



2025 Year in Review





Mission

Informed by the history, geography and culture of our subject matter, we provide members of the national security community and the broader public with rigorous nonpartisan, pragmatic research and analysis on key challenges to US national security, both current and anticipated.

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.



2025 Year in Review



President's Letter

The Foreign Policy Research Institute had an exceptional year.

FPRI had an exceptional year. We published cutting-edge research on the challenges Russia and China pose to American interests in the Indo-Pacific region, examined the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, and expanded our research on the threats posed by the militarization of space.

We hosted events in Philadelphia, Washington, DC, New York City, and in Europe, where we discussed our research and examined critical issues facing the country. We also welcomed two new staff members: Ms. Shihoko Goto, our new Asia Program Director and Vice President of Programs, and Dr. Emily Holland, our new Eurasia Director. Both have ambitious plans for their programs in 2026. We also welcomed Ms. Sarahelena Marrapodi to join our communications team and to assist with expanding awareness about our important work.

As always, our fellows provided thought provoking analysis about global events, ranging from events in Syria to political developments in Poland.

It was a pleasure to welcome so many of you to our in-person programs this year, including

our new Ambassador series, and our 19th Benjamin Franklin Award for Public Service featuring Gen. (Ret.) CQ Brown. Gen. Brown served as the 21st Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and exemplified the values of all of our former honorees.

Looking ahead to 2026, I look forward to sharing our plans for new initiatives and events as FPRI continues to do what we do best: Examine foreign policy problems and offer practical, non-partisan solutions.

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.

With best wishes,
Aaron Stein
President

A person in a military uniform is shown from the chest up, holding a handheld radio to their mouth. The person is wearing a dark uniform with a patch on the sleeve. In the background, a large propeller is visible against a cloudy sky. The scene is set outdoors, possibly on a beach or near a body of water, with some rocks and a sandy area in the lower left.

RESEARCH

YEAR IN REVIEW

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 continued the [Behind the Front](#) project, launched in 2024 to serve as a forum for analysis on the future of American and global security. A year after its launch, the project has attracted over 3,000 subscribers and over 50,000 views. Featuring monthly 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.

Highlights include:

- [Collective Seapower: NATO's New Maritime Strategy](#) by Emma Salisbury
- [The Future of the US in Europe: A Proposal](#) by Aaron Stein
- [America Looks to Finland to Save Its Icebreaker Fleet](#) by Emma Salisbury
- [Tomahawk and the Future of Stability in Europe](#) by Aaron Stein and Sam Lair

In 2025 *Behind the Front* added a monthly podcast, featuring conversations with defense industry leaders.

Highlights from the *Behind the Front* podcast include:

- [The Future of Collaborative Combat Aircraft](#) - Andrew Van Timmerman, Anduril Industries
- [Drones and the Future of War](#) - Lorenz Meir, Auterion
- [Understanding Unmanned Naval Systems](#) - Billy Byrne, Saildrone

FPRI welcomed Dr. Emma Salisbury as a Senior Fellow in 2025. In addition to a variety of analysis published on *Behind the Front*, Salisbury's report [Atlantic Bastion: The Future of Anti-Submarine Warfare](#), explored the Royal Navy's new strategic framework for defending the North Atlantic against a resurgent and modernizing Russian submarine fleet.

Tensions in the Middle East

FPRI launched a series of reports analyzing Operation Rising Lion and broader changes in the region in the months since the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023. The reports examined the efficacy of air power to topple adversary regimes, the tactical and operational lessons from Israeli actions, the future of the Islamic Republic, the role of China, and the impact the war has had on US-Gulf Arab relations.

Highlights include:

- [Drones and Mass Salvo Attacks: Lessons Learned from the American Defense of Israel](#) - Aaron Stein
- [Humiliation and Transformation: The Islamic Republic After the 12-Day War](#) -

Saied Golkar

- [Shallow Ramparts: Air and Missile Defenses in the June 2025 Israel-Iran War](#) - Sam Lair

Space and Technology

In a [report](#) for the USNORTHCOM, Aaron Stein and Tim Ball offered recommendations to address the threat of small unmanned aerial systems (sUAS) to civil aviation and empower the US government to counteract what appears to be a foreign-sponsored campaign to monitor military infrastructure and exercises. Stein and Ball presented the report's findings at a conference at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

In another [report](#), Nuclear Weapons In Space: Orbital Bombardment and Strategic Stability, published in early 2025, Aaron Stein assessed the opportunities and risks posed by the vulnerability of US private space assets, arguing that the US should make explicit that any nuclear attack on US origin satellites would invite retaliation, continue to invest in sensors to detect missile launch from adversary nations and to be the insurer of last resort for private satellite companies.

To bolster FPRI's work on the future of space security and deterrence, the organization [welcomed](#) Jeffrey Lewis as a Distinguished Research Fellow and Sam Lair as a Fellow in the National Security program.

In early 2026, FPRI [launched a two year project](#) to assess the risks to private assets in space. The project will bring together private sector actors and leading researchers from FPRI and Middlebury College to develop an action plan for the sustainable use of outer space. FPRI has received support from the Longview Foundation to conduct a series of wargames to simulate the risk of nuclear escalation in space in 2026.

Arctic Security

In [Protecting the North American Arctic and Beyond](#), Rebecca Pincus, Mathieu Boulege, and Madison Lipson offered recommendations for USNORTHCOM's role and place in a changing circumpolar environment. FPRI hosted a private roundtable on polar security in Washington DC, bringing together industry leaders, government officials, and regional experts. The conference was meant to spur greater dialogue between these disparate groups to think through the linkages between Arctic and space security.

Rebecca Pincus and David Marsh joined as fellows in late 2025, and FPRI plans to expand its work on Arctic security in 2026.

Irregular Warfare

Philip Wasielewski, Director of the Center for 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:

- [Al Qaeda and the Islamic State: Still Alive and Fighting in the Sahel](#)
- [Russian Political Operations in the Balkans](#)
- [Local Forces and Counterinsurgency Campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq](#)

Wasielewski's report [Prometheism: A Polish Covert Action Program](#) offered the most extensive English-language review of the secret war of subversion, espionage, assassinations, propaganda, and paramilitary covert waged between Poland and the

Soviet Union between 1920-1939. The key battleground of this secret war was Ukraine, but Prometheist activities also extended throughout the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as from the salons of Paris to the plains of Manchuria. Wasilewski's in-depth look at the Prometheism program offered lessons learned in the context of Russia's current hybrid warfare against the West and its kinetic war against Ukraine.

In early 2026 The Center hosted a [one day conference](#) to discuss the Anomalous Health Incidents (AHI), also known as Havana Syndrome, that have affected official Americans and their families at home and abroad. Three panel discussions examined what happened, how victims have been treated, who might have been culpable, and what are the national security implications of these attacks.

Europe and Eurasia

Baltic Initiative

The **Baltic Initiative** remained a flagship project of FPRI's Eurasia Program, continuing over a decade of analysis on defense and geopolitical issues of the Baltic Sea region, and implications for the US. In addition to monthly Baltic Bulletins, FPRI continued to publish the [monthly Baltic Roundup](#), by Dr. Indra Ekmanis. Since its launch on Substack in March 2024, the Baltic Initiative's subscriber and readership has grown by eighty percent.

Baltic Bulletin highlights include:

- [Latvia's Renewed Conscription Turns Two](#) by Maris Andzans
- [Sweden's Role in Baltic Defense](#) by Daniels Kaulins

- [Baltic Training Grounds and NATO Forward Presence](#) by Lukas Milevski

FPRI also continued to evolve the [Baltic Ways podcast](#), produced in partnership with the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, which features expert interviews on the politics, history, and culture of the region and beyond.

Baltic Ways highlights include:

- [The Battle for Memory: Populism vs. Pluralism in Public History](#)
- [Trump 2.0 and the Baltic States](#)
- [What E-Estonia Can Teach the US](#)

In June 2025, FPRI held a Track 2 Dialogue in Riga, Latvia, sponsored by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). The dialogue focused on NATO's Northern Flank since Sweden and Finland's accession and brought together 40 panelists from 12 countries as part of the two-day conference.

Transatlantic Relations

In 2025 FPRI continued the [Ties That Bind](#) project, funded by the NATO Public Diplomacy Division. The second season of the podcast, NATO Allies in Action, took a deeper look at how frontline member states contribute and collaborate within the alliance. Natalia Kopytnik spoke with experts from Poland, Romania, Latvia, and Finland about their country's contributions to the alliance, both past and present. The season discussed defense investments, disinformation campaigns, hybrid warfare, changing economic realities, and how their societies are thinking and preparing for a potential conflict with Russia.

The project, which aimed to increase NATO literacy among American audiences, gained over 2,000 subscribers, over 350,000 views, and 10,000 downloads. The podcast featured 11 guests from four NATO countries.

Highlights include:

- [For Our Freedom and Yours | Perspectives from Poland](#) - Anna Fotyga, Tomasz Szatkowski, Jakub Romaniuk
- [On the Coasts of Conflict | Perspectives from Romania](#) - Antonia Colibasanu, Alina Bargaonau, Eusebiu Slavitescu
- [Lessons in History and Communications from NATO's Principal Spokesperson](#) - Oana Lungescu
- [Windows of Opportunity | Perspectives from Latvia](#) - Maris Andzans, Linda Ozola, Ieva Berzina
- [Never Again Alone | Perspectives from Finland](#) - Minna Alander and Joel Linnainmaki

The Ties That Bind project will continue in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in 2026.

Russia's War in Ukraine

Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine continued to be a focal point of FPRI's research agenda in 2025. FPRI examined the conflict in several different ways: 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 Senior Fellows Rob Lee and Robert

Hamilton visited Ukraine multiple times over the past year, conducting field research and holding meetings with local actors in order to understand the war's current direction and potential outcomes. Hamilton appeared on *PBS Newshour* to discuss Russia's increased [drone attacks](#) against Ukraine while Lee discussed the [changing realities on the frontline](#) and [Russia's new battlefield tactics](#) in a series of interviews with the *Kyiv Independent*. Lee also interviewed [Colonel Serhii Shatalov, Commander of the 37th Marine Brigade](#) during a trip to the frontline in December 2025.

FPRI's Eurasia Program also participated in the Bucharest Security Forum and co-sponsored the Black Sea Security Forum in Odesa in June.

Russian Foreign Policy and Political Economy

The Eurasia Program continued its flagship work of nearly a decade on Russia's political economy and foreign policy through the weekly [Bear Market Brief](#) newsletter and podcast, as well as a variety of reports, analyses, and events. A long-term FPRI success story, *Bear Market Brief's* readership has doubled in the past three years, and includes subscribers from the State Department, Treasury, as well as foreign affairs ministries of the United Kingdom, Poland, Finland, and Canada, among others.

Throughout the year, fellows Sara Ashbaugh and Andras Toth-Czifra provided context on Russia regional power dynamics, the Kremlin's evolving disinformation tactics, and the country's soaring inflation, among other topics.

Building on four years of Toth-Czifra's publications examining Russia's regional

elections, FPRI published the report [*The Kremlin's Balancing Act: The War's Impact on Regional Power Dynamics*](#) in February 2025 and [*From Front Line to Fault Line: Russia's Challenge Managing Veteran Reintegration*](#) in December 2025.

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

- [From Russia, With Risk](#) - Rachel Ziemba
- [Russia Above Ground, Russia Below Ground](#) - Howard Amos and Nina Zakharkina-Berezner
- [Exploring Conceptions of Russian Power](#) - Seva Gunitsky

FPRI's Eurasia program also examined the contours of the Russia-China relationship through a project funded by the Russia Strategic Initiative (RSI) at US European Command (USEUCOM). The project examined how the two countries compete and cooperate in the Indo-Pacific through five reports and public report launch events.

Highlights include:

- [Partners or Rivals? Areas of Convergence and Divergence of Interests in the Indo-Pacific](#) - Alexander Korolev, Thomas Shattuck
- [Russia's Use of the Instruments of Power in the Indo-Pacific](#) - Alexander Korolev
- [Russia-China-North Korea Relations: Obstacles to a Trilateral Axis](#) - Elizabeth Wishnick
- [Russia and China in the Indo-Pacific: China's Use of the Instruments of Power](#) - Robert Hamilton, Christopher Primiano

- [Setting the Stage: An Overview of Chinese and Russian Interests and Influence in the Indo-Pacific](#) - Robert Hamilton

FPRI [welcomed Dr. Emily Holland](#) as Director of its Eurasia Program in late 2025. Holland comes to FPRI from the Russia Maritime Studies Institute at the United States Naval War College, where she served as the Research Director and an assistant professor between 2020 and 2025.

The Indo-Pacific

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

Taiwan

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 hosted several virtual events on the prospects of stability in the Taiwan Strait, and PRC coercion of Taiwan during the Trump administration. FPRI also hosted Ambassador Tom Chih-Chiang Lee for a reception and public event discussing the security and diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific, and the future of US-Taiwan relations.

Analysis of the US-Taiwan relationship was augmented by analyses by fellows Thomas Shattuck, Suyash Desai, and Joshua

Freedman:

- [The Present and Future of the KMT in Taiwan](#)
- [Forceful Taiwan Reunification: China's Targeted Military and Civilian-Military Measures](#)
- [The Return to Strategic Ambiguity: Assessing Trump's Taiwan Stance](#)
- [The Impacts of Trump's Tariffs on Taiwan](#)
- [President Lai Ching-te on Taiwan's National Unity and Defense](#)

China

FPRI's Asia Program examined US-China policy from a variety of angles, offering [recommendations](#) to the incoming administration, [evaluating key dialogues](#), and [managing bilateral tensions](#).

In the report [Obscurity By Design: Competing Priorities for America's China Policy](#), Tanner Greer argued that President Trump's leadership style relies on being “inscrutable and erratic” to maintain leverage, creating an “obscurity by design” where he avoids giving advance notice of his actions to keep adversaries and allies alike off-balance.

Shannon Vaughn argued that China's rapid advancement in low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite internet technology represents a [direct challenge](#) to global US operations, communications infrastructure, and the free flow of information. In another piece, Vaughn explained how China is using a multi-layered strategy to accelerate the [domestic adoption of AI](#) to bolster its long term trajectory in global AI competition.

FPRI hosted Sheena Chesnut Greitens for a [discussion](#) to explore how a US-China conflict could unfold not as a short, decisive clash

but as a prolonged, multi-domain struggle—spanning Taiwan, the South China Sea, cyberspace, and more.

Neysun Mahboubi and the Philadelphia Inquirer's Trudy Rubin hosted a discussion in Philadelphia on the prospects of [stabilizing US-China relations](#). Mahboubi also hosted Victor Shih, author of *Coalitions of the Weak: Elite Politics in China from Mao's Strategem to the Rise of Xi*, for a discussion on [Xi Jinping's succession](#).

Michael Beckley's expert commentary on US-China relations appeared in various outlets, including [Foreign Affairs](#).

In late 2025, FPRI [welcomed Shihoko Goto](#) as the Director of the Asia Program and Vice President of Programs. In her first piece for FPRI, Goto argued that Japan's first female prime minister, Sanae Takaichi, must [prioritize domestic political stability](#) and consensus-building to move past the country's “revolving door” leadership and effectively manage critical foreign policy challenges, particularly the need to build a personal rapport with Donald Trump to counterbalance China's regional hegemony.

The Asia program also welcomed Mirna Galic and Jon Metzler as Senior Fellows in late 2025.

Africa

FPRI's Africa program continued to examine the evolving dynamics of great power competition, trade realignment, political disruptions, and influence operations on the continent.

Raphael Parens explained why Burkina Faso has become the [world's “disinformation lab”](#) where the military junta uses AI and

deepfakes to mask state failure and jihadist violence. Parens showed how this state propaganda, often supported by Russia, serves to destabilize the Sahel region and poses a major global security threat.

Ambassador Charles Ray showed how [youth-led protests across sub-Saharan Africa](#) have challenged entrenched leadership and what long-term change could occur in the next few decades, as Africa's youth becomes a core global demographic.

After the US Congress failed to extend the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) in September 2025, FPRI co-hosted a [panel discussion](#) with the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa about a way forward for African economies in a new non-AGOA reality.

Other highlights from the Africa program included:

- [How the UK-Mauritius Deal on Chagos Could Reshape US Military Strategy in the Indian Ocean](#) - Raghvendra Kumar
- [The Feudalization of Mali](#) - Raphael Parens, Delina Goxho
- [Foreign Influence is Fueling the War in Sudan](#) - Charles Ray
- [The Future of US-South Africa Relations](#) - Joel Pollak, Charles Ray, Michael Walsh
- [US-Spain Relations: The North African Dimension](#)



Engaging Philadelphia and Beyond

Public Events

FPRI continued to host a rigorous program of in-person and virtual events on the pressing foreign policy and national security issues of the day.

FPRI also continued its 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, including:

- [Ambassador Vladislav Kulminski \(Moldova\)](#)
- [Ambassador Tom Chih-Chiang Lee \(Taiwan\)](#)
- [Ambassador Eityvydas Bajarunas \(Lithuania\)](#)

FPRI presented the [19th Annual Benjamin Franklin Award for Public Service](#) to General C.Q. Brown, Jr. on November 5, 2025 in Philadelphia. General Brown served as the 21st Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—the nation’s highest-ranking military officer and principal military advisor to the President, Secretary of Defense, and National Security Council. He retired from the US Air Force after nearly 40 years of dedicated service, having previously served as the 22nd Chief of Staff of the US Air Force and becoming the first African American service chief in US military history.

Other event highlights from 2025 include:

- [Israel, Iran, and What Comes Next For the Region](#)
- [Aid to Ukraine: Lessons Learned and Future Needs](#)

- [American Power in the Age of Economic Warfare with Edward Fishman](#)
- [The Future of European Security with Sir Lawrence Freedman](#)

A full archive of all event recordings is available on FPRI’s [Youtube channel](#).

Building Community

FPRI welcomed four inaugural members to a newly formed [Young Professionals Advisory Board \(YPAB\)](#). This group of supporters brings together a diverse mix of experience and a new perspective to the organization’s mission, planning the future of its engagement with the next generation of leaders.

FPRI also welcomed James Gagne, Michael Hochberg, Leslie Lane, Greg Otto, Bennett Scauzzo, and Evan Skalski as [members of the Board of Trustees](#).

As a member-supported organization, FPRI welcomed a robust new cohort of supporters in 2025. Through [engaging events, private briefings, and newsletters](#), FPRI grew its memberships by over 30 percent. Thank you to all of our supporters who make our work possible.

America's Role on the Global Stage

FPRI presented the [19th Annual Benjamin Franklin Award for Public Service](#) to General C.Q. Brown, Jr. on November 5, 2025 in Philadelphia. General Brown served as the 21st Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—the nation's highest-ranking military officer and principal military advisor to the President, Secretary of Defense, and National Security Council. He retired from the US Air Force after nearly 40 years of dedicated service, having previously served as the 22nd Chief of Staff of the US Air Force and becoming the first African American service chief in US military history.





Revitalizing a Legacy Publication

In October 2025, FPRI announced the relaunch of the *Orbis Journal of World Affairs* in partnership with the [Sam Nunn School of International Affairs](#) at the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech).

First published in 1957, *Orbis* was conceived as a forum for policymakers, scholars, and the informed public to publish scholarly articles focused on geopolitics, foreign affairs, and global security. The journal has featured work by notable authors such as Ian Brzezinski, Ash Carter, Elbridge Colby, William R. Van Cleave, Robert Kaplan, Albert Wohlstetter, and Dov Zakheim, and has been a critical resource for policymakers and professors for more than five decades.

Over half a century later, the FPRI-Nunn School collaboration will continue the mission of the journal's first editor, Robert Strausz-Hupé. Hupé believed that the contours of global affairs would be shaped both by geopolitical competition and technological change. *Orbis* will continue to deliver informative and insightful articles and podcasts about foreign policy, national security, and geopolitics, with a particular focus on how emerging technologies are reshaping these fields.

Orbis will adopt an innovative new format that features both peer-reviewed scholarly research and contributions from policymakers and practitioners. The unique partnership between FPRI and the Nunn School, combining a blend of rigorous academic scholarship with timely policy insight, promises to explore the most pressing issues in international affairs from multiple perspectives.

All future *Orbis* articles and archives will be available for all readers on a new website. The journal will continue to be published in a digital quarterly format, with the articles published online as soon as they have been edited and cleared for publication. The website will also feature a bimonthly podcast series, and both FPRI and the Nunn School will host thematic virtual and in-person events.

The editorial team will be headed by [Dr. Nikolas Gvosdev](#), Senior Fellow at FPRI and Captain Jerome E. Levy Chair in Economic Geography and National Security at the US Naval War College, and [Dr. Lawrence Rubin](#) co-director of the Georgia Tech DC Program: Pathways to Policy and an associate professor in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs.

The Spring 2026 issue of *Orbis* will be published in March 2026.

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Financial Summary

Support

	%	\$
Board Giving	18%	586,614
Other Unrestricted Contributions	3%	98,635
Restricted Contributions	7%	214,995
Government Grants	11%	348,723
Foundation Grants	58%	1,861,071
Event Income	1%	44,782
Memberships & Partnerships	2%	48,612
Royalties & Other Revenue	0%	151
Total Receipts	100%	3,203,583

Expenditures

	%	\$
Publications & Research	74%	2,206,437
Educational Programs	0%	14,480
Administration	23%	677,374
Event Expenses	1%	27,175
Development & Outreach	2%	65,024
Total Expenditures	100%	2,999,490



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