



# **Building on Lisbon**

## **A Survey of Russian Experts**

Joerg Wolf and Victoria Naselskaya

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Atlantische Initiative e.V.  
Wilhelmstraße 67  
10117 Berlin

Tel.: +49-30-206 337 88  
Fax: +49-30-246 303 633  
Email: [info@atlantic-community.org](mailto:info@atlantic-community.org)

Directors: Dr. Johannes Bohnen und Jan-Friedrich Kallmorgen



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## (A) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Atlantic Initiative, a non-partisan, non-profit and independent organization, carried out its second survey aimed at engaging Russian experts in a dialogue on how to improve relations between Russia and NATO. Undertaken less than half a year after the third NATO-Russia Council (NRC) summit, this research provides a sentiment analysis and recommendations on how to foster NATO-Russia relations.

The survey was conducted in April-May 2011. Compared to last year's results, there was a two-fold increase in the number of participants. The research reflected the opinion of 103 Russian experts in policy analysis, defense and international affairs. The contributors are affiliated with the state's largest universities, research and academic platforms, think tanks and various media outlets.

Among the participants were renowned experts such as Russian political journalist Ms. Evgeniya M. Albats, Director of Levada Centre Dr. Gudkov, Professor Katsy of Saint Petersburg State University, Dr. Ryabikhin of the Committee of Scientists for Global Security and Arms Control, Prof. Sergeev of the Russian Academy of Science and Prof. Voronkov of the Moscow State Institute for International Relations. The NATO-sponsored survey consisted of four multiple-choice and three open questions and was available both in English and Russian.

When assessing the current status of Russia-NATO relations, 54 percent of the experts describe the parties as neither enemies nor friends. This indicates a window of opportunity to change old assumptions and to create new perceptions and models of cooperation. More than one quarter of experts already characterize Russia and NATO as partners, thereby moving closer to the fulfillment of the main pledge of NRC leaders made in Lisbon in November 2010 "to work towards achieving a true strategic and modernized partnership".<sup>1</sup>

59 out of 103 respondents presume that it is in Russia's interest to make an agreement on missile defense a precondition for progress on other NATO-Russia cooperation initiatives, when asked directly. It is noteworthy, however, that almost one-third of the experts believe the opposite.

A small majority, 51 percent of the experts, are optimistic about the success of the technically ambitious and politically sensitive project to set up a joined defense shield within the next twenty years. 42 percent of the respondents doubt that this project will be completed. The considerable optimism regarding this historic NATO-Russia project should be taken into consideration, when reflecting on the survey results concerning an agreement on missile defense as precondition for progress on other cooperation initiatives.

NATO-Russia cooperation in Afghanistan is strongly supported by Russia's strategic community. Two-thirds of the experts approve of an increase in Russia's support to a NATO mission in Afghanistan. A further 17 percent of the respondents believe that Russia should provide even more help here.

The most frequent concern of the Russian experts regarding cooperation with NATO on missile defense is a psychological one. This concern focuses on the lack of trust and equality in the partnership. This opinion is shared by almost one third of respondents. A further widespread concern expressed by 28 percent of the experts, outlines the fear that missile defense might be directed against Russia or its interests and cause suppression of the state's nuclear potential or shift the balance of power. This concern is directly linked to historically retained mistrust.

Among suggestions on how to ensure the progression of the Lisbon agreements, the most common recommendation made by 30 percent of the experts is to back the agreements with

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<sup>1</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO-Russia set on path towards strategic partnership", 20 November 2010 <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_68876.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_68876.htm)> last accessed 1 June 2011.

specific mutual measures. Another suggestion, put forward by 27 out of 103 respondents, outlines the necessity to overcome mutual distrust and increase transparency and equality in the cooperation. Ms. Evgeniya M. Albats, a Russian political journalist, remarks that should trust be established, “everything else will follow.”

In response to the question of what NATO should do to support Russian security interests, the predominant recommendation by 21 percent of the experts is to end the eastward enlargement and decrease NATO’s influence in the CIS region. As in our previous survey<sup>2</sup>, the suggestion to freeze NATO’s eastward enlargement is found in the answers to many questions, even though we did not ask the experts about this issue. This trend outlines Russia’s concerns regarding the security of its western borders. Although, in comparison with 2010 when 43 percent of the respondents advocated the termination of NATO’s eastward enlargement, this year the issue was raised by a significantly smaller percentage of experts.

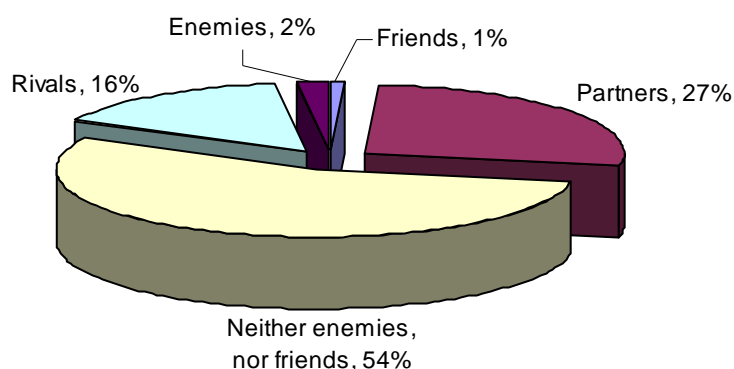
Please find a detailed analysis of the responses from 103 Russian experts working and living in Russia as well as their many policy proposals for increased NATO-Russia cooperation in the main part of this report.

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<sup>2</sup> NATO Review, “Game, Reset and Good Match” <<http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2010/Lisbon-Summit/Russia-Survey/EN/index.htm>> last accessed 1 June 2011.

## (B) ANALYSIS OF MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

### 1. How would you describe Russia's relationship with NATO?



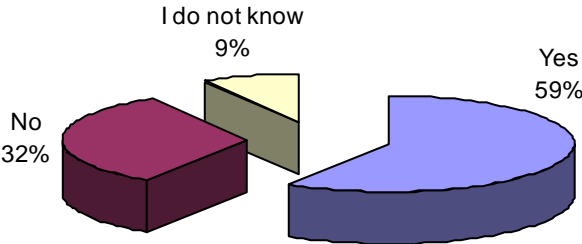
When asked to describe Russia's relations with NATO, the majority of experts state that both parties are neither enemies, nor friends. More than one quarter of the participants believe that Russia and NATO are partners, whereas 16 percent of the respondents come to the conclusion that NATO and Russia are rivals. Two percent of the experts characterize Russia and NATO as enemies while only one expert identifies a friendship between both parties.

The small number of those who chose "enemies" indicates a shift in the prevalence of a Cold War discourse. However, the fact that every sixth expert sees rivalry in NATO-Russia relations shows that trust-building measures are still needed to foster an effective strategic partnership.

Moreover, a number of experts emphasize the existence of a complex historical legacy. According to Dr. Kosolapov of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), "reason, common sense and current political interests strongly suggest that Russia and NATO are presently not enemies". Nevertheless, "[the] volume of historically accumulated mutual distrust and dislike coupled with differing political and special group interests is alive and may prove to be explosive on both sides". Prof. Demetradze of the Russian State University of Humanities explains her perception of Russia and NATO as enemies by arguing that Russia instrumentalizes the idea of NATO as an external enemy in order to hold society together. Meanwhile, Mr. Andrei Fedorov, Director of the Center of Consulting and Political Studies, suggests that NATO and Russia relations have moved closer towards a true partnership, however with "a limited positive agenda".

- The majority of experts consider NATO-Russia cooperation to be in an interim period. The contributors highlight a combination of Cold War mentalities and general mistrust as barriers to cooperation. However, they acknowledge the potential to move towards a true partnership.

**2. Is it in Russia's interest to make agreement on missile defense a precondition for progress on other NATO-Russia cooperation initiatives?**



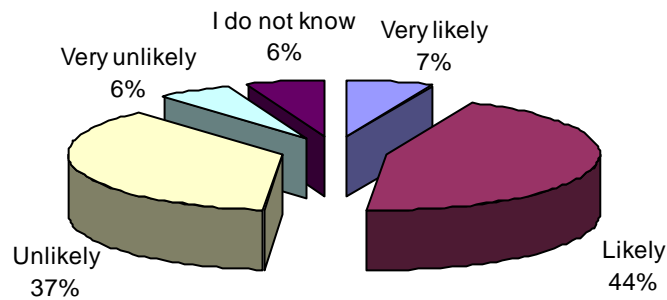
59 percent of the experts believe that Russia should make an agreement on missile defense a precondition for progress on other NATO-Russia cooperation initiatives, when asked in a very direct way. This result is consistent with the concerns over the perceived lack of NATO compliance with Russia’s security interests as expressed in response to other questions.

Dr. Kosolapov (IMEMO) suggests that an agreement on missile defense is a litmus test for peace and stability between Russia and NATO member states. This sentiment was expressed by a considerable number of respondents.

It is, however, noteworthy, that nearly one in three Russian experts opposes the suggestion to make agreement on missile defense a precondition for progress on other cooperation initiatives. Moreover, one in ten experts did not express a strong opinion on this issue.

- A concern over the deployment of missile defense against Russia’s security interests was raised numerous times by Russia’s strategic community. Thus, the centrality of this issue coupled with the experts’ optimism over the success of a joint defense shield (see question 3) indicates that an agreement on missile defense could upgrade the strategic partnership between Russia and NATO.

**3. NATO and Russia agreed at the 2010 summit in Lisbon to develop a framework for ballistic missile defense cooperation, but many details still need to be worked out. How likely is it in your opinion that this cooperation will result in a joint defense shield within the next twenty years?**



The majority of experts believe a joint defense shield will be established within the next twenty years. Nevertheless, there is only a nine percentage point difference between the number of those who anticipate the creation of a joint missile defense and those who are skeptical about the success of NATO-Russia cooperation in this area.

44 percent of the experts presume that it is likely and seven percent that it is very likely that Russia and NATO will develop a joint defense shield. Among those who do not give credence to the success of the project, 37 percent consider the development of a joint defense shield to be unlikely while six percent believe this is very unlikely.

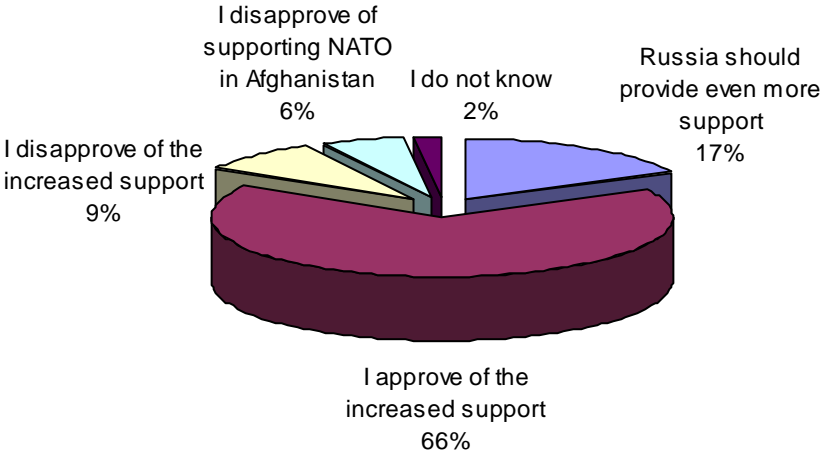
Some experts highlighted the instability of current cooperation on missile defense. Dr. Khudoley of the Saint Petersburg State University points out that the situation can change very quickly. Prof. Klepatskiy of the Russian State University of Humanities argues that Iran is not a threat and that NATO's real goal in cooperating with Russia is to monitor the country's nuclear deployment in its European part.

Dr. Kosolapov highlights a lack of political trust between Russia and NATO and doubts whether there is sufficient "mutual trust and a clear-cut common threat for such an alliance". Moreover, he raises concerns over the "subordinate status" of U.S. international obligations to its domestic legislation. He argues that "until the U.S. accepts the priority of international obligations over their domestic legislation, any long-term security arrangement with that country is at best an illusion if not a folly".

- During the NATO-Russian Council meeting in Lisbon members of the NRC agreed that "while we face many security challenges, we pose no threat to each other".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, responses to this survey indicate that this agreement still needs to be backed by some mutual trust-building measures.
- While respondents to this survey strongly believe that agreement on missile defense should be made a precondition for progress on other NATO-Russia joint initiatives, the majority of respondents are optimistic about the success of this undertaking. A breakthrough on joint missile defense could therefore lead to further NATO-Russia cooperation. Thus, implementing joint missile defense could improve and deepen cooperation between both parties, strengthen pan-European security and enhance mutual trust.

<sup>3</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO-Russia set on path towards strategic partnership", 20 November 2010 <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_68876.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_68876.htm)> last accessed 1 June 2011.

**4. Russia agreed to provide more support to NATO in Afghanistan (broadened transit arrangements through Russian territory, expanded counter-narcotics training and helicopter maintenance). What is your view on this increased cooperation?**



The experts overwhelmingly favor Russia’s support to NATO’s mission in Afghanistan. Two-thirds of respondents are in favor of an increase in support for NATO’s mission in Afghanistan. The second most popular choice among participants was for Russia to provide NATO with even more support (17 percent).

Specific recommendations on how to increase Russian participation and contribution included the establishment of a joint strategy on global and regional security. Nine percent of the respondents are against the increased support, while six out of 103 experts disapprove of Russia supporting NATO’s mission in Afghanistan. Prof Mutagirov of Saint Petersburg State University argues against increased assistance because the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979-1989 shows that the Afghan people should choose their own political path.

- The huge majority of those who favor Russia’s support to NATO’s mission in Afghanistan and even call for an increased assistance indicates the readiness of Russia’s strategic community to intensify its collaboration with NATO in areas that do not counteract or threaten Russia’s security and strategic interests. Hence, the expansion and intensification of NATO-Russia cooperation in anti-terrorism, anti-trafficking and conventional arms reductions will contribute to the establishment of closer ties and a positive partnership between both parties.



## (C) ANALYSIS OF OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

*The calculation of percentages in this section is based on the number of policy recommendations (not on the number of experts) and recognizes the fact that some contributors made more than one suggestion. These open ended questions were phrased in a way which required an elaborated response or policy recommendation. Many Russian experts made a number of constructive suggestions, which are presented and discussed in what follows below.*

### 1. In your opinion, what are Russia's biggest concerns for cooperating with NATO on missile defense?

*129 suggestions have been put forward*

This survey has resulted in a number of comprehensive policy recommendations from Russia's strategic community. The most popular concern expressed by one third of the experts focused on the **lack of trust and equality** between both parties. Russia's perceived subordinate role and the so-called "teacher-pupil" way in which NATO allegedly communicates with Russia prevent the parties from cooperating effectively. Mr. Baranovskiy of the Russian Academy of Sciences argues that the Kremlin fears "find[ing] itself in a position of an insignificant appendix of the US/NATO missile defense". Some experts suggest that treating Russia as a fully-fledged partner and decision maker would foster mutual trust and secure progress towards stronger cooperation. Dr. Khudoley of the Saint Petersburg State University describes the problem as a "psychological one". He suggests that a lack of mutual trust strengthens mutual suspicions.

The second most popular answer, given by 28 percent of the experts, focuses on the **deployment of missile defense against Russia or its security interests**. Mr. Abdulaev from the *Moscow Times* states that "Russia doesn't want to have its strategic nuclear balance removed if missile defense progresses without its participation". He believes that Russia's political elite fears that this will entail "a more assertive Western foreign policy toward Russia, as Russia will not be able to effectively counter it by its military threat". Respondents suggest that the exchange of information on NATO's missile defense strategy, Russia's inclusion in a joint missile defense shield and legally binding agreements between both parties will diminish this concern.

Seven percent of the respondents express their anxiety over **NATO's eastward enlargement**. In order to reduce tensions between NATO and Russia, experts call for the deployment of NATO missile defense systems to be stopped, a reduction of NATO's influence on Eastern Europe and an end to offering membership to the CIS states, as long as Russia perceives this as a threat to its security. Mr. Isaev of the Saint Petersburg State University argued that "the basis of the Russian security agenda includes the creation of a friendly and NATO-free zone in Eastern Europe. Any initiatives on accepting new NATO members from the traditional Russian sphere of influence (Ukraine or Georgia) will be perceived by Moscow as an unfriendly act."

Five percent of respondents believe that the decision making process in NATO-Russia cooperation lies solely with the **political and military elite**. These participants recommend that NATO-Russian cooperation be extended and intensified on all possible levels, to involve experts and expand the network of both formal and informal channels of cooperation.

Five experts argue that the main concern is that NATO perceives Russia as an unfriendly or rival state. The experts attributed this misrepresentation to a Cold War legacy and proposed the development of a more open-minded approach towards Russia in order to overcome the so-called "**Cold War paranoia**".

Two percent of experts are concerned that Moscow instrumentalizes the image of an external enemy as an "ideologically manipulative instrument" in order to create a "rally round the

flag” effect. A further marginal opinion expressed the fear that the dominant role of the USA in NATO will allow it to secure its unilateral interests. Mr. Jouravlev of the Russian State University of Humanities maintains that a missile defense shield “could play the role of a bargaining tool aimed at securing the unilateral interests of the USA.”

Numerous individual contributions voice concerns over the possible loss of Russia’s geopolitical advantage, dissipation of territory and power, NATO’s military superiority and excessive expenditures. Prof. Olga Pavlenko of the Russian State University of Humanities suggests that “military actions in Libya escalated Russia’s concerns over its own energy security.”

Prof. Isaev of the Irkutsk State University claims NATO is “a vestige of the Cold War and a symbol of Russia’s defeat in it. NATO was created as an anti-USSR organization, and there are no illusions in Russia about NATO’s goals and objectives”.

- The concerns of Russia’s strategic community have a broad psychological dimension underpinning the majority of answers. Trust-building measures are clearly needed to overcome Russia’s perception of NATO as an organization with a hidden agenda.

## **2. Russia and NATO agreed to cooperate on many projects in Lisbon and a new momentum has been created. What could NATO and Russia do to ensure that this progress continues?**

*118 policy recommendations have been made*

During this survey a number of wide-ranging recommendations on how to safeguard and build on the Lisbon success were being made. Almost one third of the respondents suggested that to continue Lisbon’s progress, NATO and Russia have to **back their agreements with practical mutual measures aimed at their fulfillment**. Extended information exchange and a resumed dialogue on controversial issues should contribute to the sustainability of Lisbon’s breakthrough.

Ms. Arbatova of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations argues “it is high time that good intentions are transformed into practical and far-reaching cooperation on the real common interests. These might include: deep conventional arms and tactical nuclear weapons reductions, which would totally remove any war planning or training of NATO and Russia against each other; cooperative missile defense and Air Defense technical projects, starting with the integration of early warning systems; the creation of joint rapid deployment corps for peace-keeping missions; an agreement on common operations (going much further than transit) of NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization on the stabilization of Afghanistan.”

27 percent of the respondents stress the importance of **overcoming mutual distrust and increasing transparency and equality** in NATO-Russia cooperation. In order to achieve this goal, some respondents suggest creating a legally binding agreement which will outline joint steps and obligations. The famous political journalist Evgeniya M. Albats argues that if trust is established, “everything else will follow”.

Signing an **agreement on missile defense** and developing a common agenda for mutual security constituted the third most common suggestion which was expressed by 15 percent of the experts. Prof. Salagaev of the Kazan State Technological University suggests that a common missile defense system should be established at Gabalinsky radar station in Azerbaijan. He believes that such a measure will help improve mutual trust.

Nine experts advocate the **expansion of cooperation channels**. They propose putting a bigger emphasis on expert engagement and ensuring that communication is maintained on all possible formal and informal levels.

Seven percent of the respondents argue that NATO-Russia relations can progress by engaging in less “politically overloaded” initiatives. Dr. Svetlana Tvorogova of the Higher School of Economics considers small-scale **anti-terrorism and anti-trafficking** measures to be a catalyst in both parties' security cooperation.

Six percent of the experts are in favor of reopening a **dialogue on the European Security Treaty** in order to maintain progress in cooperation. According to Dr. Polikanov, Vice President of The Russian Center for Policy Studies (PIR), progress on conventional arms control through narrowing down the broad concept of the European Security Treaty, or its rejuvenation by NATO member states, would be “a good symbolic step” towards the sustainability of the Lisbon agreements.

An equal number of respondents stress the importance of raising awareness among the general public, implementing **public diplomacy** initiatives, especially for less ideologically influenced new generations. A further six percent of the experts claim that Russia should increase its participation in NATO's peacekeeping operations.

Further proposals from a small number of respondents included establishing formal relations between NATO and the **Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)** and an increase in mutual investments in commercial projects.

Among the numerous minority proposals are the lifting of visa regimes and the integration of Russia into NATO.

- Concerns caused by the lack of trust, equality and transparency between Russia and NATO were raised numerous times by respondents to this survey. According to the experts surveyed, moving from negotiation to implementation is the key to upholding Lisbon's success. Nevertheless, progress can only be sustained if cooperation is based on trust, equality and transparency.
- The third most frequently raised issue in this section – the deployment of missile defense against Russia's security interests – is directly linked to general distrust between both parties. Thus, in order to overcome the deadlock, every step in the cooperation process should be supported by trust-building efforts.

### 3. What should NATO do to support Russian security interests?

*149 policy proposals have been put forward in this subsection*

The most common proposal on how NATO should support Russia's security interests was to **freeze NATO's eastward enlargement**. In our 2010 survey, this policy was offered by 43 percent of the experts as a way to reassure Russia of NATO's friendly intentions. In comparison, in this year's survey this stance was advocated by 23 percent of the contributors. The participants called for NATO's eastward enlargement to stop, for a decrease in NATO's influence on the CIS, or for a slow-down in its cooperation with allegedly unfriendly post-Soviet countries.

A large proportion of respondents alluded to their previous responses in answer to this question. For instance, 15 percent of the experts recommend **terminating missile defense development** and for NATO to stop ignoring or wielding influence over Russian security interests.

Twelve percent of the respondents recommend the intensification of **information exchange, fostering cooperation in security issues** and in matters of common interest. Nine percent suggest resuming a dialogue on controversial issues including the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Eight percent stress the importance of **trust, equality and transparency building initiatives**.

Seven participants identified the promotion of **positive images of NATO and Russia**, as well as the strengthening of bilateral relations through joint public projects, as central to the success of NATO-Russia cooperation in security matters. Seven experts recommend changing the perception of Moscow as an enemy state to enhance cooperation. Dr. Kosolapov of the Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) opines that "Russia is constantly being criticized in the Anglo-American press in a tone that makes many Russians believe that their country has been put on a waiting-list for a Libyan-style rogue-state operation".

Five experts warn that NATO's "interference" in the internal affairs of other countries (i.e. Libya) would have negative implications for cooperation with Russia. 11 experts recommend that NATO should increase counter-narcotics operations in Afghanistan. Notably, two experts call for the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan, while one expert suggests NATO prolong its Afghanistan mission.

Two experts recommend reforming and strengthening the status of the Russia-NATO Council. A further two respondents propose the signing of an agreement banning the use of nuclear weapons in Europe. One expert suggests that NATO should announce a voluntary dissolution due to its current controversial military policy in former Yugoslavia, Iran and Libya.

- The fact that almost one quarter of the experts advocate a freeze in NATO's eastward enlargement highlights the continued existence yet not dominance over other issues of Russia's traditional concerns over the security of its eastern borders.

## **(D) PARTICIPANTS**

*54 percent of experts are from universities.*

*36 percent from think tanks, foundations, NGOs.*

*10 percent from media.*

**Abarinov;** Vladimir; Political Correspondent, Radio Freedom

**Abdullaev;** Nabi; Political Journalist, the Moscow Times

**Achkasov;** Valeriy; Prof.; Head of the Department of International Political Processes, Saint Petersburg State University

**Aetdinov;** Eldar; Director of the Sector, Naberejnochelninsk State Trade-Technological University

**Afnas'eva;** Julia; Doctoral student in Political Science, Military University of the Ministry of Defense

**Albats;** Evgeniya M; Prof.; Political Journalist, Echo Moskvi; Professor (Applied Political Science), High School of Economics, Moscow

**Arbatova;** Nadezhda K; Prof. Dr.; Director for Research, Editor, "Russia in the United Europe" Committee; Head of Section, Center of European Integration, Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

**Ayvazyan;** Diana; PhD, National Research University of the Higher School of Economics, Moscow

**Baranovsky;** Vladimir; Deputy Director, RAS Correspondent, Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

**Belov;** Konstantin; PhD; Department of International Political Processes, Saint Petersburg State University

**Blagin;** Alexander; Postgraduate Student, Yaroslavl State University

**Boldyreva;** Elena; Dr.; Saint-Petersburg Polytechnic State University

**Boze;** Eduard; Expert, Center for Strategic Research "North-West"

**Burlinova;** Natalia; President of the Public Initiative, NGO "Creative Diplomacy"

**Cheredov;** Ignatyi; PhD in Political Processes, St Petersburg State University

**Delyagin;** Mikhail; Globalization Institute (IPROG)

**Demetradze;** Marine; Prof.; Nationalism and International Security, Department of World Politics and International Relations, Russian State University of Humanities

**Faroukshin;** Midkhat; Prof.; Head of Department, Political Science Department, Kazan State University, Kazan

**Fedorov;** Andrej; Director, the Center of Consulting and Political Studies, Moscow

**Fedyashin;** Andrej; Foreign Desk Writer and Columnist, RIA Novosti

**Genis;** Alexander; Journalist, Radio Freedom

**Gudkov;** Lev; Dr.; Director of Levada Centre, Levada Centre, Moscow

**Guseinov;** Vagif; Director of the Institute of Strategic Studies and Analysis; Editor-in-Chief of the “Vestnik Analytiki bulletin”, Institute of Strategic Studies and Analysis

**Ignatkin;** Oleg; Prof.; International Political Analysis, Russian State University of Humanities, Department of World Politics and International Relations

**Igumnova;** Lyudmila O.; Associate Prof.; Professor of World History and International Relations, Irkutsk State University

**Isaev;** Gumer; Senior Lecturer, Political Processes, St Petersburg State University

**Istomin;** Igor; Lecturer, Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO)

**Ivanov;** Eduard A; Prof.; Deputy Dean for International Cooperation , Department of International Public Law, Higher School of Economics, Moscow

**Jerebyatyev;** Mikhail; Journalist, Radio Freedom

**Juravlyov;** Denis; Lecturer, Russian State University of Humanities, Department of World Politics and International Relations

**Kalinichenko;** Victor; Russian military expert, Moscow

**Kaspe;** Svyatoslav; Prof.; Department of Applied Political Science, High School of Economics; Editor in Chief, Politeia Journal

**Katsy;** Dmitry; Prof.; Professor of International Politics, Saint-Petersburg School of International Relations

**Khazov;** Sergei; Journalist, Radio Freedom

**Khlopın;** Alexander; Comparative Political Studies, Center of International Relations Research

**Khlopov;** Oleg; Lecturer, Department of World Politics and International Relations, Russian State University of Humanities

**Khortov;** Artem; Researcher, “The U.S. Policy in the Bosnian Conflict and the Kosovo Crisis”, Association of Trade Unions Organizations of the Yaroslavl Region

**Khudoley;** Konstantin; Dr.; Vice-Rector, School of International Relations, St Petersburg State University

**Klepatskiy;** Lev; Prof.; Department of World Politics and International Relations, Russian State University of Humanities

**Kolesnichenko;** Olga; PhD; Freelance Journalist, Press Attaché for the Russian Youth Atlantic Treaty Association (Russia-YATA), NATO Winner Academy Participant

**Kondrakhina;** Evgeniya; Postgraduate Student, Institute for the US and Canadian Studies; Global Institute for Water Environment and Health

**Konishev;** Valeriy; Prof.; Political Science and History of International Relations, Saint Petersburg State University

**Konovalov;** Valeriy; Prof.; Department of Sociology and Political Science, Rostov State University, Rostov-on-Don

**Korgunyuk;** Yuriy; Founding member, Fund "Politics"

**Kosolapov;** N.A.; Dr.; Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

**Kosyrev;** Dmitry; Political Observer, RIA Novosti

**Kozyulin;** Vadim; Director of Conventional Arms Project, Russian Center for Policy Studies (PIR)

**Kurilla;** Ivan; Prof.; Head of Department of International Relations, Regional and Political Studies, Volgograd State University

**Lekarenko;** Oxana; Associate Prof.; Tomsk State University, Tomsk

**Litovkin;** Victor; Russian Military Expert, Responsible Editor of newspaper 'Independent Military Review', Moscow

**Lomagin;** Nikita; Prof.; Saint Petersburg State University

**Lozansky;** Edward; Dr.; American University in Moscow

**Lukashina;** Julia; MA Political Science; National Research University Higher School of Economics

**Magleev;** Alexander A; Prof.; History and Politics, Irkutsk State University

**Masich;** Vladimir; Postgraduate Student, Russian State University for Humanities

**Mironov;** Oleg; Regional Office Director, Russian Youth Atlantic Treaty Association (YATA – Russia), Kaliningrad

**Mitrofanova;** Anastasia; Prof.; Department of World Politics and International Relations, Russian State University of Humanities

**Miroshnikov;** **Maksim;** Postgraduate Student, Old Dominion University, Norfolk

**Mutagiurov;** Jamal; Prof.; Department of International Political Processes, Saint Petersburg State University

**Nikitin;** Andrej; Dr.; Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Economics, Russian Academy of Sciences

**Oganisyan;** Armen; Editor-in-Chief, International Affairs Journal

**Orlov;** Alexander; Prof.; Moscow International University, Moscow

**Parubochaya;** Helen; Research Assistant, Volgograd State University, Volgograd

**Pavlenko;** Olga; Prof.; Department of World Politics and International Relations; Russian State University of Humanities

**Petrovsky;** Dmitry; Military Expert, Council of Federation (Russian Senate)

**Plisyuk;** Mikhail; Executive Director, CSTO Institute (NGO)

**Pocheptsov;** Georgy; Dr.; Journalist, Russian Journal

**Polikanov;** Dmitry; Dr.; Vice President; Russian Center for Policy Studies (Pir Center)

**Ponarin;** Eduard D.; Prof.; War and Conflicts, European University of Saint Petersburg

**Protasenko;** Stanislav; PhD in European Studies, Saint Petersburg State University

**Rimskiy;** Vladimir; Founding member, "Fund Politics"

**Ryabikhin;** Leonid; Executive Secretary, Lecturer, Committee of Scientists for Global Security and Arms Control

**Salagaev;** Alexander; Head of Department, Department of Social and Political Conflict Studies, Kazan State Technological University

**Samuylov;** Sergey; Head, Center for US foreign policy making mechanisms studies of the Institute of the USA and Canada Studies

**Sergeev;** Sergey; Prof.; Department of Social and Political Conflict Studies, Kazan State Technological University

**Sergeev;** Evgeny; Prof. Dr.; Director of the Center of the Institute of World History of Russian Academy of Science, Full Professor of the Department of World Politics and International Relations, Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow

**Sergunin;** Alexander; Prof.; Department of International Relations, Saint Petersburg State University, Saint Petersburg

**Shubin;** Alexander; Prof. Dr.; Russian Journal

**Silin;** Evgenii; Managing Director, Association of Euro-Atlantic Cooperation

**Slobodin;** Vladimir; Prof.; Retired Professor, Moscow State University

**Tarasov;** Ilya; PhD, Saratov State Social-Economic University

**Troitsky;** Nikolai; Political Commentator, RIA Novosti

**Tsvetkov;** Ivan; Prof.; Associate Professor, Department of American Studies, Saint-Petersburg School of International Relations

**Tvorogova;** Svetlana; Dr.; Assistant Professor, Higher School of Economics, Moscow

**Vasileva;** Natalya; Prof.; Department of International Relations, Saint Petersburg State University

**Vladykin;** Oleg; Military Correspondent, Obschaya Gazeta

**Voitolovsky;** Feodor; Dr.; Head of the Department of US External and Internal Affairs, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Council of Young Scientists and Specialists

**Voksanaev;** Viktor; Head, Research Center Viktor Voksanaeva

**Volkov;** Maxim; Prof.; History Department, Tomsk State University, Tomsk

**Voronkov;** Lev; Prof.; Centre for North-European and Baltic Studies, MGIMO-University



**Usacheva;** Maria; Project Coordinator on Foreign and Security Policy, (Name of foundation not mentioned per request)

**Yeryomina;** Natalya; PhD; Department of International Relations, Saint Petersburg State University

**Zagorski;** Andrej; Director, Peace and War Research Centre, Moscow

**Zapesotskiy;** Alexander; Prof. Dr.; Rector, Saint Petersburg University of Humanities

**Zevelev;** Igor; Director, Moscow Office, MacArthur Foundation

**Zolotov;** Andrei Jr; Editor In Chief, Russiaprofile.org

**Zulkharneev;** Albert; Education and Training Program Director, Russian Center for Policy Studies (Pir Center)

Professor Katsy of the Saint-Petersburg School of International Relations offered this questionnaire to 17 Bachelor students. The students responded individually to multiple-choice questions and collectively to open questions. Their answers have been counted as the response of one expert. For the multiple choice questions we have counted the most popular result.

Four experts from Russian state universities and one respondent from the Russian Academy of Science.

Written and conducted by:

Victoria Naselskaya and Joerg Wolf, editor and editor-in-chief of atlantic-community.org

Directors: Dr. Johannes Bohnen & Jan-Friedrich Kallmorgen

© Atlantische Initiative e.V.– Wilhelmstrasse 67 – 10117 Berlin – Germany

Tel: +49 - 30 - 206 337 88 – Fax: +49 - 30 - 246 303 633

Email: [info@atlantic-community.org](mailto:info@atlantic-community.org)

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