

Overview of the Discussion

On November 23, 2021, IMEMO hosted an online presentation of the Russian edition of the SIPRI Yearbook 2020: “Armaments, Disarmament and International Security”, including the Special Supplement of IMEMO, as well as a separate English edition of the Supplement “Russia: Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security.”

Both publications were prepared as part of a joint project between Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

In the view of the worsening of the COVID-19 situation, the initial dates of the event had to be adjusted, and the presentation was held in a mixed in-person/virtual format.

The meeting was started off by the **Head of the Center for International Security (CIS), IMEMO, Academician Alexey Arbatov**, who stated that SIPRI Yearbooks have been a go-to source of information for a wide range of specialists dealing with security, armaments and military conflicts. Unlike Yearbooks’ Chinese, Arabic and other editions, Russian edition always contains quality Supplement which includes chapters authored by IMEMO specialists, partner institutes and research centers.

Academician Arbatov stressed that with the publication of the Special Supplement, IMEMO was able to reduce the time gap in the analysis of security issues that naturally occurs not only during the publishing process of the original, English edition of the Yearbook but also in the course of translation of the hefty tome into Russian language. As an example, an in-depth analysis of China presented in this year’s Supplement raises a number of topical issues related to China’s covert military build-up, which will have an impact on strategic stability and international security. Other noteworthy topics covered in the Supplement include the EU’s strategic autonomy, information security, and Turkey’s new foreign policy role. In conclusion, Academician Arbatov expressed gratitude to the IMEMO staff members Valentina Matveeva and Vasily Klimov for the high-quality organizational work in preparation and presentation of the SIPRI Yearbook.

President of IMEMO RAS, Academician Alexander Dynkin, delivered a welcoming address to the participants of the event and stressed that Russia’s strategic community was looking forward to the publication of the SIPRI Yearbook, which harmoniously combined highly skilled SIPRI team and eminent Russian experts, whose work was featured in the Yearbook’s Supplement. The Supplement is a full-fledged part of the general edition of the SIPRI Yearbook. Academician Dynkin lamented that the most recent developments in the field of US-Russian arms control, in particular the extension of New START and the ensuing US-Russian consultations, did not make it into the Yearbook but also noted that those events will most likely be reflected in the 2021 SIPRI Yearbook. The Yearbook’s editing, as usual, was carried out by Alexey Arbatov and Sergey Ozobishchev, while Marianna Yevtodyeva and Konstantin Bogdanov shouldered organizational tasks. Academician Dynkin concluded his presentation by thanking the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport of Switzerland for its long-standing support for the publication.

Head of Research of the Center for Situational Analysis at IMEMO, Academician Vladimir Baranovsky stressed that the Presentation reflected the relevance of the joint SIPRI/IMEMO project and the work of a wide range of experts. Overall, the general political situation makes the Yearbook's focus topics increasingly important. Academician Baranovsky noted that the annual publication makes it possible for specialists and interested members of the public to follow developments in the field of international security from a professional perspective. As a final point, he congratulated the participants of the project on the Yearbook release and noted the great contribution of IMEMO to the maintenance of such "intellectual resource."

Director of the Center for East Asian and Shanghai Cooperation Organization Studies at MGIMO Alexander Lukin in his presentation, emphasized that China's strategy towards the United States had radically changed. The new Chinese leadership has begun to gradually abandon the policy of Deng Xiaoping based on "power accumulation" and prioritize active foreign policy. Alexander Lukin recalled that China's containment policy under US President Donald Trump took China by surprise, as few believed that the United States would do something that was unfavorable to them. The discovery of large-scale mine construction in the summer of 2021 highlighted the ever-growing need for the inclusion of China in the arms control negotiations. The first step could be, for example, to give it an observer role in the US-Russian consultations.

Deputy Director of the Centre for Comprehensive European and International Studies (CCEIS) at Higher School of Economics Vasily Kashin expressed the opinion that we have reached a certain "turning point" when China can begin negotiations on strategic stability with the United States. The two countries have already had expert consultations that led to the development of a number of common specialized terms and concepts in the field of arms control. However, one can assume that, if negotiations were to begin, China would not be prepared to disclose the quantitative level of its nuclear forces and other important elements of its "nuclear policy." Issues related to asymmetry of potentials and complexity of political relations in Russia-US-China "triangle" create obstacles for achieving equal ceilings on strategic armaments for all three nuclear-weapon states. Vasily Kashin made a prediction that China could choose to delay negotiations in order to reach its desired level of nuclear weapons (e.g., by 2035) and only then would it agree to a substantive discussion on nuclear arms limitations. Concluding his presentation, Kashin stressed that the development of US-China nuclear relations would have far-reaching implications beyond the Indo-Pacific region.

Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Advanced American Studies at the Institute of International Studies at the MGIMO Andrei Baklitskiy tried to predict what issues could be included in the section on arms control in the 2021 SIPRI Yearbook. One could start with defining the US and Russian approaches to various aspects of arms control. We know that the United States and Russia are ready to discuss missile defense and space issues, but it remains unclear how the rapid technological development of new weapons systems and successful anti-satellite tests can affect the willingness of the parties to engage in a substantive discussion. Recognition of the Russian moratorium on the deployment of intermediate- and

short-range missiles in the light of the development and testing of US land and sea INF systems is also becoming increasingly less feasible.

Professor at the Department of World Policy and International Relations at the Russian State University for the Humanities Vladimir Pryakhin presented his vision of the philosophical aspects of arms control. This approach is based on the recognition of the alarming increase of the costs of an uncontrolled arms race, which is extremely difficult to arrest because it serves the interests of influential national groups associated with military-industrial complex. In the opinion of Vladimir Pryakhin, the time has come to consider positive alternatives to the senseless arms race, the origins of which can be found in the ideas of Russian space scientists. The development of these ideas will allow us to take a new “reflective look” at ourselves and at the world around us, finding a reasonable alternative to the destructive arms race.

Presentations were also made by **Senior Consultant for General Director of Rostec State Corporation Nikolay Turko; Professor at the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics Alexander Perendzhiev; Leading Researcher at the CIS Natalia Bubnova; Senior Expert at the Center for Advanced Governance (CAG) Oleg Shakirov; and Research Fellow at the CIS Dmitry Stefanovich.**

The event was attended by about 50 representatives of relevant ministries and departments, RAS institutes, departmental scientific research centers, foreign embassies, independent research centers and journalists.