Currently Eurasia Program includes 25 affiliated scholars, five thematic initiatives, and seven regular publication series. In January 2020 we appointed a Black Sea Fellow, a Central Asia Fellow, three Baltic Sea Fellows, and named Dr. Barbara Fick and Dr. Nick Gvosdev our special Eurasia Fellows for the year.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ambassador Adrian A. Basora
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Deputy Director

EURASIA PROGRAM INITIATIVES

RUSSIA POLITICAL ECONOMY PROJECT

BMB RUSSIA

CENTRAL ASIA INITIATIVE

DEMOCRACY AT RISK

BLACK SEA INITIATIVE

BALTIC INITIATIVE
The Eurasia Program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute was founded in 2015 with the aim of examining the political, security, economic, and social trends shaping Europe and Eurasia. Our research agenda covers the increasingly tense competition roiling the region from several angles. It has a multi-year focus on the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, emphasizing how geography, economics, ideology, and history continue to shape politics and security in both regions. The program also 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 Eurasia Program’s thematic initiatives also include the Democracy at Risk rubric, which examines the trends of democratization and authoritarian pushback in the region. The Central Asia Initiative is our newest project dedicated to examining the geopolitics and geoeconomics of the rapidly changing region and informing the US policymakers and policy-influencers on matters that affect U.S. national interests.

Currently Eurasia Program includes 25 affiliated scholars, five thematic initiatives, and seven regular publication series. In January 2020 we appointed a Black Sea Fellow, a Central Asia Fellow, three Baltic Sea Fellows, and named Dr. Barbara Fick and Dr. Nikolas K. Gvosdev our special Eurasia Fellows for the year. During the first half of 2020 we published 62 articles, including 7 long reports and a special Summer 2020 issue of Orbis. We also held 7 public events and gave 23 private briefings with policymakers and policy-influencers within and outside the United States. Most of our public events were held over Zoom, bringing together hundreds of audience members and dozens of scholars and experts from all over the world. We also inaugurated the BMB podcast, to accompany the BMB Russia and BMB Ukraine newsletters.

**THE BALTIC INITIATIVE**

The Baltic Initiative analyzes the geopolitics, geo-economics, defense and security issues of the Baltic Sea region, and their role in European security as well as their implications to the United States. The Baltic Bulletins feature research by both American experts and analysts from the Baltic States and Central Europe. The monthly Baltic Roundup newsletter, authored by Dr. Indra Ekmanis, the Editor of the Baltic Bulletin, regularly sums up major political, cultural, and economic events in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

In January 2020 we appointed three Baltic Sea Fellows. Una Bergmane, Indra Ekmanis, and Linas Kojala are driving FPRI’s focus on political and security issues in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and on NATO-Russia relations in the Baltic Sea region more generally.

**Why Isn’t Latvia the Next Crimea? Fading Russian Influence in the Baltics featuring Indra Ekmanis, Una Bergmane, and Maia Otarashvili. (July 2020)**
FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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 BLACK SEA INITIATIVE

FPRI’s Black Sea Initiative analyzes the region from the perspective of security, domestic politics, economics, and energy. Home to frozen conflicts in Moldova, Georgia, and now Ukraine, surrounded by major geopolitical actors such as Russia and Turkey, EU member states - Bulgaria and Romania, and crucial energy transit routes, the challenges of the Black Sea region influence all of Europe and Eurasia. We closely monitor these issues through our series of publications including the Black Sea Strategy Papers, BMB Ukraine, and other FPRI publications. Over the past five years we have built a sizable network of scholars and experts both in the United States and in the Black Sea region itself. We support their work by sponsoring field research, publishing their findings, and organizing public and private lectures, briefings, and conferences.

In 2020 Dr. Robert Hamilton returned as the Black Sea Fellow at FPRI. He has spearheaded a book on military aspects of Russia’s war in Syria, with chapters from some of the most insightful Russia foreign policy experts. The book examines naval, ground, and air operations of the war and draws “lessons learned” from the conflict.

BMB RUSSIA & UKRAINE

FPRI’s BMB Russia brings you 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 what is going on in the world of 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 and blog are a resource for those looking for business opportunities, to make sense of one of the U.S.’s most significant bilateral relationships, and to cut through the cacophony of noise out there to find the important signals few outlets cover. We’re a team dedicated to making Russia and Eurasia more accessible, both to rising area experts and specialists and to those who don't know what kvass is, have no strong opinions about dill, and don't have any feelings about Moscow’s macroeconomic policies. It’s our aim to bring our passion and the joy our love of the subject brings us to life for others. Finally, we’re here to keep you ahead of the curve and spot what most in English-language media aren’t talking about.

The BMB Russia project is led by FPRI Fellow and BMB Editor-in-chief – Stephanie Petrella.

Recently we expanded this initiative by adding BMB Ukraine, which is led by FPRI Associate Scholar, Fabrice Deprez, who is currently based in Kiev. In February 2020 we launched the BMB Podcast, which is hosted by FPRI Fellow and the founder of BMB Russia – Aaron Schwartzbaum.

### BMB Podcast 2020 Episodes

- **I SEE DEBT PEOPLE** - Aaron Schwartzbaum & Maximilian Hess
- **3.6 ROENTGEN** - Aaron Schwartzbaum & Chris Miller
- **BRENT OUT OF SHAPE** - Aaron Schwartzbaum & Rauf Mahmmadov
- **MACRO POLO** - Aaron Schwartzbaum & Ivan Tkachev
- **COMRADE COVID** - Chris Miller & Stephanie Petrella
- **WE CAN DEFENSE IF WE WANT TO** - Aaron Schwartzbaum & Michael Kofman
- **POPULAR/POPULIST: IS PUTIN POPULAR?** - Aaron Schwartzbaum & Yana Govokhovskaia
- **POPULAR/POPULIST: IS PUTIN A POPULIST?** - Aaron Schwartzbaum & Brian Taylor
Central Asia Initiative

In June 2019 we inaugurated FPRI’s 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. FPRI’s Central Asia Initiative will objective analysis of trends in Central Asia, informing policy makers 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.

In January 2020 we appointed Maximilian Hess as FPRI Central Asia Fellow. So far we have held two major public events, three private discussions, and published half a dozen articles in various FPRI outlets (including Orbis) on Central Asia.

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.
In late 2017 we inaugurated the Russia Political Economy Project, which publishes research papers providing a clear-eyed assessment of Russian political economy trends. The program 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. In 2020 the project has focused on assisting the US European Command’s Russia Strategic Initiative with research regarding Russia’s military industrial complex and economic trends related to Russia’s defense sector.
Still Ahead in 2020

- Monthly Baltic Bulletins and Baltic Roundups
- Twice weekly BMB Russia and BMB Ukraine
- Twice monthly BMB Podcasts
- Three Black Sea Strategy papers
- Three Central Asia papers
- Three Russia Foreign Policy papers
- Launch of the FPRI book on Russia’s war in Syria
- Five Zoom events featuring authors of the chapters from the FPRI book on Russia’s war in Syria
- Three Black Sea events via Zoom
- Two Central Asia events via Zoom
- Three scholars’ meetings via Zoom
The Summer 2020 of Orbis is a special issue focused guest edited by Chris Miller and Maia Otarashvili. It is dedicated to examining the consequences of 20 years of Vladimir Putin’s time in power as the Russian Federation’s ruler.

Guest Editors’ Corner Summer 2020
Chris Miller & Maia Otarashvili

Research Articles

Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss: Putin ‘Changes’ the Constitution
William R. Spiegelberger

The Role of the Military in Russian Politics and Foreign Policy Over the Past 20 Years
Anna Borshchevskaya

Russia and Central Asia: Putin’s Most Stable Region?
Maximilian Hess

Gazprom and Russian Natural Gas Policy in the First Two Decades of the 21st Century
Anna Mikulska

What Does Putin Promise Russians? Russia’s Authoritarian Social Policy
Sarah Wilson Sokhey

Russia’s Pivot to Asia: Between Rhetoric and Substance
Maria Shagina

“The M.P. for Russia”: Olga Novikova, William Gladstone, and the Crisis of 1878
Chris Miller

Fading Russian Influence in the Baltic States
Una Bergmane

Why Isn’t Latvia the “Next” Crimea? Reconsidering Ethnic Integration
Indra Ekmanis

Book Reviews

Are Chinese and American Interests Mutually Exclusive in Eurasia?
Paul Heer

Book Recommendations and Roundtable on The Death of Arms Control and the Birth of Putinism 3.0
Robert E. Hamilton & Thomas J. Shattuck
FRIENDS OR FRENEMIES?
HOW RUSSIA AND IRAN COMPETE AND COOPERATE
Nicole Grajewski

RUSSIA’S DEFENSE INDUSTRY:
BETWEEN POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND ECONOMIC INEFFICIENCY
Pavel Luzin

“ENGAGED OPPORTUNISM”
RUSSIA’S ROLE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA
Samuel Ramani
The Foreign Policy Research Institute is dedicated to producing the highest quality scholarship and nonpartisan policy analysis focused on crucial foreign policy and national security challenges facing the United States. We educate those who make and influence policy, as well as the public at large, through the lens of history, geography, and culture.

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