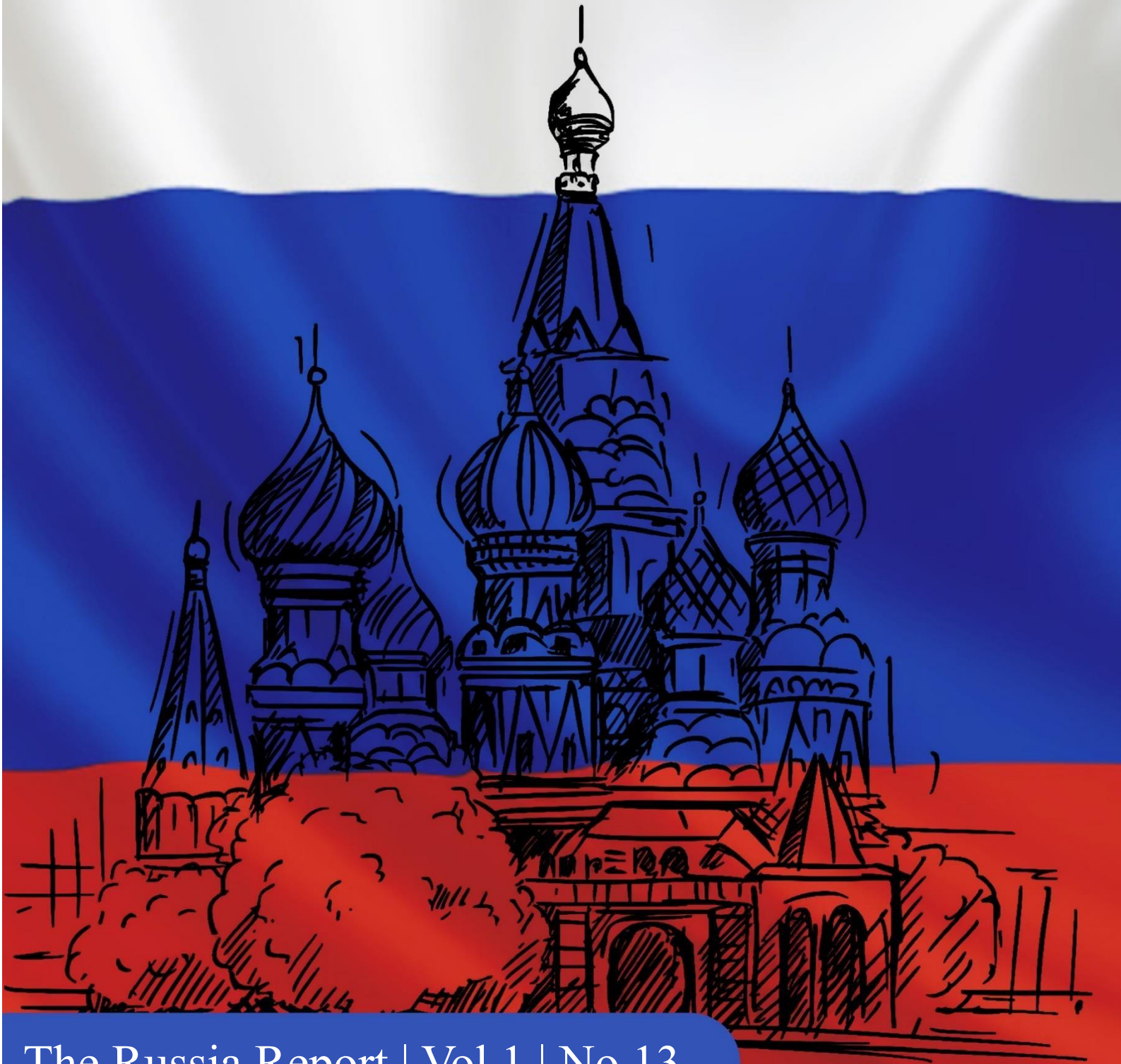


CLAWS Newsletter



The Russia Report | Vol 1 | No 13

by Anusua Ganguly

- **Russia and Iran**

Iran and Russia Deepen Energy and Defence Cooperation

[Institute for the Study of War](#), September 18, 2025

Senior Iranian officials, including President Masoud Pezeshkian and Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad, met Russian Energy Minister Sergey Tsivilyov in Tehran on 18 September to review bilateral energy cooperation. The talks focused on the April 2025 agreement under which Russia will export up to 55 billion cubic metres of natural gas annually to Iran via Azerbaijan. President Vladimir Putin previously stated that deliveries would begin at 2 billion cubic metres per year, gradually increasing to the full volume.

The discussions come as Iran faces chronic energy shortages, particularly in the north of the country during the winter months. With limited gas storage capacity and production concentrated in the South Pars field, Iran remains vulnerable to seasonal supply pressures. Iranian media have also warned of a possible sharp decline in overall gas production within the next five to seven years. These challenges have already forced the government to impose temporary shutdowns of banks, schools and government offices, while previous shortages have sparked protests in the northeast. The deal with Russia is therefore seen as critical for stabilising Iran's energy security and preventing potential social unrest.

Alongside energy cooperation, defence ties were also in focus. Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Major General Abdol Rahim Mousavi, met Tsivilyov and underlined the importance of strengthening military collaboration with Russia in the face of Western sanctions. These engagements highlight Tehran's commitment to expanding strategic cooperation with Moscow under the framework of the Russo-Iranian Comprehensive Strategic Agreement signed in January 2025.

Iran Considers Acquiring Russian Krasukha-4 EW Systems

[Institute for the Study of War](#), September 18, 2025

The Iranian military establishment has discussed the possible acquisition of Russian-made Krasukha-4 electronic warfare (EW) systems as part of efforts to rebuild its military capacity. On 13 September, an Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS)-controlled outlet highlighted initiatives to enhance Iran's air defence following the Israel-Iran war, with particular emphasis on the potential use of Krasukha systems. Iranian defence leaders have shown growing interest in strengthening EW capabilities, especially in light of Russia's war in Ukraine. Since the June 2025 conflict with Israel, Tehran has consistently stressed the importance of improving domestic defensive systems.

Russia first developed the 1L269 Krasukha in 2010 as a ground-based EW system capable of disrupting low-earth-orbit spy satellites, ground-based radars, airborne surveillance radars and radar-guided weapons at ranges between 150 and 300 kilometres. The system was

deployed to Syria in 2015, and by 2018 US commanders reported that Russian EW attacks had disrupted American communications and aircraft there. Satellite imagery from January 2024 revealed the presence of a Krasukha-4 system in Bandar Abbas, which later came under Israeli attack during the June 2025 war. It remains unclear whether the equipment was affected.

Israel's use of F-35s, equipped with advanced counter-EW technology, suggests the Krasukha-4 could be vulnerable. Even so, Iran may be considering the system to defend against Israeli drone operations. Israel relied heavily on drones at the outset of its strike campaign to weaken Iranian air defences. Russia itself has used Krasukha-4 units to counter Ukrainian drones and ground operations, with Tehran likely hoping to apply similar lessons in its own future defensive planning.

Iran and Russia Sign \$25 Billion Nuclear Deal Amid Sanctions Threat

[The Moscow Times](#), [Iran Observer X](#), [Al Jazeera](#), September 26, 2025

Iran and Russia have signed a \$25 billion agreement to construct four nuclear power plants in Iran; state media announced on Friday. The deal, concluded just hours before the expected reinstatement of sweeping UN sanctions on Tehran, was signed between Iran Hormoz company and Russia's state nuclear corporation, Rosatom.

The new plants will be built in Sirik, Hormozgan, with each reactor projected to generate 1,255 megawatts. No timeline has yet been provided. Iran currently operates only one nuclear power plant, the Bushehr facility in the south, which produces 1,000 megawatts and meets only a fraction of the country's energy needs.

The agreement follows the visit of Iranian Vice President and nuclear chief Mohammad Eslami to Moscow earlier this week. Eslami indicated that four future reactors would also be located in Bushehr. Russia has long planned to assist in building eight reactors in Iran as part of Tehran's goal to reach 20 gigawatts of nuclear energy by 2040.

The announcement comes as Britain, France, and Germany move to trigger "snapback" sanctions, accusing Iran of failing to meet its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal. At the UN Security Council, China and Russia proposed delaying sanctions for six months to allow further talks, but the draft is unlikely to succeed.

Western governments have repeatedly accused Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons — a claim Tehran denies, insisting its programme is for civilian purposes. The U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear accord in 2018 and recent Israeli strikes on Iran have further strained prospects for renewed negotiations.

Iran Receives Russian MiG-29 Jets, Awaits Su-35s and Air Defence Systems

[Iran International](#), September 23, 2025; [The Jerusalem Post](#), September 24, 2025

Iran has taken delivery of Russian MiG-29 fighter jets as part of efforts to modernise its air force, with more advanced Sukhoi Su-35 aircraft expected in the near future, according to an Iranian lawmaker.

Abolfazl Zohrevand, a member of parliament's national security committee, confirmed that the MiG-29s have already arrived and are now stationed in Shiraz. He described the jets as an interim step until the Su-35s are delivered, which he characterised as a "long-term solution" for Iran's air power.

In addition to fighter aircraft, Zohrevand noted that Iran is also receiving significant numbers of advanced air defence systems, including China's HQ-9 and Russia's S-400. However, neither Moscow nor Beijing has publicly confirmed these reported transfers.

Tehran has sought for years to overhaul its outdated fleet, which still includes US-built aircraft acquired before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, alongside a limited number of Russian and domestically upgraded models. Iranian state media reported in January that the first Su-35s had been formally handed over, though officials have not disclosed how many are currently operational.

Western analysts suggest that Iran's request for 50 Su-35s has only been partially met, with Russia prioritising its own needs in Ukraine. Meanwhile, Iran's air defence vulnerabilities remain acute, particularly after Israeli strikes earlier in 2025 destroyed its last S-300 systems. Iran originally received four S-300 battalions from Russia in 2016, but their loss has left Tehran reliant on securing more advanced replacements.

- **Russia's Intervision**

Intervision 2025: Russia's Own Song Contest

[BBC](#), [France24](#), September 20, 2025

Moscow has unveiled Intervision 2025, a brand-new international song contest billed as Russia's alternative to Eurovision. The Kremlin presents it as a platform for cultural exchange and cooperation, though critics argue it is as much a geopolitical project as a musical one.

With Russia excluded from Eurovision since its 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the Kremlin has sought to build new arenas where it can set the stage. Much like its alternative sporting events, Intervision offers Moscow an opportunity to showcase influence beyond Western structures.

This year's line-up includes 23 countries, from China, India and Brazil to Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Vietnam – a roster reflecting Russia's diplomatic partnerships. The United States briefly joined before its original entrant withdrew.

Russia was represented by Yaroslav Dronov, known as Shaman, a patriotic singer sanctioned by the EU. Meanwhile, Ukraine has condemned the event as propaganda, accusing Moscow of trying to deflect attention from the war.

Unlike Eurovision, there is no public vote: a jury of one representative per nation will decide the winner. The challenge for Intervision will be whether it resonates across continents – or whether its politics overshadow the music.

Vietnam's Duc Phuc Wins First Intervision Contest in Moscow

[CNN](#), [Reuters](#), September 21, 2025; [Vietnamnet Global](#), September 30, 2025

Vietnamese singer Duc Phuc has won the inaugural Intervision Song Contest in Moscow; Russia's new cultural showcase launched as an alternative to Eurovision. Performing a soaring ballad against a dramatic eclipse backdrop, Duc Phuc triumphed over 22 other acts to secure the top prize of 30 million roubles (£280,000).

The contest, established at President Vladimir Putin's behest, was framed as a celebration of "traditional family values" and global cultural exchange. With Russia barred from Eurovision since its 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Intervision has provided Moscow with a stage of its own. The line-up reflected Russia's alliances, with entrants from China, Brazil, Cuba, Venezuela, India and several Central Asian states.

Despite the Kremlin's insistence that politics played no role, the event was not free of intrigue. US-Australian singer Vassy withdrew at the last moment, with organisers blaming "unprecedented political pressure" from Canberra. Nevertheless, former Deep Purple vocalist Joe Lynn Turner sat on the jury to ensure American participation.

The spectacle blended Euro-pop style with overtly conservative messaging. Unlike Eurovision, which embraces LGBTQ+ visibility, Intervision banned pride symbols, highlighting Russia's emphasis on "spiritual and family traditions." Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova, however, stressed that talent rather than politics was at the heart of the competition.

As the final drew to a close, Russian star Shaman received raucous support at home, but it was Duc Phuc who lifted the trophy – to the delight of fans and the Vietnamese delegation. Organisers confirmed Intervision will return in 2026, with Saudi Arabia set to host.

- **Global Atomic Forum**

Putin Addresses Global Atomic Forum in Moscow

[President of Russia](#), [Anadolu Ajansi](#), September 25, 2025; [World Nuclear News](#), 26 September 2025

President Vladimir Putin addressed the *Global Atomic Forum* at Moscow's Atom Museum on 25 September, part of World Atomic Week marking the 80th anniversary of Russia's nuclear industry. The event, themed "From a New Technological Paradigm to a New Worldview," gathered leaders from Belarus, Armenia, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Iran, Uzbekistan and the IAEA, underscoring Moscow's emphasis on international partnerships in nuclear energy.

In his remarks, Putin argued that peaceful nuclear energy is increasingly recognised as both a clean and reliable power source, particularly vital in an era of soaring electricity demand from data centres and the wider adoption of artificial intelligence. He emphasised nuclear energy's role as a low-carbon technology, predicting, in line with IAEA estimates, that global nuclear capacity could more than double by mid-century, driven largely by demand in the Global South and East.

Highlighting Russia's unique position across the entire nuclear technology chain, Putin reaffirmed commitments to safety, reliability, and support for partner nations in developing sovereign nuclear industries. He also promoted Russia's innovations, including floating and small-scale reactors, and announced plans to launch the world's first closed nuclear fuel cycle in Tomsk by 2030, which would reuse 95% of spent fuel and reduce reliance on uranium resources.

The Russian leader stressed the need for international cooperation, modern financing models, and a balance between energy development and non-proliferation. He closed by congratulating Russia's nuclear workers on their upcoming professional holiday, celebrating the industry's 80 years of history and global ambitions.

Ukraine Condemns IAEA Chief's Visit to Moscow

[Міністерство закордонних справ України](#), September 26, 2025; [Kyiv Independent](#), September 27, 2025

Ukraine has strongly criticised International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi's participation in Russia's World Atomic Week forum in Moscow on 26 September. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry accused Russia of exploiting the IAEA's presence for propaganda purposes at an event marking the 80th anniversary of its nuclear industry.

Grossi met Russian President Vladimir Putin and Rosatom CEO Alexey Likhachev to discuss nuclear safety at the occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP). He also engaged with young participants at the forum, highlighting the role of youth in shaping the future of nuclear energy.

Kyiv condemned these appearances, insisting that Russia was using the IAEA's leadership to "whitewash its crimes in the field of nuclear and radiation safety." Ukraine stressed that Rosatom, which organised the forum, is not only part of Russia's military-industrial complex but also complicit in abuses at the ZNPP.

Environmental groups, including Greenpeace Ukraine, recently published reports alleging Rosatom's involvement in war crimes at Zaporizhzhia, including the detention and torture of Ukrainian staff. They warned the facility remains at risk of disaster under Russian occupation.

The plant, Europe's largest, has faced repeated safety incidents since Russian forces seized it in March 2022. On 23 September, shelling severed its last functioning connection to Ukraine's power grid, forcing reliance on emergency diesel generators.

Ukraine reiterated its call for the IAEA to uphold strict neutrality and independence, warning that Russia's actions at the ZNPP pose a direct threat to nuclear safety not only in Ukraine but across Europe.

Iran and Russia Sign MoU on Small Modular Reactors

[World Nuclear News](#), September 24, 2025

Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation and Russia's Rosatom have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to cooperate on the development of small modular reactors (SMRs) in Iran. The agreement, announced on 24 September, aims to expand peaceful nuclear collaboration, enhance energy security, and support technological development in line with both countries' national laws and international commitments.

According to the Iranian Atomic Energy Organisation, the MoU paves the way for future contracts covering the design and construction of SMRs. These reactors, it said, will be instrumental in advancing nuclear technology within Iran while strengthening domestic industries involved in manufacturing power plant equipment and instrumentation.

The MoU was signed by Rosatom CEO Alexei Likhachev and Iranian nuclear chief Mohammad Eslami. The two sides also reviewed progress on existing projects, including the Russian-built VVER unit at Bushehr on the Persian Gulf, which produces 915 MWe. Two additional units, featuring VVER-1000 reactors, are currently under construction at the same site.

Rosatom described the talks as being held in an atmosphere of "mutual trust, openness, and constructiveness." The discussions took place during an Iranian delegation's visit to Moscow to attend the World Atomic Week forum, running from 25–28 September.

The cooperation on SMRs adds another dimension to Iran and Russia's long-standing nuclear partnership, which has seen Moscow play a central role in supporting Tehran's civil nuclear ambitions for decades. Both countries framed the agreement as a step toward sustainable development and the peaceful application of nuclear energy.

Myanmar Deepens Nuclear Cooperation with Russia

[The Irrawaddy](#), September 26, 2025; [Mizzima](#), September 29, 2025

Myanmar's junta leader, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, led a high-level delegation to Moscow this week to attend the World Atomic Week Forum 2025, underscoring Naypyidaw's expanding nuclear partnership with Russia and its engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The forum, held from 25–28 September, brought together officials and experts from more than 100 countries to discuss energy, healthcare, sustainability, and technological cooperation. In his address, Min Aung Hlaing described nuclear power as a “green, low-carbon” solution to Myanmar's electricity shortages and a driver of economic growth. He pointed to potential applications in agriculture and medicine, while stressing safety and waste-management standards.

During the visit, Myanmar's ministries of Science and Technology and Electric Power signed new cooperation agreements with Russia's state nuclear corporation, Rosatom. The accords cover training, infrastructure development, and peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Discussions with Rosatom Director General Alexey Likhachev reportedly included plans for a small modular reactor in Myanmar as a first step toward domestic power generation.

In addition, Rosatom's Technical Academy signed a memorandum of understanding with Yangon Technological University, paving the way for joint research, student scholarships, and curriculum exchange. Myanmar's delegation also pressed for expanded IAEA support in training and safety oversight.

The visit builds on earlier accords signed in 2022 and reflects the junta's strategy of integrating nuclear energy into national development planning. Observers note that while the partnerships strengthen Myanmar's ties with Moscow, they also raise questions over transparency and the regime's long-term intentions.

- **Lavrov at UNGA**

Lavrov Outlines Vision for Multipolar Security Order

[The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), September 27, 2025

Speaking at the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 27 September, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov urged member states to recommit to the founding principles of the UN Charter. He emphasised that sovereign equality, non-interference, and the non-use of force remain vital for international stability, particularly in today's multipolar world.

Lavrov criticised what he described as systemic violations of these principles, citing NATO's interventions in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya, as well as Israel's actions in Palestine. He condemned civilian suffering in Gaza, warning against attempts to undermine the two-state

solution. He also highlighted Western policies on Iran, Cuba and Venezuela as examples of pressure that undermines diplomacy.

Turning to Ukraine, Lavrov reiterated Russia's position that the 2014 change of government in Kiev was unconstitutional and accused the West of obstructing negotiations. He reaffirmed Moscow's openness to dialogue, but insisted that Russia's security interests and the rights of Russian-speaking populations must be fully guaranteed.

On global governance, Lavrov supported reform of the UN Security Council to include broader representation from Asia, Africa and Latin America, endorsing permanent seats for India and Brazil. He also called for reforms of international financial institutions to reflect the weight of the Global South.

Looking ahead, Lavrov proposed the creation of a Eurasian security framework as an inclusive alternative to NATO's expansion. Concluding, he urged all states to uphold the UN Charter "without exception or double standards" as the only way to preserve peace and equality.

Lavrov: NATO Seeks to Encircle Eurasia

[TASS](#), September 27, 2025

Speaking at the UN General Assembly's General Debate on 27 September, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated that NATO is pursuing a dangerous strategy of global military expansion that threatens the stability of Eurasia.

Lavrov argued that NATO is no longer confined to Europe but is extending its reach across the Pacific Ocean, the South China Sea, and even the Taiwan Strait. This, he said, undermines ASEAN's regional security mechanisms and creates risks not only for Russia and China but also for other Asian nations.

"The NATO leadership has justified this latest stage of expansion with the idea of 'indivisible security' across the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific," Lavrov told the Assembly. "In reality, it is about tightening a military ring around the whole of Eurasia."

He stressed that any meaningful conversation about reforming global institutions must also address what he called the worsening international security environment. The foreign minister pointed to the reliance on "hegemony based on military force" as the main cause of global instability.

Lavrov warned that an increasing number of countries and regions are being drawn into confrontational blocs, creating an atmosphere of mistrust and escalating risks. He reiterated Moscow's view that NATO's expansionist policies run counter to the principle of collective, indivisible security and heighten the danger of new conflicts.

Russia has long advocated for an alternative model of Eurasian security, one rooted in cooperation among regional organisations such as the SCO, ASEAN, and the CIS, without domination by any single bloc.

- **Putin's National Address**

Reunification Day Address by Vladimir Putin

[President of Russia](#), [RT](#), [TASS](#), September 30, 2025

On 30 September, President Vladimir Putin marked Reunification Day with a national address, celebrating the incorporation of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, along with the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, into the Russian Federation.

Putin described the 2022 referendums as a “momentous, historic decision” in which millions of residents “chose freely and independently to return to their native family – Russia.” He framed the reunification as both the fulfilment of a long-held aspiration and a defence of shared culture, history, language and faith.

Acknowledging the difficulties still facing people in the affected regions, the president pledged to continue restoring essential infrastructure and improving living conditions. He highlighted progress since 2022, including the construction or renovation of over 23,500 facilities such as schools, hospitals, housing, and sports complexes. Major upgrades to utilities, communications, and transport have been reported, with more than 6,000 kilometres of roads laid or modernised.

Putin emphasised that the work went beyond recovery, representing a wider “revival of our ancestral Russian lands”. He spoke of unlocking the industrial, agricultural, scientific and cultural potential of Donbass and Novorossiia, presenting them as regions of future growth and prosperity.

Special tribute was paid to soldiers and officers engaged in ongoing military operations, whom Putin described as “true heroes of our time.” He expressed confidence that their efforts would secure Russia's safety and ensure “long-awaited and lasting peace” in the contested territories.

Closing his address, Putin declared: “We are together. And that means all our plans will be fulfilled. Happy Reunification Day.”

Documentary Photo Exhibition “New Regions of Russia” Opens at Presidential Library

[Presidential Library](#), September 30, 2025; [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), September 22, 2025

On 30 September, the Presidential Library in St Petersburg hosted the opening of the documentary photo exhibition “New Regions of Russia”, coinciding with the Day of Reunification of the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics, and the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions with the Russian Federation.

Yuri Nosov, Director General of the Presidential Library and Chairman of the St Petersburg branch of the Russian Military Historical Society, welcomed guests, stressing the importance of highlighting the reunited territories through education and cultural projects.

The exhibition, curated by journalist and photo correspondent Sergey Venyavsky alongside colleagues from Donbass and Novorossiia, showcases photographs of daily life across the four regions. Materials are presented in Russian and English, accompanied by archival documents, statistical data, maps and other historical sources.

Distinguished guests included Serbian political leader Slobodan Dimitrijević, French media manager Michel Jean Roumega, and representatives from Russian cultural and media organisations. The project was supported by JSC “CSK” of the Leningrad Region, LLC “Modul-Centre,” LLC “Ok Service,” and Foto.Ru.

The exhibition was previously presented in Moscow on 22 September at the Foreign Ministry’s Reception House, attended by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Venyavsky, who has documented the conflict and its aftermath since 2022, has also published albums and exhibitions such as Mariupol. 2022... and Mariupol. Revival. His photographs capture the transformation of the region and its communities.

The New Regions of Russia exhibition will run until 31 October 2025 and can be visited as part of guided tours of the Presidential Library.

- **Lavrov at Valdai International Discussion Club**

Valdai Discussion Club Opens in Sochi Under the Theme “The Polycentric World”

[TASS](#), September 29, 2025

The annual meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club opened in Sochi on 29 September, bringing together leading political thinkers, diplomats and policymakers from 42 countries. This year’s flagship conference is held under the title “The Polycentric World: Instructions for Use.”

Around 140 participants have gathered from across the globe, including representatives from Algeria, Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, the UAE, the UK, the US, Uzbekistan and

Venezuela. The discussions are expected to focus on shifting geopolitical dynamics, global governance, and the challenges of building a multipolar international system.

Delegates will meet with senior Russian officials, among them Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Presidential Aide Maxim Oreshkin, Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, and Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyenin. President Vladimir Putin will deliver his keynote address on 2 October, which is anticipated to be the most substantive session.

The Sochi gathering underscores Valdai's continued role as a forum for dialogue between Russian policymakers and global experts at a time of mounting international tensions. With world powers recalibrating their positions, this year's discussions are expected to shed light on Russia's vision of a polycentric order.

Lavrov Criticises Moldovan Elections, Comments on Arms for Kiev and Middle East Crisis

[The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), [TASS](#), [TASS](#), September 30, 2025

At the close of the 22nd annual session of the Valdai International Discussion Club in Sochi, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov answered wide-ranging questions on international affairs.

On Donald Trump's proposed Gaza plan, Lavrov stressed that Moscow had not yet seen the details and would only form a position after hearing from Palestine, Israel, neighbouring states and regional organisations. Reports suggest the temporary governing body could be led by former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair. Lavrov noted Russia had not been invited to join any proposed international security force, while highlighting contradictions between Israel's demand to retain control and the idea of multinational oversight.

Turning to global governance, Lavrov endorsed China's initiative announced at the recent SCO summit, criticising what he called Western "monopolisation" of institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, WTO and UN. He argued reform was needed to ensure fairer representation for the Global South.

On Moldova's parliamentary elections, Lavrov described the vote as "fraudulent," alleging manipulation, restrictions on Transnistrian participation and disproportionate reliance on overseas ballots to secure victory for President Maia Sandu's party. He noted that patriotic opposition forces still outpolled the government domestically.

Lavrov also said that Kiev had submitted misleading records to international negotiators, stating that a list of 339 allegedly displaced children, turned out to be mostly adults, who were later located in Europe instead of Russia.

Asked about potential supplies of Tomahawk cruise missiles to Ukraine, Lavrov said no decision appeared final and that such weapons would not alter the military balance. He questioned whether Washington would entrust Kiev with their use.

Lavrov also underlined India's refusal to bow to US energy pressure and praised Brazil's pragmatic humanitarian engagement on Ukraine.

President Vladimir Putin will address the Valdai session on 2 October.



About the Author

Anusua Ganguly is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies, where her study focuses on Russia and Central Asia. She holds a Master's degree in Conflict Analysis and Peace Building, and her research interests include non-traditional security threats, the role of media in conflict, and the intersection of gender with conflict and peacebuilding.



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