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GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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Moderator:

Sergei Brilev, Anchor and Deputy Director, Rossiya TV Channel (RTR)

Panelists:

Henry Kissinger, American statesman, diplomat, international relations expert,
Nobel Prize winner

Yevgeny Primakov, Diplomat and international relations expert, Academician of the
Russian Academy of Sciences

S. Brilev:

Good afternoon. For those of you who live outside Russia or who have stopped watching television, which is sometimes understandable, let me introduce myself. My name is Sergei Brilev, I work for the TV channel Rossiya, and today I have been asked to chair what, in my personal opinion, is the most extraordinary event of this year's St. Petersburg Economic Forum. The people taking part need no introduction – to do so would be stupid and pointless, as they are known universally. I will therefore limit myself to a brief anecdote from of our professional life.

Both Yevgeny Primakov and Henry Kissinger are a nightmare for the directors' assistants responsible for captions, because it is impossible to fit all of their titles onto one screenshot. For this reason, some time ago we stopped adding their job titles to their credits, instead simply writing 'Yevgeny Primakov' and 'Henry Kissinger'. However, I do not think we would technically have broken any ethical or moral rules if we had written 'living legends'.

We have in store a discussion about the geopolitical challenges of the 21st century, featuring people who to a certain degree defined those of the 20th century. There will also be a short film presentation, but to begin with I would like to pass the floor to our guests. We will begin with our guest in The Russian Federation.

Dr. Henry Kissinger, I would ask you to begin your little presentation, after which we will switch to Mr. Primakov and then we will go on to the rest of the session. Dr. Kissinger, over to you. The microphone is in front of you.

Dr. H. Kissinger:

I am sorry; I did not hear the eloquent introduction.

S. Brilev:

I was flattering you all the way through.

Dr. H. Kissinger:

It is a great pleasure for me to be here with Dr. Primakov, with whom I have been acquainted for decades, sometimes as an adversary, all the time as a friend. I believe in the importance of the relationship between the United States and Russia, and I thought the best way to conduct this would be just to list a number of issues very briefly, and then to permit a dialogue to be developed by the moderator. We live in a period of extraordinary transformation. Some of it is evolving from the normal evolution of states. Some of it is evolving from the fundamental transformation of the nature of the international system. Some of it is evolving from the contradiction that exists between the process of globalization and the forms which international organizations are taking. Some of it grows out of the nature of modern technology and of modern weapons. And some of it grows out of the shift of the centre of gravity of the world from the Atlantic region to the Asian region. To evaluate all of these changes together, I think it is best to do it in the form of a dialogue, rather than in my exposition. So I will simply thank you for the opportunity to come here, and to renew my acquaintance with this extraordinary city on this extraordinary occasion.

S. Brilev:

Dr. Kissinger, before I give the floor to Mr. Primakov, let me just add a couple of things to what you have just said. Not only is there a shift from Europe and the Atlantic region to the Asia-Pacific, but both Russia and the United States, yet again in history, belong to the relevant regions. So despite the USSR–USA standoff being a thing of the past, we are still talking about the future of the 21st century using the names of the same countries, which makes our conference more relevant than ever.

Y. Primakov:

Feel free to boss me around. We were just in the plenary session, and there you did not tell anyone to be brief in their presentations. But very well, I will really only say a few words.

I am very pleased to be reunited with Henry Kissinger, my interlocutor, colleague and friend of many, many years. It is just as well that Zbigniew Brzezinski is not here instead. I should say that I agree with many of your observations and claims. I read your most recent articles, which were interesting, as always. You always stress the importance of the relationship between our two countries, and I fully concur. You stress (Henry, given how short your presentation was, I will, as it were, help you out), that the concept of mutual deterrence is dated, that it should be a thing of the past, consigned to the period of the Cold War. You stress the need for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, so that they do not fall, in your words, “into the wrong hands”, and I completely agree with you.

How can this be achieved? Clearly, we must do everything in our power to ensure the passage, no matter how slow, towards a nuclear-free world. Now, it is very important that China, Britain, and France are included in our bilateral relationship in this area. We have already reached a point where it is clear that this must occur in the near future.

We can now say with certainty that the treaty which many countries signed on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was not a magic solution. I think new ideas are needed, and several of these are good ideas that have been forgotten. I am talking about nuclear-free zones. It is now very important that we work on the plan of creating two nuclear-free zones – in the Middle East and the Korean Peninsula. Clearly, both areas include nations that already possess nuclear weapons and are involved in conflicts. We now have to do everything we can to make these nuclear-free zones a reality.

What is hindering the development of our relations? Well, together we always find a common language, and I am sure that our Presidents too will do just that. But afterwards affairs are sometimes limited to simply making declarations, and to talks. I would like to say now that we are very suspicious – Henry, you must know this – of the fact that the United States is building a global anti-missile defence system, and that parts of this system are near our borders. I think that everyone needs to understand the correlation between building a system of this ilk and the process of

developing aggressive strategic nuclear missiles. Perhaps someone from the United States assumes that we will therefore be drawn into an arms race and that we shall be forced into spending large amounts of money on it. The Soviet Union is no more, and one of the reasons for that is, as I understand it, of course, that it was dragged unwillingly into an arms race, in order to maintain a level footing. However, the situation now is entirely different. We will not be starting from zero, and there is no need to do this.

That is all I have to say. I am not really going to talk about anything else, I will just answer questions. However, I would like to underline one more time that I am very pleased to see you here. I will be very happy to accept your invitation to America.

S. Brilev:

Mr. Primakov, thank you very much for that last remark. We are presently commemorating the three-hundredth anniversary of the transfer of the capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg – how did they get by without our Preobrazhensky and Semenovskiy Regiments?

We now have a break in the form of a short video montage, created by the Forum organizers and Bloomberg, which aims to spell out the challenges that perhaps still face us. Our guests today have, to a certain extent, already mentioned them. Nevertheless, let us watch; in any case, television is as much about the pictures as anything else.

From video:

Social, political, and economic issues affect us all. They are the game-changers of stability. They could trigger crisis across the globe, and they are a source of international conflict. In the Middle East, speculation over a potential Israeli attack on Iran continues over Tehran's nuclear ambitions. But what role will the major powers play? Turkey, a major US ally in the region, has made its position clear. Prime Minister Erdogan warned that an Israeli strike would have disastrous consequences for the Middle East. Meanwhile, the Arab Spring has brought

uncertainty. Egypt remains in political gridlock, and in Libya, the new government is paralyzed by rivalries. In Syria, civil unrest continues with the international community struggling to find a unified position. In Asia, China must deal with nervous neighbours as it grows in economic and military power, while North Korea's leadership change signals the potential of another period of tension emanating from the peninsula. Political relations between India and Pakistan have improved, but they remain tense. Analysts are convinced that any terrorist attack in India emanating from Pakistan could trigger direct military escalations.

Major economic factors could also trigger global instability. In China, the government continues to drive the economy towards a soft cooling. The measures taken have thus far paid off, but the eventuality of a stronger-than-expected slowdown could quash the US recovery and aggravate Europe's financial crisis, resulting in further global economic tension. Europe's strategies to combat the debt crisis remain crucial to the global economic outlook. A potential breakup of the Euro zone could send the entire continent into a crisis even more damaging than 2008, with consequences for all the major superpowers. And then, there is the risk that protectionism could trigger economic friction between major economic powers, both developed and developing, crippling the architecture that has supported globalization and prosperity over the past decades. On the international agenda, there are also issues such as climate change and energy security, which require intense international cooperation in order to reach a wide consensus. These are all issues that require global cooperation, and effective and imaginative leadership. The question is: how are the world's leaders going to tackle them? Let the conversation begin.

S. Brilev:

In actual fact, the analysis which our colleagues from Bloomberg presented was, I think, missing some things. For example, the several dozen failed states (and here I am not worried about exaggerating) in Africa, which were not even alluded to here. But I would like to begin the discussion with the issue on everyone's lips.

In fact, by a twist of fate – did you notice it? – in the presentation there, in the large hall, when the world began to spin, you got the feeling that you were taking off from somewhere and seeing the whole world. If you traced its path, it looked like the flight of an Iranian ballistic missile. Seriously, it was launched right from the Persian Gulf. My first question to Dr. Kissinger is what can convince Iran to give up on its ambitions to get its hands on nuclear weapons, which all the evidence points to, when it saw how effectively the Soviet Union and United States held each other at bay with nuclear weapons for decades without war breaking out? As cynical and awful as this may sound, if there were no nuclear weapons, a war would have started sometime around 1946.

Dr. H. Kissinger:

The principle of mutual deterrence, as long as it was confined to the Soviet Union and the United States, was reasonably effective. But even then, it was an effort at the margins of the tolerable. I can say from my personal experience, the problem that occupied me most when I was in office was what I would say to the President of the United States if he told me that all diplomatic means had been exhausted and the only method left was nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, because I would have known that this would involve tens of millions of casualties. You cannot build an international system based on constant readiness to engage in such a catastrophe.

In the case of the Soviet Union and the United States, the calculations of risk were more or less parallel, and in every crisis both the Soviet Union and the United States shied away from taking the absolute final step. They could do so because they possessed the technical ability to protect their weapons. They possessed the technical ability to establish warning systems and safeguards that prevented the need for instantaneous reaction. But once nuclear weapons spread to a large number of countries, then the deterrent balances that operated between the United States and the Soviet Union may not operate: first, because the level of restraint within each country may be less; second, because they are certainly less able to

protect these weapons and to establish warning systems, and therefore the temptation to engage in pre-emptive action will be much greater; third, because between the United States and the Soviet Union, at some point in their relationship, a kind of mutual restraint developed in undermining each other. Around the world, none of these conditions exist with respect to, say, Iran's relations with the countries around it, to the possibilities of establishing balances and mutual deterrence. Then the additional element would be that when many countries possess nuclear weapons, even the major deterrent balances will no longer operate, because the shift of countries from one side to the other will become a crucial element.

One new element is, of course, that a nuclear war between the United States and Russia is now inconceivable. I cannot imagine what the issue would be that would produce even the threat of nuclear military action. I agree with the point that my friend here made, which is that at some point in the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons that is now going on, the other nuclear powers should be involved in the discussions. But the issue of nuclear weapons in Iran has to be faced from the point of view that for ten years, the permanent members of the Security Council have said that a nuclear military programme in Iran is unacceptable. If we now accept it in any way, even in the form of some seeming agreement that maintains the programme in some form, it will undermine the credibility of the system.

Now, what assurances can one give Iran, or what would make them do it? When Iran acts as a nation state, America has no conceivable quarrel with it. If the concern is that America might attack Iran and that it therefore needs a nuclear weapon, any number of assurances can be given on that. And it is in the nature of the situation. It is, of course, true that Iran may think that it will be more secure if it gets nuclear weapons. If it does, a major international crisis is certain; a crisis caused either by the declining credibility of the Security Council members, or because one of the countries in the region, like Israel, may, even against our advice, act.

So I believe it is the task of the international community at this moment to do two things: firstly, to make the possession of nuclear weapons in Iran too risky from a

strategic point of view, and secondly, to create assurances for political concerns that Iran might have. I was not one of the advocates of the Libyan operation, so I cannot understand the argument you are making. But these seem to me to be key issues, so that the negotiation that is now going on with Iran is of crucial importance and should be taken that way by all the members of the Security Council. It can have, as I said before, two components. The negative components need to be matched by whatever positive guarantees can be given to meet the security concerns of Iran.

On the other point that my friend made on the evolution of the arms control negotiations, I believe it is correct that at some point, when the level between Russia and the United States has been reduced, other countries need to be involved to permit further reduction.

S. Brilev:

Dr. Kissinger, if I may interrupt you, because that is a very interesting subject to which I hope we will return a bit later, but let me just ask you a little question. This is for Dr. Kissinger. Now, as far as Iran is concerned, things are clear. But what do you say to countries like India and Pakistan? In their case, the logic of deterrence is perfectly all right, and it works basically along the same lines as between the USSR and the USA. They will not attack each other precisely because they have nuclear weapons?

Dr. H. Kissinger:

First of all, we do not know why they do not attack at any one moment. I think the vulnerability of the weapons on both sides between India and Pakistan creates a higher incentive for pre-emption. But I think as a practical matter, one cannot now roll back the India and Pakistan programmes, and they will have to be included in any discussion of general nuclear disarmament.

S. Brilev:

Mr. Primakov, we have strayed quite considerably from our discussion! Let us return to the key topic.

Y. Primakov:

I would like to briefly answer your question.

Firstly, on what is nuclear deterrence based? Theoretically, it is the possibility of the nuclear annihilation of the enemy. A situation of this type could not arise in the Middle East, with its many enclaves. Around Palestine you have the Palestinians here, Jordan here, Syria here, and Lebanon here. Nuclear weapons could not be applied there by Iran, nor could they be used even by Israel to deter anyone.

Secondly, neither we nor our American colleagues have any proof that Iran has already taken a political decision to build nuclear weapons. A trade-off is underway. I think that first and foremost Iran would now like to achieve the best international conditions possible for itself, which is why it is spreading concern about it gaining nuclear weapons far and wide. From the point of view of nuclear weapon proliferation this is very dangerous because, fearing an Iranian expansion, the Arab states can and will develop their own nuclear arms, exactly like what happened with Korea.

On now to Libya (my friend Henry raised this issue). Just like you, I am fully opposed to the escapades which took place in Libya. But I should mention, Henry, that they duped us. Our American friends duped us. They told us that it would only be a blockade of the airspace, so that Gaddafi's air force could not bomb civilians. We understood how important that resolution was when there were still several days remaining. Benghazi would have been taken, so we agreed to it at the request of the Americans. But then what happened? It turned out that the air force helped to overthrow the Gaddafi regime. We, thank heaven, are learning, and have already learnt our lesson. Nobody is going to dupe us on the issue of Syria.

S. Brilev:

You said the magic word, Mr. Primakov: Syria. But let us talk a little more about nuclear weapons, because, strange as it may seem, the argument continues.

There is a theory that the Iraq war was fully justified because the impression Gaddafi got of the events in Iraq made him renounce weapons of mass destruction – and yet nevertheless he still ended up the way he did. Times really have changed. For example, 50 years ago Cuba was developing weapons, but the Americans did not touch it because they had an agreement in place. Now it seems that, if agreements function at all, they last two or three years, and not decades.

So I have another provocative remark to make – an intellectual provocation, if you like. Mr. Primakov, following your logic, I would say that the fact that Israel has nuclear weapons does not keep its Arab neighbours from attacking it. Could the same argument be applied in the dialogue with Iran, for instance? In any case, to borrow a piece of journalistic jargon, I would like us to ‘chew over’ this subject. Dr. Kissinger.

Dr. H. Kissinger:

Let me correct a point that was made. I said I was unenthusiastic about the Libyan operation. That does not mean that I was totally opposed to it. It was a difference in assessment of what the situation on the ground required, and the people who advocated the Libyan operation in the United States were individuals who were deeply concerned about the conditions of human rights and of the consequences of conflict.

S. Brilev:

I think it was about the Israeli nuclear armament and the Arab countries still attacking it? Whether this could be used as an example in possible negotiations with the Iranians?

Dr. H. Kissinger:

The problem of Israel is a very special one, in the sense that it is a country of rather small geography, that has never been recognized by most of its neighbours, and where in negotiations between it and its neighbours, the neighbours considered it their final or ultimate concession to recognize this state. The recognition of the state is taken for granted in Europe. That is the beginning of peace; it is not the end. So given that precarious situation, one can understand the circumstances which induced Israel to make that decision.

I can, however, conceive, in the case of a genuine peace settlement, and a peace settlement that is not just the grudging recognition that a state exists but one in which the conduct of the state is changed and some of the outside propaganda is at least modified and not encouraged, that a nuclear programme might also become part of a settlement. But one has to consider the sense of urgency of a country whose depth is ten miles at many points, which has never been recognized by its neighbours, and which is daily vilified in the propaganda of all of its neighbours. But if that can be modified, I think the security preparations should also be considered.

S. Brilev:

Mr. Primakov, let us get to the bottom of this issue. I know that you have several remarks to make on what you have just heard. Afterwards, let us move to discussing Syria, which is a separate topic altogether.

Y. Primakov:

I completely agree with Henry that, perhaps, an element of the nuclear-free zone concept should be included in the overall settlement of the Middle East, to which peace will come at some point. It must certainly be included. For example, Mohamed ElBaradei, the former head of the IAEA, told me that this topic was raised when he was in Israel, and that there are people there who support initiating this process. I think that this would also be a very good thing for Iran, so that it does not work towards production of nuclear weapons.

S. Brilev:

Very well, let us bring this topic to a close. I think we have raised several very important systemic approaches which my generation is very keen to employ, instead of learning lessons from history.

Syria. I am running a small risk here, of course, but as a television reporter I have to say that honestly Syria is one of the most terrifying countries I have ever visited. When you are picked up in the middle of the night by an armour-clad Mercedes and taken to the very same guy who half an hour ago was sat next you in a suit, but who is now in military uniform and holding an automatic rifle... Elements of caricature there can stretch to the ludicrous. When talking to some of my acquaintances, I realized that although my life was not easy when travelling there, it was nothing compared to the difficulty of those that live there. Russia is now also saying that we are certainly not defending Bashar al-Assad's regime – we want settlement. But what can settlement lead to, what kind of forces could come to power in Syria and maintain the really fragile balance in the Middle East? Mr. Primakov.

Y. Primakov:

We need to learn lessons from all of this. What, for example, was the lesson learnt from Libya? Do you remember the pictures on television of the rebels with their arms aloft, shooting into the air, talking of victory and so on? These practically untrained people then took Tripoli. History will show how this happened, because, if I may be so brave as to say so, I am not convinced that the French and British forces who were deployed there did not take part in the taking of Tripoli. The Western press wrote that they went there to train people, but I am not convinced – it is difficult to believe that that people with absolutely no prior training, firing into the air, could suddenly defeat the regular army.

This is another matter, but it needs to be ascertained, entirely hypothetically, who would come to power if Assad stands down. I should say that Henry is famous for his analytical mind. Without wanting to interfere in the internal affairs of the United States, I will even pay you the compliment that I would like you to have some

influence over whoever is elected President in November, because this influence would be essentially positive.

The US has not learnt its lesson from the history of Libya and Iraq. What did you gain from Iraq? The same thing applies to Libya. The country is on the brink of total collapse – tribal warfare, Shia versus Sunni. The animosity which began in Iraq is reaching new levels, and this is spreading into other countries. Al-Qaeda is strengthening its position. Do we want this to happen in Syria too? It will be inevitable.

Just consider one thing. When the Arab Spring began, many people, including me, were enthusiastic about it. But how have events progressed since then? To start with there were peaceful demonstrations, and only in two countries – Libya and Syria – did people straight away begin shooting at the authorities, at the police and the army. People began to take up weapons. This did not happen right from the start in any other Arab country. History will tell us who provided the weapons.

S. Brilev:

Mr. Primakov, could it not be that we are underestimating the American policy? Perhaps, for example, they aim to remove the Shiite family from power, so that the Sunnis fill this space and shatter the Syrian-Iranian axis? Perhaps we are underestimating the Americans, by not considering the fact that in the period under consideration Brent increased a little in price and the WTI (West Texas Intermediate) fell slightly? Maybe that is the root of it all?

Y. Primakov:

No, that is not the root of it, and if it was, it would have to be kept buried and out of sight, do you not think? It seems to me that we need now to put pressure on both sides in Syria to create a ceasefire. We are doing all in our power to influence them. When I say 'we', I mean Russia, even though I have no government role.

S. Brilev:

Of course, ordinary taxpayer Primakov, we know.

Y. Primakov:

Yes. We are really trying to do all we can to stop the Syrians from shooting – the Syrian army and so on. However, they come up with an argument along the lines of “We are ready to move towards democracy, but we cannot introduce it when everyone is shooting at us”. And they are provided with weapons. This is mostly from Arab countries, but I suspect there are others too. How can a democratic process be born in conditions like these? Therefore, I believe that today the United States and Russia are faced, first and foremost, with this serious challenge. We will apply pressure on the government, and the United States should apply pressure on the opposition. Only if they can manage to do this, of course, because they are too democratic.

S. Brilev:

Dr. Kissinger, I have got to confess that of course I was exaggerating a bit.

Dr. H. Kissinger:

First of all, I want to make my own position clear here. When we talk about controversial issues, it is easy to create the impression that I disapprove of American foreign policy. That is not the case. I have supported many of the main lines of foreign policy, even though I belong to none of the governing bodies in the United States.

Now, on this issue of Libya and Syria, you can look at it as part of a big strategic design of the United States in which it wants to expand its influence at the expense of Russia and other countries. But you have to consider that I bet that 95% of the American people have no idea where Libya is located, or had no idea where Libya was located when the crisis started. The issue that arises is as follows. If civil war starts in a country that we consider a state, but that really is not a state in the historical sense, it then is conducted with great savagery, because in the absence of

a national feeling, the various constituents of a state fight each other. The instinct, then, of many Americans is: let us get the killing stopped. This is the dominant theme. Now, I think of it in a strategic sense, so I ask the question, what happens after you intervene? And when the state structure is destroyed, many in America think another state structure will automatically appear. But in fact, it can happen that no state structure appears at all, and that there is a wide spot of the world where there is nobody who can be held accountable any more. That is the negative side of Libya.

Again, Syria is, in a way, an artificial state. It was created at the end of World War One by throwing together Druze and Sunnis. But it is also a representative of a long tradition of Arab nationalism. Now, the state structure there is under attack, and so one has, on the one hand, the instinct of saving as much human life as one can, which is a dominant view in America. But then, our critics say, what are you going to do when this state is destroyed? To which we tend to say, let us have a negotiation. But very few civil wars have been ended primarily by negotiations. So that is the dilemma.

I do not see any conflict of national interest between Russia and the United States on the issue. It is a difference in assessment of the consequences. I am unhappy when, on either side, this is presented as a conflict between the United States and Russia. In terms of national interest, neither of us can gain a great deal, or anything, in Syria. To end this war, I agree, it takes pressure on both sides. I believe that Russia and the United States should cooperate. If you ask me how to do that exactly, I do not know. And I asked my friend – whose first name I cannot pronounce, otherwise I would use it – I asked him when we were sitting privately, I said, “Tell me, what is the exact solution? What should we do, and how should we do it?”

But we should stop pretending that there is a conflict between the United States and Russia. We should do it in the United States, where we are doing too much of it, and you should stop it, if I may say so, on the Russian side. Then, we should sit down quietly and see how we can influence which parties to take what specific

steps to prevent the situation from getting out of control. The danger is that when these various nationalities and religious groups inside Syria start fighting with each other and it spreads into neighbouring countries, then what starts as a local conflict turns into a regional war, and then we might all get involved. That would be a tragedy. That is my fundamental view on this.

Y. Primakov:

You touched upon history, and I am also going to delve into the past. In the 1920s many people in the Soviet Union (Trotskyites, in the main) believed that regardless of the situation in another country, you could still export revolution there; whether or not the 'masses' were ready and the 'leaders' were prepared to rule following the old methods. The United States is making the same mistake in their attempt to export democracy. Democracy cannot be exported; it must grow from within. That is where our differences lie – not personally, as I am sure you think the same way that I do. In any case, I am imposing my ideas on you.

S. Brilev:

I would like to add my own insight here. Completely by chance, it turns out that sitting opposite us, literally in this section, are several people from the countries we have been talking about. The surprising thing, and I think this merits a photo, is that the Cuban and the Israeli ambassadors are within two seats of one another. You normally only see this at the UN, but now we can add the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum too.

Here too, for example, are some young people from Tatarstan. Following the events in Libya, the companies Tatneft and Russian Railways were forced to evacuate their employees from the area. This happened with promises that the new Libyan authorities would accept the contracts which were signed between Gaddafi and Russian companies without fail. Those who were evacuated are still living in Kazan and Almetyevsk. You cannot buy a ticket to Tripoli anywhere. That is just a personal remark from me – I am exploiting my position as moderator somewhat.

A question for Dr. Kissinger: what can really be done to rectify this tragic and extremely sad situation? Mr. Primakov, I am not trying to correct you, but I will add something. Sometimes exporting democracy can be successful, in the sense that democratic elections are indeed taking place, with results in the Gaza Strip and in Egypt. It remains to be seen, of course, how their stories will play out, but a specific parliament has already been elected. It turns out that democracy is working against its strongest supporter. It will be much more difficult for the Americans to deal with an Islamist Egypt than, for example, with Mr. Mubarak. What can be done?

Y. Primakov:

You know, it will be more difficult for us as well. We are all in the same boat here.

S. Brilev:

Now let us allow Dr. Kissinger to act as a Russian forecaster for a short while.

Dr. H. Kissinger:

You know, my Russian hosts are so generous that they want to manoeuvre me into a position where I cannot go home, and I have to stay here with all my great affection. But those of you who follow the American domestic debate know that I am in a minority position on this. As a child, I lived in a totalitarian system as a member of a persecuted minority, so I know that a democracy is far preferable to any totalitarian system. I personally prefer democratic systems, and would like to see them evolve. But as a historian, I have to say, and I have said it in America, I believe that the evolution of any society needs to follow its own historic rhythm to some extent. So I have a lower estimate than some of my countrymen about the ability to spread democracy by military action in a brief period of time. I also want to say that I agree with their objective and I sympathize with their motives, but I am in favour of more restraint in the day-to-day impact on other societies. This is a judgment of possibilities and, therefore, in my attitude towards Russia and China I have had a different view than some of the neo-conservative elements in the United

States, even though I respect their motives. But it is better for me to conduct that debate in America, and I do not want to conduct our American domestic debate even with people for whom I have so much affection, as for my friend whose name I cannot pronounce.

S. Brilev:

I should be straight with you and warn you that there is still one regulator, in this country at the very least, which is forcing us to make our session slightly shorter, rather than longer. As sad as this is, friends, we will be forced to finish after an hour, and we have five minutes of that hour remaining. I hesitate to allow you to ask questions now, because then we will have to talk unfairly in relation to one person, and a specific question may arise instead of a general one. With your permission, therefore, I will, regrettably, take up the right to ask the final question in this discussion. I think it is a very important one.

There is one issue which is causing mirth both in Russia and in the US (which, in fact, also brings our countries together). Doctor Kissinger has that famous phrase to his name – where is the European Union? Who do I call if I want to speak to Europe? I believe we will be particularly unlikely to call them. Today President Putin said that it was time to move from the G8 to the G20, time to change the rules for regulating the world's economic space. Dr. Kissinger (I am stressing the role of our guest here) also lays claim to the idea (and he touched on it today) that problems are becoming global, and regulation is becoming national. But we have seen that following the expansion of the European Union, its level of manageability has fallen sharply. So, anyway – G8, or G20? What should a possible world government look like, if we can even talk about one at all?

I am afraid that this will definitely be the last question in this discussion, before we are forced to let our guests leave. Mr. Primakov, let us start with you.

Y. Primakov:

After President Putin said that the G20 has priority over the G8, I have come to share this opinion. It means that that is the case.

S. Brilev:

It does mean it is the case, of course.

Y. Primakov:

Henry, as for my name and patronymic being difficult to pronounce, you have my permission to just call me 'Yevgeny', without the 'Maximovich'.

H. Kissinger:

That is my problem. I will practice learning it, Yevgeny. Thank you!

Y. Primakov:

Thank you very much!

S. Brilev:

The G8 and the G20 – is that it? In other words, as the G20 was mentioned, the G20 it is?

Y. Primakov:

The G20 is better than the G8. That is completely obvious, because a larger number of countries will take part in it. Several countries that are not part of the G8 but which should be will be able to take part in the G20 with no problems, and so I completely agree. But this is not a world government. Although in Europe things are currently, as I understand it, heading towards a small group of states being more deeply integrated, and on a wider scale. Some supranational structures will be created, which will take control, for example, over their budgetary policy. This will affect all countries in the European Union, and particularly in the eurozone. But talking about transferring that setup to a global level, is, I believe, still premature.

S. Brilev:

So we are at a consultation level, and no more than that?

Y. Primakov:

Yes, a consultation level, because neither the United States, nor Russia, naturally, would allow themselves to be dictated to. Nevertheless, there is a gap between sovereignty and democracy. The more democracy you have, the less sovereignty, because many powers are transferred to a supranational level. I believe it is too early for this.

S. Brilev:

Dr. Kissinger, we have got to be brief, but will you elaborate on the subject of the G20, international regulation, and global problems?

Dr. H. Kissinger:

The G20 includes more countries that are relevant to the solution of the problem. But there is a phrase that is ascribed to me, that I do not know which telephone number I am going to call in Europe, which frankly I am not sure I ever said, but they quote it so often that I take credit for it now. Now, we have a telephone number, and they can make up their mind how to answer it. So the lesson to learn from the crisis that has occurred is that when you set up an institution, you should think through the implications of its evolution, and not just what you do at the beginning. Europe created a monetary union without a common fiscal policy, and they knew intellectually that this could not really work, but they thought that the immediate advantages of the monetary union might somewhere along the line create a momentum. In repairing that damage, one should think carefully about what the future evolution of it will be. I think on the one hand, it is a severe crisis. On the other, it is also a great opportunity. There is no reason to suppose that a country with the potential wealth and education of Europe cannot solve a problem of this

nature. So I really think that this generation can learn from the mistakes of its predecessors. Also its predecessors, while they have made mistakes, have also created an enormous accomplishment.

Could I go back to one point that was made about half an hour ago by...

S. Brilev:

Yevgeny Primakov.

Dr. H. Kissinger:

I have enormous affection for him. We have been through so many battles and agreements for decades. I have great respect.

I want to make a point on missile defence, not to get into the technical side of it, but to get into a conceptual side of it. Under conditions of mutual deterrence with only two countries, you could say you rely on the destruction of each other's population, although it is not a healthy and sound basis for national policy. But now, under conditions of some proliferation, you cannot ask leaders to say, I will keep my population forever vulnerable. On the other hand, I have understanding for the Russian position that in protecting one's population against the proliferation aspects, one should not create conditions that encourage a pre-emptive attack. Therefore, some of us have urged a merging of some of the missile defence systems. You and I have even talked about this in other fora, and we are not going to settle that issue here in a debate. I think we should think about how to protect the population from the threat of proliferated weapons under conditions when the possibility of a nuclear war between us is, in my mind, zero. It is in this context that we should talk about missile defence, not in the context of what America might attempt to do in a nuclear attack on Russia, which is practically inconceivable to me.

S. Brilev

After Mr. Kissinger leaves, we shall have a nice little chat about him! Is that not right, Mr. Primakov?

Unfortunately, we should have finished two minutes ago. Believe me, this is not down to me, but rather the person whose name and patronymic we have been pronouncing with such ease.

Thank you very much to our participants. I believe that in the past hour we have all gained some wisdom. Thank you very much, Dr. Kissinger!