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Let us move to Russia. Last week, there was talk about Telegram deactivating blogs and accounts of organisations, but it will be great to have your view, Fyodor, on what is going on in Russia, the digital perspective and the initiatives.

Fyodor LUKYANOV, Editor in Chief, *Russia in Global Affairs*

Thank you very much. First of all, thank you, Thierry. Thank you to all the organisers for this invitation. It is a big honour to me and especially a big challenge to speak on this panel, but I think the choice of Russia as part of this limited panel was absolutely right because Russia shapes a very interesting case.

In Russia, many processes and dimensions of this area which exist in the West are simply much more open and vocal than sometimes in Europe or in the United States. Russian political culture is traditionally suspicious of openness and this inevitably shapes the national discourse about the Internet. It also creates a lot of stereotypes abroad because usually the Russian approach to the Internet and the digital sphere is presented as an opposition to the approach adopted by the US and Europe as a symbol of freedom and openness. This to me is slightly exaggerated because yes, the wording of Russian debate frequently is pretty strange, and I would say very much old-fashioned and bland, but if we look at the substance, the approach to this dilemma between freedom and security, what is more connected to the spread of the digital world and the Internet?

This dilemma is absolutely the same in Russia as it is anywhere else and we see that trends are more or less similar to trends that we can see in the Western world. Worldwide technological advances are leading to the rise of regulatory zeal at every level, so Russia is not unique. Of course, in the case of Russia, you frequently see that actions by the government or by security services are simply much more clumsy and non-elegant, as it used to be in more so-called advanced countries, but the essence is pretty much the same.

I have a couple of figures. Russia is one of the countries where technological development is extremely rapid, so Internet penetration is now above 60% and in recent years, the intensity of use has risen permanently. Between 2009 and 2014, the number of weekly users doubled. Russia is not the only largest Internet market in Europe, but also, strangely enough, the leading user of social media. As of 2014, Russia boasted 47 million social media users, well ahead of the UK with 36 million and France and Germany with 28 million. It is really a very, very big development in this sphere.

Of course, it is unevenly spread in the country, but at the same time, it would be wrong to assume that big cities like Moscow, St Petersburg, Yekaterinburg are leaders of this process and the remote areas not. For example, there is a very interesting phenomenon described by many scholars now, which is the phenomenon of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), which is far away in the east, so Eastern Siberia, which is as big as, I think, the whole of Europe. Of course, it is much more scarcely populated, but still, and Yakutia has recently experienced a WhatsApp boom. The WhatsApp system became not only a means of communication for people, but actually everything; it replaced television. It replaced sources for news information. This is partly because of a lack of technical level in a big part of the country because in Russia, big areas are still without ground line telephone communication, so mobile phones and smart phones are used more and that means that such systems play a much bigger role.

Social media serves as an important source of information for an increasing number of Russians. In July this year, 40% of the total adult population and two-thirds of active Internet users got their news from social media. It is a big problem for television, for example, because they are losing advertising market to social media much faster than

before. Studies on the Internet and the issue of Big Data, which was mentioned earlier, are now rapidly rising in Russia. Each week, you can see that somebody new is publishing something or new journals and so on.

The Russian authorities have recently passed a number of laws regulating the use of the Internet. Among those laws are a ban on child pornography and defamation, copyright legislation, data localisation law. Most recently, we had legislation on the right to be forgotten, which means the removal of data from the web, and usually all of this legislation faces huge debate in society. In the West, it used to be immediately blamed as another step towards a totalitarian society. In fact, if you study those laws, most of them are more or less along the same lines as discussed or adopted in the West.

Of course, again, the Russian problem is that we do not yet have the structured community and professional lobbyists in the IT industry. They try to influence this decision-making, but they are not strong enough, sometimes not qualified enough and of course, the government, which first of all tries to tackle security and political issues, prevails and then afterwards, usually there is a need to review and revise those laws because it turns out that they did not work, but anyway.

The Internet topic is discussed in Russia in a slightly different way than in the West when, for example, we discuss cybersecurity. Cybersecurity is a big issue in Russia nowadays, as everywhere else, but beyond the traditional approach of cyber warfare and hacker attacks, the Russian side is very much afraid and concerned about the content. It is not only the technical ability to intervene, but the content, and of course, this is a reaction to all this hysteria about Twitter revolutions and the role social media played in the Arab Spring, the Orange Revolution and all possible revolutionary developments. I think it is very much exaggerated because many studies show that Twitter, Facebook and others never created revolutions. They just served as a means of communication, but anyway, this is an issue which is very much discussed in Russia, not only domestically, but also at the international level.

Russia is trying to be very active in the international debate on cybersecurity and the idea that you mentioned about the code of behaviour. That was presented by the Russian side earlier than anybody else. For example, big in-fighting happened at a conference on international telecommunications in 2012 in Dubai when Russia tried to introduce and get a new code of behaviour adopted, which at that time was not supported by the Western countries. However, two years after, something changed. The Edward Snowden revelations of course had an impact on the approach of at least some democratic countries, like Germany and Brazil. They started to lean more towards the Russian position.

The ongoing debate, which seemed to become the core of the Russian discussion on this, is about international regulation and the Russian proposal, which is gradually becoming more discussed and maybe even more supported in the world, is about this ICANN, a non-governmental organisation in California, which has a right to assign IP addresses. It is widely seen as the centre of the whole Internet in the world. The Russian discussion about this is of course, again, a little bit old-fashioned because we love conspiracy theories and we really believe that if a state department or the Pentagon gives the order to the guy in Palo Alto or wherever, this guy will shoot down the whole Internet in the world by just one switch. However, at the same time, I think that the idea about multi-stakeholderism, about the diversification of control is now again discussed not only in Russia, but also in the world, so it might be quite a big issue in years to come.

Finally, what Russia is trying to propose now as part of the whole debate about cyber warfare is an electronic non-aggression pact. In a way, the discussion now is like the debate about nuclear security 40 years ago because at that time, the major powers came to the conclusion that without the rules of the game, the whole existence of mankind was endangered. Despite the Cold War, despite all the differences, the Soviet Union and the United States came to formulate those rules. Now, in cyberspace, we have a similar situation because the damage which could be done by cyberattacks, maybe even wars, were similar to nuclear. I think that on the one hand, we see very specific behaviour and debate in Russia, but if you start to analyse and if you disregard some very obscurant statements, in fact, this is very much in line with what happens worldwide.

Finally, about your question about Telegram, I think it is very typical. The owner and the guy behind Telegram, when he heard about this problem, his first reaction was very sarcastic. He said, 'Okay, maybe we should ban words because I heard that the terrorists used words while communicating'. After a while, when he discovered that it was

very serious, he just switched off. He banned all those IP addresses and I think in the Russian case, where security is valued above anything else, this is much easier to do than anywhere else. Thank you.

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It has been a bold move and nobody else so far has done that or asked to do that, especially for the big search engine. Thank you, Fyodor.