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Now we will have a Russian view on the question of global governance, Russia's contributions to it and perhaps the challenge it presents to global governance.

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Thierry de Montbrial in his introductory speech this morning asked us to be as positive as possible in our contributions to the debate, so I will try to please him by expressing my gratitude to those who arranged this conference and start with some positive things.

The world has changed since the first of this conference in Evian, and we have survived the very difficult crisis in the Southern Caucasus. We have avoided the further development of American anti-missile systems in Europe, at least until now, and we have avoided the expansion of NATO against the will of certain countries. Russia has finalised its negotiations with the WTO, on the bilateral track; the US was the last bilateral track. We also have the ongoing activities of certain global forums like the G20, which have started to function well, and one event we would like to welcome is the forthcoming summit of the G20 in Seoul.

This is all about the positive news on global governance from the Russian perspective. Analysing events which will take place before the end of this year, I would like to mention three which do not belong specifically to the topic of global governance. The first is the upcoming elections in the US on 2 November. Russia is very much affected by these elections even though they are national elections. For example, one of the other positive stories from the past two years was the new START treaty between Russia and the US, though this is still not ratified; the reason is not because the treaty is good or bad, but because its ratification has coincided with the elections. People there consider them from the viewpoint of whether they are good for Democrats or for Republicans, but they do not speak in terms of security; they declare that it is so, but they do not mean it, to be frank.

I do not believe it is a good thing for global security and governance that a national election in a certain country has a much broader impact, because if the Democrats lose, President Obama will have much less space for his good initiatives. I believe it will affect all of us, and I do not like it. This is why Russia has always opposed a unipolar world, and I hope this opposition will become more consolidated in the future.

The second event is the coming NATO summit in Lisbon. Though Russia does not belong to NATO, it will affect us for the simple reason that the new strategic conception for NATO involves, theoretically and I believe also practically, that it will take on itself certain responsibilities beyond its borders. I remember Mr. Rasmussen presenting some parts of this new concept, and expressing it in the following words: 'The territorial defence of NATO starts beyond the borders of NATO countries.'

I do not like this neither, because I do not understand what this is about. The security of NATO countries is not about Afghanistan, but the NATO operation there, formerly the UN operation, is not about Afghanistan but about NATO. I do not know whether the territorial security or integrity of NATO will start here, Morocco, Russia or elsewhere. This is what concerns and disturbs Russia, because we would have preferred to have a broader dialogue about global security and global governance, not just with NATO but with anybody else who was concerned.

The next event is the coming OSCE summit in Astana in early December. I am not sure that this will be a success story. The Kazakhstan presidency has done an excellent job and I applaud their contribution, but a successful presidency is not what is required for a successful OSCE. I think that there will be major contradictions, and that the final documents will be general rather than concrete. This is a very serious matter, because we have failed to start talking seriously about an undivided Europe and about European security, which will probably become something more global.

This is why the Russian President presented the concept of a new European security treaty in Evian, which some people have misinterpreted as an attempt to get rid of NATO or of something else in Europe. This is definitely not the case; the idea was to provoke a discussion on security issues for the simple reason that the OSCE, NATO, the EU and all the other bodies are not enough to ensure security, not only for member states but also in global terms. Russia has been affected by that as well, starting with Kosovo and continuing with the current operation in Afghanistan, which may be more or less successful in combating insurgents but is definitely a total failure in terms of solving the problem of drug production, and Russia is the first country to be affected by that.

There is also the Southern Caucasus and the signals which were sent to the Georgian leadership in 2008. I have never suggested that somebody was trying to push Mr. Saakashvili forward in this situation, but he misinterpreted signals he received from NATO, the EU or elsewhere, he started to move ahead, and we have all suffered a lot from this.

Therefore, this initiative on the part of Russia for a European security treaty is just an invitation for dialogue, and I am very happy to see that this dialogue has started. We are not far away from Evian, but we are making progress on discussions as to whether European or global security will focus just on military aspects, which is more or less the case now, or will include other things like economic security, humanitarian issues and other important things.

I think that one of the positive signals is that there are much fewer obstacles in today's globalised world to operating together in different parts of the world; in this case I mean Africa, where we are right now. I think the Russian approach to regional conflicts, whether in Africa or other regions, does not contradict but coincides in general with those of our good partners and friends in NATO, the EU, the G20 and elsewhere, and this is also good news. Thank you very much.