



## IGOR IVANOV

Former Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs

### **Dominique MOISI, Special Advisor at Ifri**

Thank you very much. In all fairness, I placed the word 'dispensable' in Kishore's mouth. He did not use it. I thought that he meant it. However, the words are a recreation of mine. We have had two very prominent European voices on Europe and we will return to Europe in the course of the debate. However, we now have the chance to have a prominent Russian voice on Russia.

### **Igor IVANOV, Former Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs**

Dominique asked me to talk about what was happening in Russia and what role Russia could play in the future world order. As I noticed during our sessions over two days one word was used very frequently – the word 'reform'. We have reforms in the international system and we also have reforms in various regions and countries. Russia is also living through profound reforms. These are reforms that started 20 years ago with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and we still have had a lot of discussions about reforms in our country.

Reforms in our country are so dramatic because they came in a very unexpected and unforeseen way affecting the political institutions, economic structures, even the psychology of our people. In a short period – 20 years is not a long period historically, with just one generation going through this new situation – it was necessary not just to adopt new laws, but also to implant in the minds of the people what the market economy is and what democracy means. During all our history there had been no long period where there was a democratic system in Russia. This is not about me trying to explain or to justify our mistakes. I have to confess that we made a lot of mistakes. What I want to say is that there is a serious process of complicated and painful reforms and Russia is still living through reforms.

If you saw the demonstrations in Moscow on TV yesterday, you probably noticed many young people – the new generation that has emerged over the last 20 years. That generation wants a real change and a real democratic system. If you compare these demonstrations with similar street protests in Italy or Greece, this is a striking difference. Young people in Russian have not been talking about salaries or the pension age, but about the modernisation of the country and strengthening the democratic system. That is why I am optimistic, with all the problems which I understand.

John Kennedy, the President of the United States, said that those who make peaceful evolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable. In our country, people want evolution, not revolution. We have had revolutions and suffered from them. We want evolution and we want our country to be a modern state with strong democratic institutions. From my point of view, those demonstrations were very positive. They were the positive reaction of people sending a message to those in power saying 'We are participants in this process. We are not observers. We are direct participants and we want to participate and we want you to listen to our voice.' It was a pacific, but a very strong and clear message. I think that that is fine. It means that society is in the process of developing, which is very positive.

Talking about the future role of Russia, I do not know what kind of a multi-polar system we will have in the world – it is a long process, but what I know and what I am sure of is that the intention to create a uni-polar world has failed. There will be no uni-polar or bi-polar world. That is finished. It will be multi-polar, with different powers and the system will be flexible. It will not be a rigid system but a flexible one, based on the interests of different countries and groups of countries. And Russia will try to play an active role together with Europeans, the Asia-Pacific region and other groups of countries with whom Russia will have common interests – common economic, political and other interests. However,



it is clear that for Russia – and we understand this perfectly well – it is not enough to have nuclear weapons. Russia will need to be a strong player and to have a modern economy. That is why we proclaimed the goal of modernisation of our economy and of building a strong democratic system inside the country so that we could speak the same language with other international players.

We understand, furthermore, that the role of one of the active players will not be guaranteed to Russia or to any Asian or European country. It will be necessary to struggle for the position and win your position in the future international system. I do not exclude the role of military force in the future system, but it will be not only the military force or energy resources that will matter in this system. A modern economy and healthy society, strong political institutions will be no less important to maintain the position as one of the important players in international relations.