this initiative, making FPRI the go-to think tank for the latest cutting-edge research on Central Asia.**

Focus on Turkey and Black Sea Security

FPRI has long prioritized research on the Black Sea, on the grounds that American analysis too often missed the region's interconnections, putting the region's countries into wholly separate mental boxes—some in Europe, some in the post-Soviet space, and Turkey in the Middle East. The ongoing crisis in Turkey's relations with the West shows the danger of such an approach. It was only four years ago that Turkey shot down a Russian jet along its border. Now, the Kremlin is selling Turkey advanced S-400 surface-to-air missiles, sparking a crisis within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. We plan to focus our Black Sea research over the next year on the question of Russia and Turkey, with a special emphasis on Syria. What is Russia's long-term strategy vis-à-vis Turkey and Syria? To what extent does the new alignment reshape regional security? Will Turkey's pivot toward Russia outlast Erdogan? How should the U.S. respond? We will explore these questions in upcoming roundtable discussions in Washington and Philadelphia, and further deepen our thinking on these issues

through a series of published reports and an edited volume on the complex roles of the U.S., Russia, and Turkey in Syria.

Emphasize Long-Term Thinking

FPRI believes that its most impactful research is not reactive analysis that responds to the news cycle, but deep thinking about long-term trends. Three long-term issues will motivate the Eurasia Program's thinking and writing throughout 2020. The first is the future of the European security architecture. The U.S. president's attitude about NATO points to a broader question about the Alliance's future that Washington has yet to answer. The Western Alliance was remarkably successful at securing Europe in the Cold War and enlarging the zone of peace and prosperity in the years after 1991. **What should its strategic purpose be today, at a time when the world is increasingly multipolar and as all powers are shifting their attention toward the Indo-Pacific?**

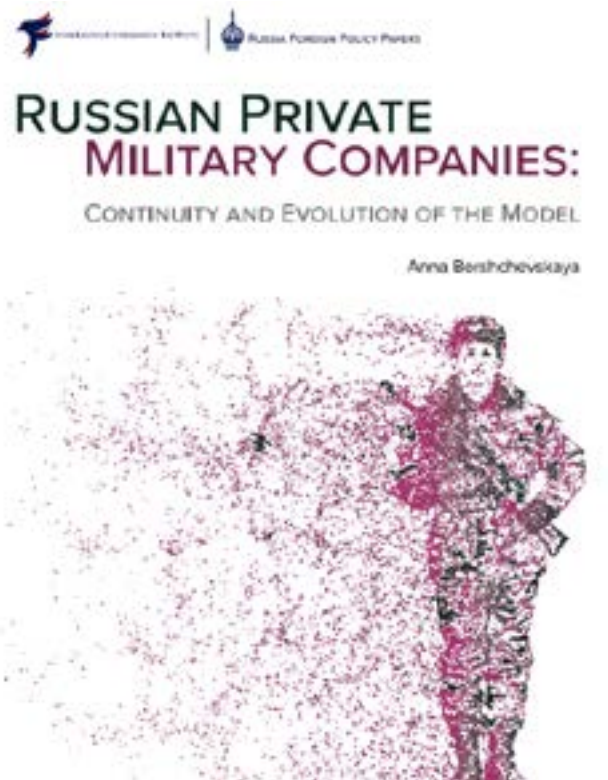
Second is the question of Russian politics and foreign policy. Russian President Vladimir Putin's current term in office ends in 2024, and per the Russian constitution, this term ought to be his last. Constitutions are changeable, of course, especially in dictatorships like Russia, and already the first few months of 2020 have been eventful in this regard. The Kremlin faces a dilemma about what to do, and seems to be leaning towards extending the Putin presidency to 2036—allowing him to surpass any of his modern predecessors

with a potential 36-year-long rule. We are likely to find out the fate of his presidency during 2020, while the impending deadline of 2024 makes the question of post-Putin politics relevant for the first time. **We will explore potential pathways of Russian foreign policy beyond 2024, examining long-term historical continuities and exploring the broader implications of both, a potential change in leadership, or lack thereof.**

The third question is concerned with the impacts of Russia's political economy and defense sector on its current and future domestic and foreign policymaking. FPRI will continue its in-depth study of Russia's military industry and its technological development. Key questions include Russia's technology goals, its tech cooperation with China, and its investment in artificial intelligence. **FPRI is also examining the efficacy of Russia's military-industrial complex, including its technological basis, and its ability to hire talented engineers and computer programmers and to source complex IT components from other countries.** Finally, FPRI scholars are analyzing trends in Russia's arms exports to understand the effect of U.S. sanctions on the future of the sector.



2019 REPORTS



2019 REPORTS



RUSSIA'S LONG PIVOT EAST

Nicholas Trickett



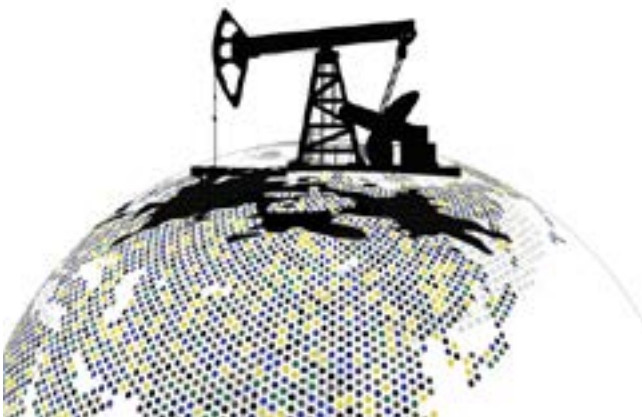
IN THE CROSSFIRE: THE IMPACT OF WEST-RUSSIA TENSIONS ON POST-SOVIET STATES

Marie Shagina



SANCTIONS & FINANCING: ROSNEFT'S GLOBAL EXPANSION

Bill Harney

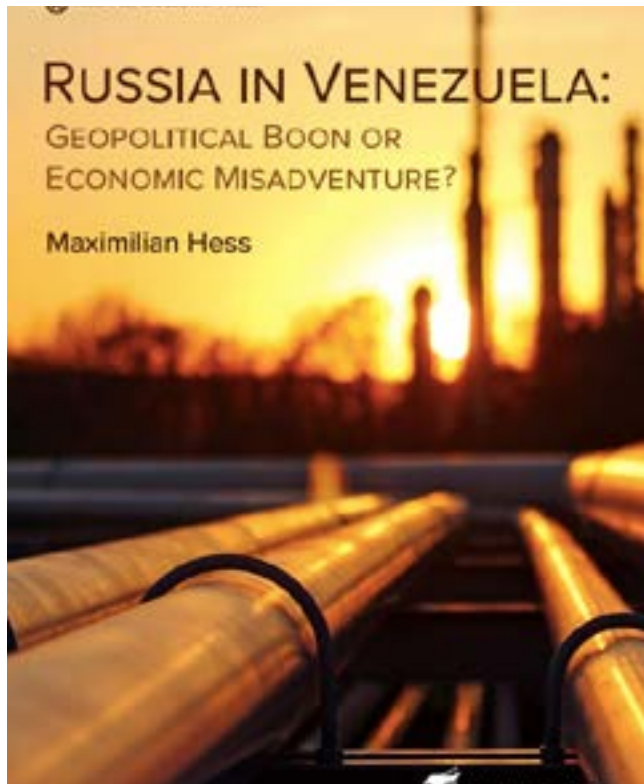
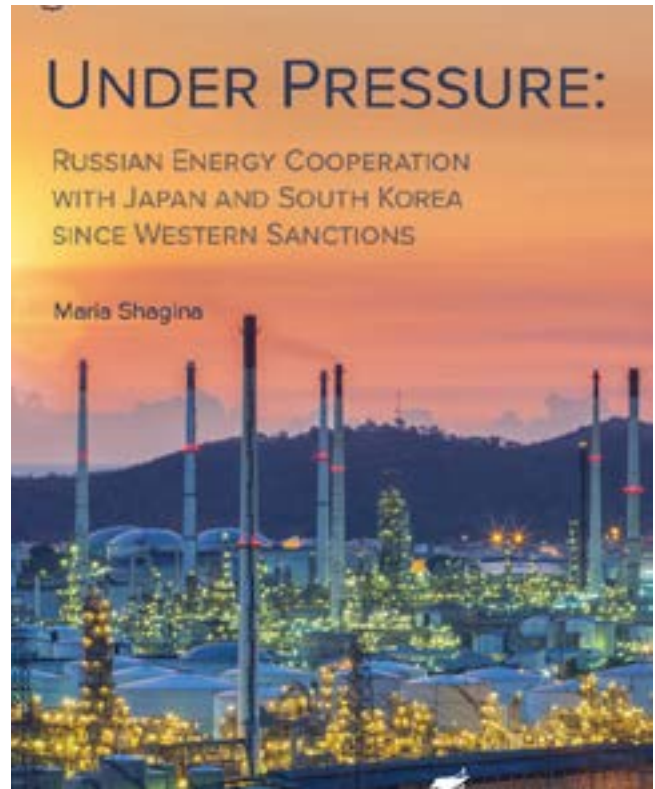
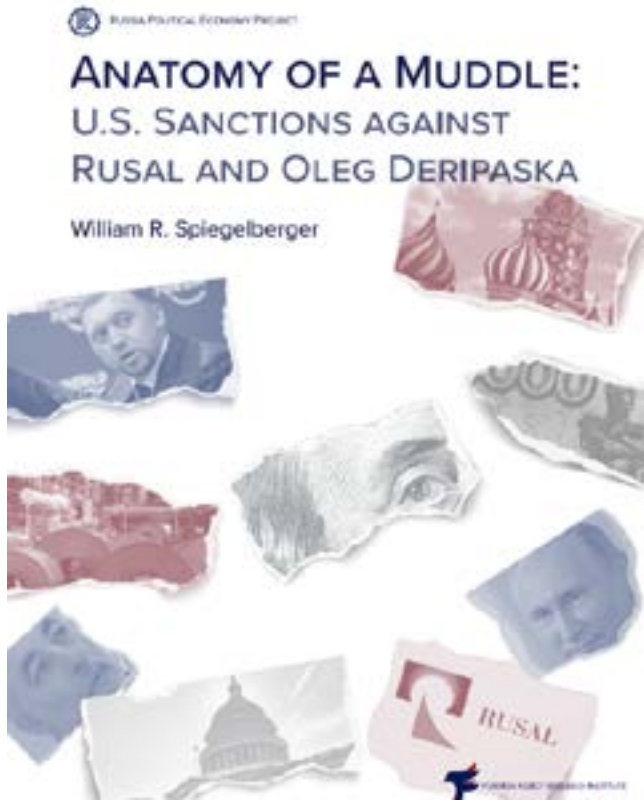


GEOPOLITICS, SANCTIONS, AND RUSSIAN SOVEREIGN DEBT SINCE THE ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA

Maximilian Hess



2019 REPORTS



2019 REPORTS



RUSSIA'S SOUTHERN STRATEGY

Nikolai K. Gusev



FIVE YEARS OF WAR IN THE DONBAS

ROBERT E. HAMILTON

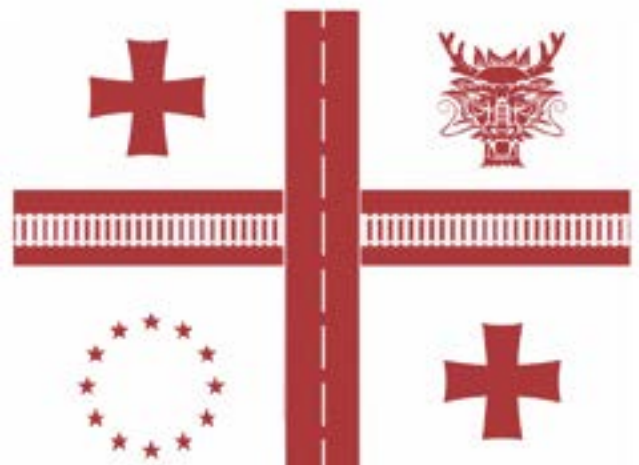


BLACK SEA STRATEGIC VOLATILITY: PLAYERS & PATTERNS

Iula Joja



ON THE FAULT LINE: GEORGIAN RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND THE WEST



2019 PUBLICATIONS

“Russian Private Military Companies: Continuity and Evolution of the Model.” Anna Borshchevskaya - Russia Foreign Policy Papers, December 18, 2019

“Why the ‘loser’ in SNL’s NATO spoof is important.” Indra Ekmanis - Baltic Bulletin, December 18, 2019

“Belarus-Russia: From a Strategic Deal to an Integration Ultimatum” Arseny Sivitsky - Russia Foreign Policy Papers, December 16, 2019

“Merkel’s Foreign Policy Muddle.” Chris Miller, Joseph de Weck - E-Notes, December 13, 2019

“United Russia is Dead.” Vitali Shkliarov - E-Notes December 09, 2019

“Russia’s Long Pivot East.” Private: Nicholas Trickett - Russia Political Economy Project, December 09, 2019

“The Extradition Case of Dmytro Firtash, A Ukrainian Oligarch with Global Connections.” Maximilian Hess - E-Notes, December 06, 2019

“In the Crossfire: The Impact of West-Russia Tensions on Post-Soviet States.” Maria Shagina - Russia Political Economy Project, November 21, 2019

“Russia’s Southern Strategy.” Nikolas K. Gvosdev - Black Sea Strategy Papers, November 12, 2019

“Sense of Place in Narva: How Do Narva’s Residents Feel and Think about Their City?” David J Trimbach - Baltic Bulletin, October 31, 2019

“Five Years of War in the Donbas.” Robert E. Hamilton - Black Sea Strategy Papers, October 24, 2019

“Black Sea Strategic Volatility: Players and Patterns.” Iulia-Sabina Joja - Black Sea Strategy Papers, October 16, 2019

“Russia’s Awkward Dance with Vietnam.” Bennett Murray - Russia Foreign Policy Papers, October 14, 2019

“Russia’s Engagements in Central America.” Ivan Ulises Klyszcz - Russia Foreign Policy Papers, October 04, 2019

“Sanctions & Financing: Rosneft’s Global Expansion.” Bill Harney - Russia Political Economy Project, October 03, 2019

“Coal Mines, Land Mines and Nuclear Bombs: The Environmental Cost of the War in Eastern Ukraine.” Robert E. Hamilton - Black Sea Strategy Papers, September 26, 2019

“On the Fault Line: Georgian Relations with China and the West.” Eurasia Program - Black Sea Strategy Papers, September 26, 2019

“Playing Both Sides: How Oligarchs in Eastern Europe Maintain Power and Control.” Mitchell Orenstein - E-Notes, September 24, 2019

“30 years later, the human chain that ‘unshackled’ the Baltic nations still matters.” Indra Ekmanis - Baltic Bulletin, August 23, 2019

“Russia’s Opposition Protests: On the Road from Nowhere to Nowhere.” Vitali Shkliarov - E-Notes, August 21, 2019

“The Pendulum of Ukrainian Politics: One Day You’re in, the Next Day You’re Out?” Stephanie Petrella - E-Notes, August 20, 2019

“What Happened at the Severodvinsk Naval Testing Range? Thoughts on the Severodvinsk Radioactive Release and When It Happened Here.” John R. Haines - E-Notes, August 19, 2019

“Official List or Blacklist? The UK’s Proposed National Security Block on IPOs and Bonds.” Matthew Fisher, George Taylor - Russia Political Economy Project, August 14, 2019

“A Eulogy for the INF Treaty.” Maggie Tennis - Geopoliticus, August 02, 2019

“The Rise of Right-Wing Populists in Estonia.” Viljar Veebel - Baltic Bulletin, July 31, 2019

“Russia’s Attempts to Undermine Democracy in the West: Effects and Causes.” Robert Hamilton – Orbis, Summer 2019

“Is Russia Sabotaging Democracy in the West?” Nikolas Gvosdev – Orbis, Summer 2019

“After a Full Week of Tbilisi Protests, Georgia’s Future Looks Partly Promising.” Maia Otarashvili - Geopoliticus, June 27, 2019

“Czechs Protest like it’s 1989, Demand Resignation of ‘Czech Trump.’” Mitchell Orenstein - Geopoliticus, June 26, 2019

“Geopolitics, Sanctions, and Russian Sovereign Debt Since the Annexation of Crimea.” Maximilian Hess - Russia Political Economy Report, June 25, 2019

“Turmoil in Georgia.” Maia Otarashvili - E-Notes, June 21, 2019

“Georgia and Azerbaijan’s David Gareja Monastery Conundrum.” Miro Popkhadze - Geopoliticus, June 14, 2019

“Mirziyoyev’s Uzbekistan: Democratization or Authoritarian Upgrading?” Edward Lemon - Central Asia Papers, June 12, 2019

“Perceptions of Russian Interference in U.S. Elections Matter as Much as the Actual Involvement Aleksandr Fisher” - Geopoliticus, May 09, 2019

“Hope from a Century Past: The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the First Parliamentary Republic of the Muslim World.” Michael A. Reynolds - E-Notes, May 08, 2019

“Volodymyr Zelensky: Ukraine’s Servant of the People?” Stephanie Petrella - Geopoliticus, May 08, 2019

“Latvia’s ‘Harmony’ in Jeopardy.” Una Bergmane - Baltic Bulletin, April 30, 2019

“Anatomy of a Muddle: U.S. Sanctions against Rusal and Oleg Deripaska.” William R. Spiegelberger - Russia Political Economy Report, April 29, 2019

“Lithuania’s Presidential Election: Same Policy Wine in New Bottles?” Egle Murauskaite - Baltic Bulletin, April 17, 2019

“New Baltic Defense Discussions and Beyond at Vilnius Security Forum.” Lukas Milevski - Baltic Bulletin, April 12, 2019

“Georgia’s Latest Banking Scandal Tests the Limits of its Democratic Institutions.” Elene Melikishvili - Geopoliticus, April 11, 2019

“Yandex’s Balancing Act and the Sovereign Runet Bill.” Natasha Bluth - Geopoliticus, March 28, 2019

“Is Russia Undermining Democracy in the West? Conference Report.” Carl Lampe, Roksana Gabidullina - Conference Report, March 26, 2019

“Ukraine’s Presidential Election and the Future of its Foreign Policy.” Melanie G. Mierzejewski-Voznyak - E-Notes, March 26, 2019

“Russia’s Tragic Great Power Politics.” Robert E. Hamilton - E-Notes, March 08, 2019

“Not all Song and Dance: Georgia as a New Economic Center?” Steven Luber - Geopoliticus, March 04, 2019

“The State of Russia’s IPO Market.” Peter Simon - Geopoliticus, February 20, 2019

“Armenia and the Velvet Revolution: The Merits and Flaws of a Protest-based Civil Society.” Simon Hoellerbauer - Geopoliticus, February 19, 2019

“Latvia’s Balancing Act: The Birth of a Pushmi-pullyu Government.” Una Bergmane - Baltic Bulletin, February 15, 2019

“Under Pressure: Russian Energy Cooperation with Japan and South Korea since Western Sanctions.”

Maria Shagina - Russia Political Economy Report, February 07, 2019

“Do Svidaniya, Chernobyl: Russian economic statecraft in Turkey and Belarus.” Anna J. Davidson - Geopoliticus, February 06, 2019

“Democracy is ‘a priority we cannot afford to ignore’—at home or abroad.” Thomas O. Melia - Geopoliticus, February 05, 2019

“Russia’s National Guard Sets its Sights on the Country’s Private Security Business.” Fabrice Deprez - Geopoliticus, January 31, 2019

“(De)friending in the Baltics: Lessons from Facebook’s Sputnik Crackdown.” Indra Ekmanis - Baltic Bulletin, January 31, 2019

“Russia in Venezuela: Geopolitical Boon or Economic Misadventure?” Maximilian Hess - Russia Political Economy Report, January 30, 2019

“Yulia Tymoshenko: Ukraine’s Candidate of Uncertainty.” Stephanie Petrella - E-Notes, January 28, 2019

“Green By Name, Green By Nature: The First Russian Green Bonds.” Ed Hicks, Matthew Fisher - Geopoliticus, January 28, 2019

“Citizens United = Russian Money in American Campaigns.” Thomas O. Melia - Outside Publications January 26, 2019

“Why Russia Sticks With Venezuela.” Ivan Ulises Kentros Klyszcz - Geopoliticus, January 23, 2019

“Trump vs. Trotsky: The Many Consequences of a U.S. Withdrawal From Syria.” Robert E. Hamilton - E-Notes, January 23, 2019

“Understanding Russian Foreign Policy.” Chris Miller - Orbis, January 16, 2019

“Contextualizing Russia and the Baltic States.” Joe Kyle - Orbis, January 16, 2019

“Taking Stock of U.S. Sanctions on Russia.” Janis Kluge - E-Notes, January 14, 2019

MEDIA APPEARANCES



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