

FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

2024 Year in Review





Mission

The Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) 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.

About the Organization

The Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) is a nonpartisan Philadelphia-based think tank dedicated to strengthening US national security and improving American foreign policy.

Established in 1955 by the noted 20th century geopolitical strategist, Ambassador Robert Strausz-Hupé, FPRI was founded on the premise that an informed and educated citizenry is essential for the United States to understand complex international issues and formulate foreign policy. FPRI remains committed to this principle and strives to inform both policymakers and the general public through FPRI research and educational programs.

FPRI is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and takes no institutional positions on issues and conducts no advocacy. The organization has six main research programs, covering U.S. National Security, Eurasia, Asia, and Africa. Each program produces reports, articles, public events, and private briefings for policymakers, FPRI members, and the general public.

What We Do

The Foreign Policy Research Institute conducts in-depth research to find new information about US foreign policy challenges and provides insightful analysis that is evidence-driven, policy-relevant, and nonpartisan.

We produce research reports, articles, and summary briefs tailored to the needs of different audiences.

We host public events and private briefings to make our findings as accessible as possible and to ensure the information we uncover reaches the American people and the policymakers who need it most.



Letter from the President

The Foreign Policy Research Institute had an exceptional year.

The Foreign Policy Research Institute had an exceptional year. We published cutting-edge research on [Russia's war in Ukraine](#) and examined the [Russo-Chinese relationship](#), with a special focus on [Central Asia](#) and the challenges posed by the rise of the [Chinese Communist Party](#). We have also continued to pioneer new ways to expand our impact, using new tools and platforms like Substack to engage with new audiences.

Our flagship publication on this platform, [Bear Market Brief](#), is a leading publication on Russia's political economy and society. It is also a long-term FPRI success story and part of a broader strategy we are pursuing to diversify our core research content.

We believe our investment in projects like the *Bear Market Brief* will continue to drive readership, deepen impact, and raise awareness about the work that we do every day.

We also launched two new publications: [Behind the Front](#) and [The Ties That Bind: NATO at 75 and Beyond](#). These two publications examine US defense industrial policy and transatlantic security issues.

FPRI engaged with new partners like the Irregular Warfare Center, the Black Sea and Balkans Security Forum, NATO, and the Polish Economic Forum to expand our global impact. We welcomed fellows Maria Avdeeva, Antonia Colibasanu, and Jeffrey Ding to bring new

perspectives to our work.

Our fellows provided thought-provoking analysis about global events, such as the elections in Georgia and Moldova, Ukraine's counteroffensive, and the Syrian revolution.

It was a pleasure to welcome so many of you to our in-person programs this year, including our new Ambassador series and our [18th Benjamin Franklin Award for Public Service](#) featuring [Jared Isaacman](#). Isaacman is a pioneer of private space flight and was recently nominated to lead NASA in the incoming administration. This event was part of a broader effort to deepen our work on the future of space and the geopolitical consequences of its further militarization.

Looking ahead to 2025, I look forward to sharing our plans for new initiatives and events as FPRI celebrates its 70th anniversary. FPRI has long been a trusted source of analysis about geopolitics, global security, and America's role in the world. We look forward to celebrating our platinum anniversary and doubling down on our historic mission to deliver timely and well-researched analysis to policymakers and the general public.

I also wanted to say thank you. Our growth as an organization is only possible through your support. I truly appreciate your continued support for FPRI's mission.

Aaron Stein

President



RESEARCH

YEAR IN REVIEW



Expanding Analysis of Russia's War in Ukraine

Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine continued to be a focal point of FPRI's research agenda in 2024, examining the conflict's local, regional, and global impact.

Russia's Military Strategy

Despite gaining the advantage on the battlefield, Russia's progress in the war has been slow and costly. It has adapted its strategy over the course of the war but has yet to find a path to military victory. FPRI examined the conflict in several different angles: Russian and Ukrainian military performance, the impact of the war on the Russian economy and society, and the ways in which the war has reshaped the European security architecture.

FPRI published a report by Lieutenant Colonel Denys Yurchenko, a Ukrainian military cooperation officer specializing in NATO-Ukraine cooperation. In *Russian Strategic Culture and the War in Ukraine*, Yurchenko observed Russia's intentions through the lens of strategic culture theory and explained why understanding Russian strategic culture can help establish new policies and strategies to defeat Russia and prevent future conflicts. He also evaluated Russia's strategic culture and provided recommendations for Ukraine and the West.

In the report *Russia's Black Sea Fleet in the "Special Military Operation" in Ukraine*, Igor

Delanoë examined the evolving role of the Black Sea Fleet in the conflict and argued that its outcome—and the scale of Ukraine's potential territorial concessions—will influence Russia's posture in the Black Sea basin for decades.

Another [report](#) by Pavel Luzin explained the constraints and challenges of Russia's space program, which has been in a state of turbulence and uncertainty since 2022. Luzin argued that the challenges force Russia to focus efforts on military space activity and leave manned spaceflights and space exploration to maintain its international status as a space superpower and sense of domestic legitimacy of authoritarian governance without any sustainable outcomes of the civil space activity itself.

FPRI's work on this topic was bolstered by several episodes of the *Bear Market Brief* and *Chain Reaction* podcasts:

- [No Nukes is Good Nukes: Russia's Strategic Red Lines](#) ft. Andrey Baklitskiy – *Bear Market Brief*
- [Russia Launches New Offensive in Ukraine](#) ft. Aaron Stein and Rob Lee – *Chain Reaction*.



Ukraine's Military Strategy

FPRI expanded its engagement with Ukrainian counterparts, co-sponsoring the [Black Sea Security Forum in Odessa](#) in June, and a virtual conference, [Ukraine's Horizon: US Support and Strategies for 2024](#), with the Transatlantic Dialogue Center.

Robert Hamilton, Head of Eurasia Research, traveled to Ukraine for field research for his forthcoming book on the value of US military assistance programs abroad.

FPRI also welcomed Maria Avdeeva, a Ukrainian strategic communications and security expert specializing in detecting and countering information operations, as a Senior Fellow. Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, she has focused on documenting the Russian invasion, reporting directly from front-line areas to an international audience, and contributing to leading global media outlets.

Hamilton spoke with Avdeeva about the [situation on the ground in Kharkiv](#), the focus of another Russian offensive earlier in the year. In the weeks before the Biden administration gave Ukraine the green light, Avdeeva also argued against the [old rationale](#) for restricting Ukraine's use of Western-supplied weapons.

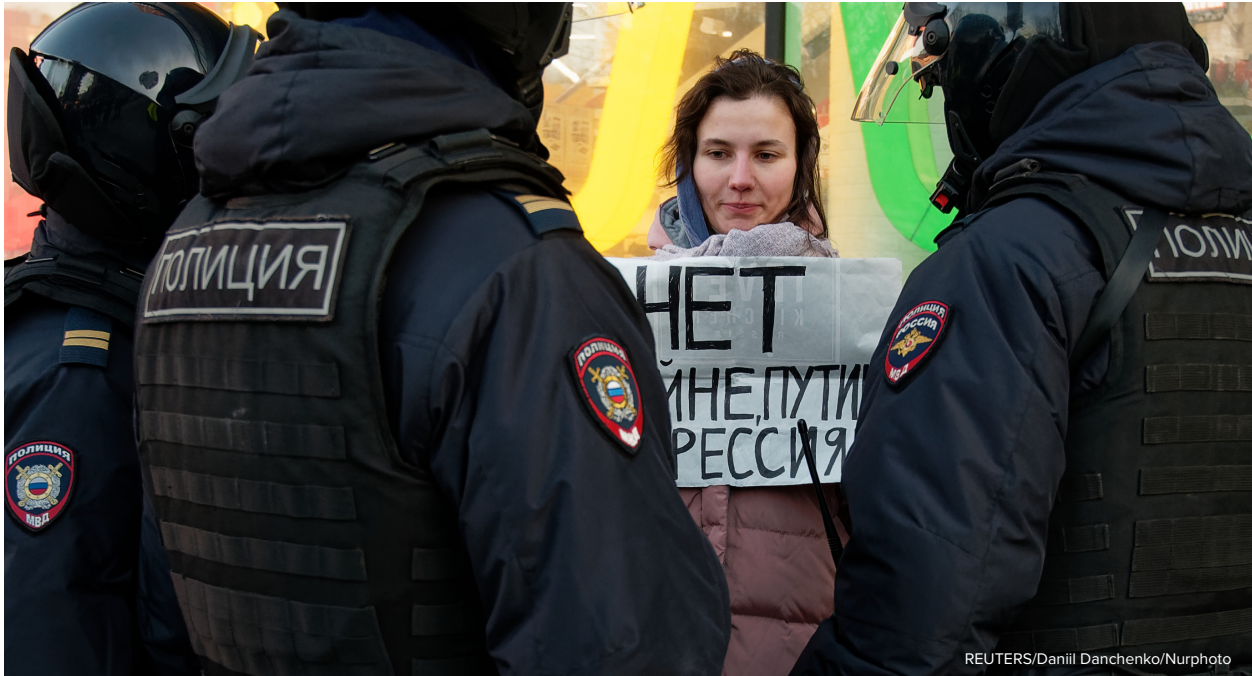
After months of delay, Congress finally passed a foreign aid package for Ukraine. Lieutenant General [Ben Hodges](#), former Commander of US Army forces in Europe, joined Hamilton on FPRI's *Chain Reaction* podcast for a frank and insightful conversation about what is at stake in the conflict.

Dan Cox provided a [holistic analysis of the Kursk Offensive](#), Olga Khvostunova explained what the campaign revealed about the [Kremlin's propaganda](#) and warmongering tactics, and Kollen Post explained how Ukraine is fighting back against Russia's [war of disinformation](#).

Senior Fellow Rob Lee's defense policy and military analysis of the war were featured across dozens of print and media news outlets. He also authored analyses on key developments in the conflict for outlets like [Foreign Affairs](#) and the [New York Times](#).

FPRI's *Chain Reaction* podcast featured a wide range of perspectives on the conflict:

- [The Precipice: The War in Ukraine Hangs in the Balance](#) ft. Janis Kluge
- [Kharkiv: A Ukrainian City Perseveres](#) ft. Maria Avdeeva
- [Kyiv Dispatch](#) ft. Fabrice Deprez
- [Russia's Invasion Through Ukrainian Eyes](#) ft. Hannah Shelest, Maksym Skrypchenko, and Sophia Opatska.



REUTERS/Daniil Danchenko/Nurphoto

Understanding Russia's Society, Politics, and Economy

The war in Ukraine has made understanding Russian society, economy, and public opinion more relevant than ever. FPRI strives to keep its analyses of Russia's domestic affairs balanced and grounded in local realities. We engage with Russian researchers to provide realistic, unvarnished, and unbiased understanding of these issues, a task made more difficult with Russia's growing isolation from the rest of the world.

This year FPRI continued its flagship work of nearly a decade on the Russian political economy through the weekly [Bear Market Brief](#) newsletter and podcast, as well as a variety of reports, analyses, and events.

FPRI experts Olga Khvostunova, Sara Ashbaugh, and Andras Toth-Czifra provided context to [Putin's presidential campaign](#) and [unsurprising reelection](#) to a [fifth term](#), Russia's

[regional elections](#) in the fall, the country's soaring [inflation](#), the death of [Alexei Navalny](#), and future of Russian resistance.

FPRI published Toth-Czifra's report [Turning Point or Dead End? Challenging the Kremlin's Narrative of Stability in Wartime](#). Toth-Czifra argued that the ongoing restructuring of Russia's domestic economy and economic elite, structural weaknesses created by a military-production based economic growth model, threat of military mobilization, and tightening of public behavior represent growing risks for governance whose sole organizing principle is the ongoing war.

The report was featured in the European Council's 2024 list of research on Russian aggression.

In another report, [Russian Women in the Face of War Against Ukraine](#), Egle Murauskaite



provided a new vantage point of the war in Ukraine, revealing the full spectrum of women's participation in the conflict as aggressors of violence, survivors of war crimes, and members of a growing opposition movement. Through an evaluation of Russian and Ukrainian patriarchal narratives in living memory, she showed a divergence in where Ukraine evolved and Russia did not.

Most notably, she identified the powerful feminist opposition driving the war's resistance in Russia. Murauskaite also discussed the report's [key findings](#) on an episode of *Report in Short*.

The *Bear Market Brief* podcast also featured a variety of conversations on related topics such as:

- [The F Word: Is Russia Fascist?](#) ft. Marlene Laurelle and Julian Waller
- [Russia's Election: It Ain't Vova Until It's Vova](#) ft. Olga Khvostunova and Andras Toth-Czifra
- [Has Russia Won the Sanctions War?](#) ft. Nick Trickett and Iikka Korhonen



Analyzing Russian National Security and Foreign Policy

China-Russia Relations

The China-Russia relationship is arguably the most important bilateral relationship in the world today and has a direct bearing on vital US national security interests. Nowhere in the world presents a better environment to study the China-Russia relationship than Central Asia. To examine the facets of this relationship, FPRI produced a series of reports and [events](#) for the Russia Strategic Initiative at US European Command examining Russia and China's [current](#)

[interactions](#) in Central Asia, [power transition](#) in the region, and [potential for direct competition](#).

Robert Hamilton's book, *[The China-Russia Relationship: Dance of the Dragon and Bear](#)*, published in October 2024, examined how Russia and China interact on the ground, in regions where both have important interests at stake: Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and East Asia.



Central Asia

Beyond the China-Russia relationship, in 2024, FPRI deepened its research on Central Asia and the South Caucasus in 2024 by publishing a series of reports and short articles by both well-known and emerging voices on the region, including Bruce Pannier, Maximilian Hess, and others.

In his report, [Countering a “Great Jihad” in Central Asia](#), Pannier examined how Central Asian governments and societies are reacting to growing concerns of Islamic extremism in the region. FPRI also published Pannier’s study of [Kyrgyzstan’s authoritarian shift](#), arguing that despite its decades-long status as an “island of democracy” in Central Asia,

the country was poised to join the club of its authoritarian neighbors. The report was also featured on FPRI’s [Report in Short](#) podcast.

Other research highlights on Central Asia include:

- [Tajikistan’s Afghan Conundrum](#) by Bruce Pannier
- [The Impact of Russia Sanctions on Central Asia](#) by Maximilian Hess
- [Trade Corridor Wars: Escalating Competition Between China, Russia, Iran and the West](#) by Antonia Colibasanu.

FPRI also partnered with Narxoz University in Almaty, Kazakhstan on a [virtual conference](#) on emerging trends in Central Asia.



South Caucasus

One of the most read pieces of the year, Walter Landgraf and Nareg Sefarian's report, [A Frozen Conflict Boils Over: Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023 and Future Implications](#), presented an account of the conflict, discussed local, regional, and global consequences of the latest developments of the dispute, including policy implications and recommendations. FPRI hosted the authors of the report for a [virtual event](#) and on the [Report in Short](#) podcast.

The report and policy recommendations by Landgraf and Sefarian featured prominently in academic and government discourse, with research referenced by the [US House Foreign Affairs Committee](#) and eight [national](#) and [European](#) academic journals, [books](#), and [international impact studies](#) of the conflict.

FPRI partnered with the Armenian Policy Research Institute (APRI) to co-publish a report by Robert Hamilton and Nvard Chalikyan on the [implications](#) of the Georgian and US elections for the South Caucasus. Hamilton also participated in APRI's conference [Russia, the West, and the Future of the South Caucasus](#) in New York City.

Russian Influence Operations in Africa

Building on several years of work, FPRI's fellows continued to track private military companies (PMCs) such as the Wagner Group/Africa Corps and their evolving role in Russian defense policy. Raphael Parens and Christopher Faulkner examined how Sahelian regimes have [pivoted away from the West to Moscow](#) and the consequences and [challenges ahead for African countries](#) that have leaned heavily on Russian PMCs.

Building on one of FPRI's most-read reports of 2023 [The Wagner Group's Expanding Global Footprint](#), Parens, Faulkner, and Colin Clarke provided context about the [evolution of the Russian PMC](#) to FPRI's audiences, [academic discourse](#), and [international media](#).

Olena Snigyr showed how Russia uses the legacy of Soviet-African relations to adapt to the [unique information environment](#) of each nation. Snigyr argued that Russia leverages these sentiments and weaknesses with the aim to integrate African societies into a shared perspective on global order and history. In a related piece, Ambassador Charles A. Ray examined Russian soft power, specifically the [role of the Russian Orthodox Church](#), in providing humanitarian assistance and education with the aim of expanding Russian influence.



Shamil Shugaev

Deepening Our Work in the Black Sea Region

After a long period of neglect relative to the Baltic Sea region, the Black Sea region has emerged as the focal point of US national security policy in Eurasia.

This year FPRI continued to build on the themes of its June 2023 conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, examining security dynamics, strategic connectivity, and democratic resilience in the Black Sea region. FPRI appointed new fellows from Romania and Ukraine and engaged new speakers and authors from the region.

As part of an ongoing effort to deepen and sustain its regional presence, FPRI partnered with think tanks in Romania, Ukraine, and Armenia, organizing joint research and events throughout the year. FPRI co-sponsored the *Black Sea and Balkans Security Forum* in May as well as the *Bucharest Security Conference* in November.

In a year marked by several consequential elections in the region, FPRI experts provided context to *Moldova's EU referendum* and

Romania's electoral crisis. In a turbulent political year, Georgia's ruling party passed a controversial "foreign agents" law in May, sparking massive protests across the country. In a joint article Eurasia Program Director Maia Otarashvili and Head of Research Robert Hamilton broke down the repercussions of the *new legislation*. In the midst of the tumultuous aftermath of Georgia's parliamentary election in November, Otarashvili explained the *election results* with Aaron Schwartzbaum on a special episode of *The Continent* podcast.

FPRI also welcomed *Antonia Colibasanu*, a Romanian geopolitical expert and Senior Analyst at Geopolitical Futures, as a fellow this year. In her report for FPRI, Colibasanu examined *Turkey's evolving geopolitical strategy in the Black Sea* and outlined four potential scenarios for the country's strategic alignment in the region.



Focusing on NATO's Eastern Flank

Baltic Initiative

FPRI's *Baltic Initiative*, founded in 2016 to serve as a hub for analysis of defense and geopolitical issues of the Baltic Sea region, underwent an expansion and [relaunch on Substack](#) in an effort to provide a better user experience and more content to our subscribers. As a result, our *Baltic Initiative* audience grew by over thirty percent in 2024.

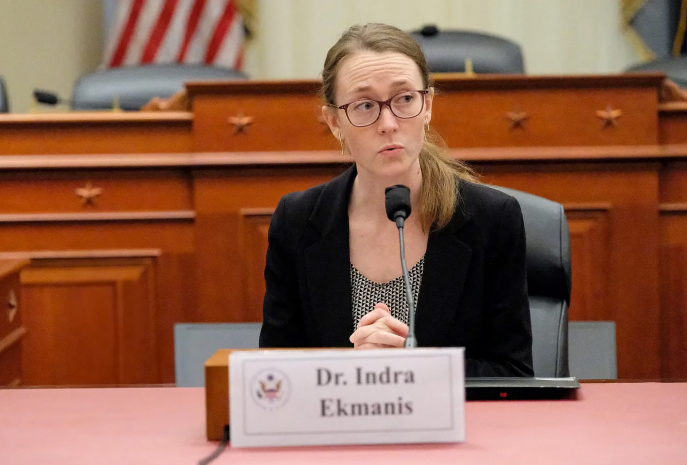
FPRI also grew its cooperation with Baltic Sea partners. Maia Otashvili and Robert Hamilton participated in the [Baltic Sea Security Forum](#) with the Baltic Security Foundation in Riga, Latvia. FPRI also cosponsored the [10th Annual Stasy Lozoraitis Lithuanian Foreign Policy Conference](#) with the Geopolitics and Security Studies Center in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The *Baltic Initiative* continued to publish monthly [Baltic Bulletins](#) from analysts in the region. Highlights include:

- [The Evolution of Baltic Military Divisions](#) by Lukas Milevski
- [Women in Baltic Politics and Political Leadership](#) by Ausra Park
- [Inside Estonia's Defense-Tech Ecosystem](#) by Joel Burke
- [The Baltic \(R\)evolution in Military Affairs](#) by Justina Budginaite-Froehly
- [Latvia and Africa: An Untrodden Road](#) by Maris Anzans.

FPRI also continued the [Baltic Roundup](#) newsletter, by Indra Ekmanis, which features a monthly overview of major, political, and economic events in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

FPRI extended its partnership with the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS) on the *Baltic Ways* podcast, which features monthly conversations on the past, present, and future of the Baltic States. Podcast highlights from 2024 include:



Top left: Indra Ekmanis participates in a US Helsinki Commission briefing. Top right: From left to right, Maia Otashvili, Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, Walter Landgraf, and Julien Deruffe speak on a panel at FPRI, June 2024.

- [What a Harris or Trump Presidency Means for the Baltic States](#) ft. Margarita Šešelgyte, Daunis Auers, and Andres Kasekamp
- [LGBTQ+ Rights in the Baltic Region](#) ft. Aro Velmet
- [Baltic Leadership in the European Commission](#) ft. Andžej Pukšto.

Ekmanis participated in a US Helsinki Commission briefing, [Contesting Russia: Lessons from Central and Eastern Europe](#), highlighting how the Baltic states play an essential role in shaping a secure and resilient Europe and their response to heightened Russian aggression.

European and Transatlantic Security

FPRI launched a new project, [The Ties That Bind: NATO at 75 and Beyond](#), to examine how the alliance has shaped the transatlantic relationship and what challenges lie ahead. Featuring a five-part podcast series, interviews, and analyses

from experts and NATO officials, as well as special events, the project aims to bridge the gap in understanding the alliance's mission, operations, and role in preserving transatlantic security. The podcast featured eighteen guests from eleven NATO members and partner countries, including former NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and former Deputy Secretary General, [Ambassador Alexander Vershbow](#).

Highlights from the podcast include:

- [High Stakes: What Is NATO's Role in Ukraine?](#) ft. Dominik Jankowski, John Deni, and Lisa Aronsson
- [The Linchpin: NATO's History, Purpose, and Evolution](#) ft. former NATO Sec. Gen. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Amb. Alexander Vershbow, and Seth Johnston
- [The Price of Peace: NATO's Burden-Sharing Debate](#) ft. Amb. Doug Lute, Colonel Jordan Becker, and Aylin Matle
- [Between Oceans: NATO's Indo-Pacific Partnerships](#) ft. Gwendoline Vamos,



Eurasia Program Director Maia Otarashvili (far left) leads a panel with the Polish Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister, Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz (center) at the Polish Economic Forum in Karpacz, Poland

Ian Langford, Peter Olive, and John Hemings

- [NATO's Future: The Philadelphia Perspective: In Conversation with Rep. Brendan Boyle \(PA-02\)](#) ft. Brendan Boyle
- [The Art of the Alliance: Trump, Ukraine, and NATO Beyond 75](#) ft. Nina Soljan, Sara Moller, and Susan Colbourn

FPRI co-hosted a NATO Parliamentary Assembly visit to Philadelphia in April 2024. Robert Hamilton, Asia Program Chair Jacques deLisle, and Fellow Thomas Shattuck briefed the delegation about the US perspective on Russia-China relations and the future of transatlantic relations. Hamilton also attended the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's annual session in Montreal in November 2024 and was an expert witness for a Canadian Parliament briefing on North American security threats.

As part of its institutional partnership with the [NATO Public Forum](#), FPRI hosted an

event in its Philadelphia office in June 2024 in the lead-up to the *Washington Summit*. The event, which also served as an official launch of *The Ties That Bind* project, featured Ambassador Vershbow, Maia Otarashvili, Walter Landgraf, and Julien Deruffe, the Political Advisor to the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation at NATO in Norfolk, Virginia.

FPRI also published a report by Stephen Blank which outlined a [multi-dimensional strategy for the US and its allies](#), encompassing the Balkans, Belarus, and Ukraine, to win the war in Ukraine and lay the foundation for a stable and secure peace afterward.

This year FPRI partnered with the [34th Economic Forum](#) in Poland for the first time. Otarashvili, Hamilton, and Communications Director Natalia Kopytnik participated in a series of panel discussions on transatlantic relations, the war in Ukraine, and the China-Russia relationship.



REUTERS/Pu Haiyang/VCG

Strategic Competition with China

This year the rivalry between countries siding with China and the US-led Western alliance has deepened. FPRI continued to expand its research on the US-China economy and technology, China's internal politics, and overseas influence activity.

Asia Program Director Michael Beckley's expert commentary on US-China relations appeared in various outlets, including the [New York Times](#) and [Lawfare Daily](#).

FPRI published a report by Senior Fellow Jessica Teets, exploring the [complexities of China's governance system](#). Surveying 1,500 local officials across 28 provinces, Teets revealed the intricate policy process and cadre evaluation system of China and showed how the system has become more centralized under President Xi Jinping's "top-level design." FPRI hosted the author for a report launch [event](#) in Philadelphia.

FPRI also hosted several events examining the ongoing geopolitical impacts of [UN Resolution 2758](#), [China's expanding reach and border management](#), as well as the past, present, and future of [civil society in Hong Kong](#).

FPRI's China work was further augmented by analyses from several FPRI Asia Program Fellows:

- [The Battle to Shape Trump's China Policy](#) by Tanner Greer
- [Explaining China's Diffusion Deficit](#) by Jeffrey Ding
- [From Protests to Prosecutions: A Tale of Modern Hong Kong](#) by June Teufel Dreyer.

The Asia Program also hosted several book talks throughout the year, including:

- [America Second: How America's Elites are Making China Stronger](#) with Isaac Stone Fish
- [Technology and the Rise of Great Powers: How Diffusion Shapes Economic Competition](#) with Jeffrey Ding
- [World on the Brink: How America Can Beat China in the Race for the 21st Century](#) with Dimitri Alperovich.



The Indo-Pacific

FPRI continued to examine the threats, challenges, and opportunities for the United States and its allies in the Indo-Pacific.

Nowhere are the challenges more acute than in the Taiwan Strait, where the risk of war is higher than at any time in the past half-century. FPRI co-hosted two events examining the US-Taiwan relationship through the lens of elections, both [Taiwan's presidential and legislative elections](#) and the [US presidential election](#). FPRI also hosted two events around the 45th anniversary of the [Taiwan Relations Act](#) with Laura Rosenberger and Matt Pottinger.

Analysis of the US-Taiwan relationship was augmented by analyses from Thomas Shattuck and Benjamin Lewis:

- [Taiwan's Mainstage Moment](#)
- [Breaking the Barrier: Four Years of PRC Military Activity Around Taiwan.](#)

FPRI fellows examined US relations with other Indo-Pacific allies from a variety of angles. Associate Deputy Director Connor Fiddler explained the [Indo-Pacific Supplemental bill](#) passed by the House of Representatives, while Ryan Ashley and Joseph Su examined challenges and opportunities for cultural exchange between [Japan and South Korea](#). Mike Beckley, Ketian Zhang, and Zack Cooper discussed China's aggressive actions towards the Philippines at [Second Thomas Shoal](#) while Fiddler and Anthony Eames discussed [emerging dynamics](#) in the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (AUKUS).



Rethinking the Future of American Security

The rise of China, coupled with the return of revanchist Russia, requires new thinking about the future of American and global security. The United States has serious shortcomings, linked to deindustrialization after the Cold War and assumptions about US military supremacy, that require urgent thinking to address.

To address these challenges, FPRI launched [Behind the Front](#), a new project to serve as a forum for analysis on the future of American and global security. Featuring weekly analysis on topics such as the defense industrial base, lessons learned from ongoing conflicts, and challenges and opportunities in the technology and space sector, *Behind the Front* aims to share new thinking on security policy. Six months after launch, the project has attracted over 2,000 subscribers and over 30 thousand readers.

Highlights from *Behind the Front* include:

- [A New Arms Race in Europe: Euromissiles 2.0](#) by Aaron Stein
- [The Law the Defense Department Loves to Break](#) by Madeline Zimmerman

- [Exploring Ukraine's Future: Alternative Scenarios](#) by Frank Hoffman
- [Is the Quest for Rapid Innovation Distracting from Naval Force Design?](#) by Commander Joshua M.M. Portzer, USN.

Intelligence and Irregular Warfare

FPRI hosted a [joint conference](#) with the Department of Defense's Irregular Warfare Center in Annapolis, Maryland to discuss irregular warfare lessons learned since 9/11. FPRI published several reports presented at the conference including John Nagl and Marshall Cooperman's analysis of the [US Army's Security Force Assistance Mission in Iraq and Afghanistan](#), as well as Heather Gregg's analysis of [fighting ideologies](#) in the global war on terror.

Philip Wasielewski, Director of Center of the Study of Intelligence and Non-traditional Warfare, continued the [Overheard](#) podcast,



which explores the national security implications of intelligence activities, irregular warfare, and political warfare.

Podcast highlights include:

- [Russian Political Warfare and the Georgian and Moldovan Elections](#) ft. Batu Kutelia and William Hill
- [The Espionage Act versus the First Amendment](#) ft. Jill Dougherty, George Croner, and Jim Petrila
- [Lessons Learned from the Intelligence Reform Act of 2004](#) ft. John McLaughlin and Sue Gordon
- [Irregular Warfare in Afghanistan](#) ft. Hy Rothstein
- [Political Warfare Toolbox: Russia](#) ft. Thomas Kent
- [Political Warfare Toolbox: Iran](#) ft. Christopher Bolan.



Instability in the Sahel

Over the past five years the Sahel has experienced a string of coups and attempted coups from the Atlantic to the Red Sea. Russia has moved in to replace the vacuum caused by the withdrawal or ejection of US and French forces. FPRI's Africa fellows examined the changing dynamics through a variety of analyses and virtual briefings including:

- [Prospects Dimming for Democracy in the Sahel](#) by Amb. Charles A. Ray
- [Foreign Militaries in Africa](#) by Paul Nantulya and Raphael Parens\
- [The West's Loss of the Sahel: Not \(only\) Russia's Doing](#) by Dan Whitman
- [The US Withdrawal from Niger Signals a Shift in Western Influence in the Sahel](#) by Abigail Kabandula

In another report, Alden Young examined how [Sudan's wars of succession](#) shaped the country's current conflict and offered recommendations for international and US efforts, arguing for a focus on the cessation of hostilities above the exact shape of a peace agreement.



Special Events

In September, FPRI launched the Ambassador Event Series which brings global voices to Philadelphia and presents a unique opportunity to gain insights on international affairs from leaders at the diplomatic forefront. Throughout the fall, President Aaron Stein hosted representatives from Ukraine, Romania, and Germany including:

- [Sergiy Kyslytsya](#), the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations
- [Andrei Muraru](#), Ambassador of Romania
- [Axel Dittman](#), the Deputy Chief of Mission at the German Embassy.

In this year's *Templeton Lecture on Religion and World Affairs*, FPRI's [Nikolas Gvosdev](#) offered four distinct paradigms—based on Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and John Adams—for

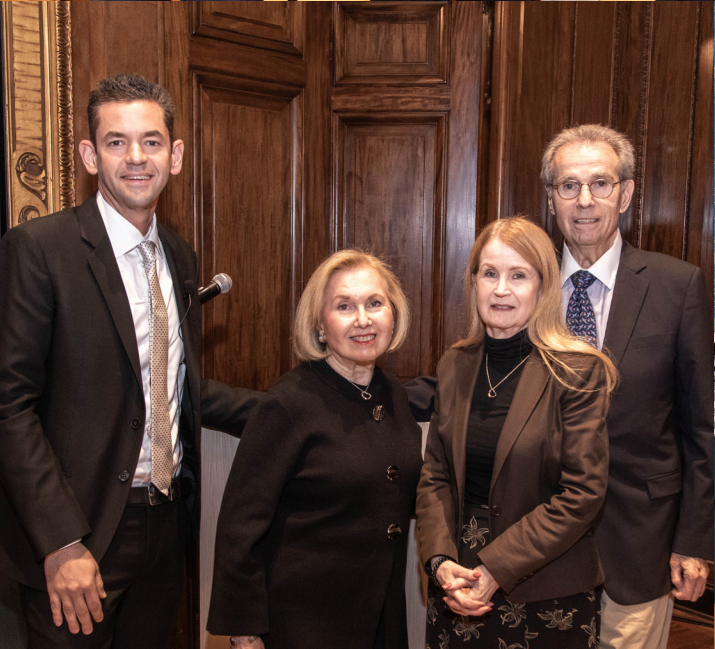
understanding the ways in which religion can intersect with politics, national identity, and political leadership styles. The *Templeton Lecture on Religion and World Affairs* was established in 1996 with a gift from the late John M. Templeton, Jr., M.D., and has continued to be supported by the Templeton Family and the Psalm 103 Foundation ever since.

In the seventh annual *Ginsburg-Satell Lecture on American Character and Identity*, FPRI's Pulitzer Prize-winning historian [Walter A. McDougall](#) continued his narrative of Anglo-American relations from 1776 through the 19th century during which time a principal aim of British diplomacy was to contain the growth of the United States lest it become a peer competitor for world power. This episode focused on the little-known British dalliance with the Texas Republic in the years leading up to the US-Mexican War in 1846.

The Dawn of a New Space Age

FPRI presented the 18th Annual Benjamin Franklin Award for Public Service to Jared Issacman, the Mission Commander of Polaris Dawn and CEO of Shift4 on November 13, 2024 in Philadelphia. A few months prior, Isaacman and the Polaris Dawn crew returned from a five-day mission in space completing the first commercial spacewalk and the highest-altitude orbit of Earth, among other historic “firsts.” He was recently nominated to lead NASA in the incoming administration.







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Foundation Grants	40%	\$954,395
Event Income	3%	\$72,070
Memberships & Partnerships	2%	\$49,899
Royalties & Other Revenue	6%	\$141,574
Total Receipts	100%	\$2,383,189

Expenditures

Publications & Research	50%	\$1,149,228
Educational Programs	1%	\$25,980
Administration	39%	\$904,849
Event Expenses	2%	\$40,521
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