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Thank you very much, Thierry. It is great to be back in Seoul and I think that we have been privileged to hear a very important speech by the President of Korea. When I was thinking of this session I tried to put down on a piece of paper the differences that over the decades have framed the strategic situation between Europe and East Asia and it seems to me that we have had, in fact, very different experiences over the decades. Perhaps today we are both confronted with the same kind of problem, which I could call the resurgence of the Monroe Doctrine, and then the question is how can we deal with this new situation? However, first, it seems to me that we have certainly had very different experiences after the Second World War and up to today.

To start with Europe, over the five decades, we were divided in Europe, with the Iron Curtain. However, we did not have war. We had crises, with the Budapest crisis in 1956, the Berlin Wall crisis in 1961 and the Prague tragedy in 1968. These were moments of great tension but there was certainly no war. We then had the détente process, which led to the signing of the Helsinki Accords almost 40 years ago already and the foundation of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) which paved the way for cooperation between the two sides of Europe. Something then started that my colleague on the panel is better placed to describe, which was Glasnost and Perestroika and the simple implosion of the Soviet Empire. Again, there was no war and there were therefore no winners or losers, in my view, only winners. For us, this was a kind of miracle. As a diplomat, frankly, if you had asked me in 1980 if I thought that during my career I would see the total transformation of the continent, with the disappearance of the Berlin Wall and Iron Curtain and everything else, I would have said that it was impossible. It did happen and that is a miracle.

The second miracle was the construction of the European Union, which was based on the recognition of the bitter past. Beyond this recognition, we were in a position where we could build a better future for our countries, based on the reconciliation between Germany and France. When we started the unification process there were only six nations, which represented 180 million people, and in front of us was the Soviet Empire with more than 300 million people. Today, there are 28 countries in the European Union, representing more than 500 million people, and Russia, if I am correct, has 146 million people. This is, therefore, a strategic change of major amplitude, although in Europe we consider Russia to be a necessary partner, a partner for peace and for building a better future. That is, therefore, the framework as it evolved in Europe.

If we look at East Asia, it is a totally different picture. There were indeed wars, starting with the war in Korea over three long years, with probably more than 2 million dead. The legacy of this war, as Madame President said, is still there. That is the first thing. The second thing is that there were the wars in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, which went on for years and years. This legacy is therefore very important. The legacy of the past is still there and it is a bitter past, and this has an impact on the present. The legacy of the Cold War is also still there in another form, between Japan and Russia over a number of islands, between China and Taiwan and, of course, with the division of the Korean Peninsula.

That is therefore the first thing and it seems to me that the second thing is the return of China to the world scene. China was part of the Soviet block after the Second World War and, as you know, there was a kind of divergence between the Soviet Union and China in 1961 when China decided to go it alone. There were then huge changes in 1972 to the strategic situation for the world, especially for Asia, with the visit of President Nixon to Beijing. As a young diplomat, I was posted to Beijing just at that time and it was really a major earthquake of strategic proportions. The process of economic transformation then started and China is now back on the world scene and emerging as the dominant power in the region and beyond. This has been the most massive, rapid transformation of a society in the history of mankind and it is having a huge impact on the whole region.



Today, therefore, it seems to me that both Europe and Asia are part of a world where the rule of law, the United Nations (UN) Charter and the capacity to solve problems together still exist. After all, we worked well to confront the financial crisis and today, as we speak, our countries are in Lima trying to find a way of fighting global warming. We fight terrorism together and we also fight nuclear proliferation and piracy and so on and so forth.

At the same time, it seems to me that there has been a new development which may have a big impact on the world order, which is what I call the return of the Monroe Doctrine. As you know, in 1823, President Monroe stated that no outside powers should interfere in the Americas, as it was for the United States to deal with any problems which might emerge there. It seems to me that we have a kind of return today of the Monroe Doctrine in Asia with the rise of China and in Europe with the resurgence of Russia as a major actor. I am very cautious in saying this, but it probably happens in different ways.

It seems to me that what is important for China is to make sure that its prominence is recognised and accepted in the region. China has always considered that they had a paramount role to play in the region and that the role of everyone living around China was to go to the court of the Emperor and pay tribute and then go back to their cities, illuminated by Chinese civilisation, although I might be going a bit too far here. This is still in the minds of the Chinese leaders and when you see the confrontation over small islands, the Senkaku/Diaoyu and the South China Sea it is less about fish, oil and gas and more about sovereignty and even more about prominence. With Russia, although perhaps my colleague will speak about this later, it seems to me that President Putin wants to rebuild the Russian Empire as it was during the days of Catherine the Great or Stalin and this is, of course, a major challenge for us in Europe.

I will conclude in a few words by saying that it seems to me that it is difficult to solve problems in the same way in the two regions. For obvious reasons, China is so important, big and powerful that it is difficult to build organisations. I heard the three initiatives presented by the President of Korea and I think that this is a very important and positive way forward.

For us in Europe, it seems to me that it is very important, firstly, to continue dialogue and dialogue and dialogue, and this is true for both regions. I was very happy when I saw that President Hollande went to Moscow two days ago and it is very important to reaffirm the principles on which the international order is built. It is also very important to consider that the European Union and Russia need to stay together and build a better future together and that Ukraine must remain a bond of friendship and cooperation between Russia and the European Union. This is possible and to do it there needs to be negotiation. That is what I experienced when, after the invasion of Georgia in 2008, President Sarkozy rushed to Moscow and Tbilisi and we obtained important results. You will remember that in Evian in 2008, with President Medvedev at the time, we were very pleased with what developed.

However, in all this, and this is my last remark, there is one actor that we need, which is the US. In my view, the US, both in Europe and Asia, has to play the role of balancing power, like the UK did in the 19th century in Europe. The US needs to remain the ultimate guarantor of peace. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is back because of Ukraine and it is very important that we have confidence in our most important partner and ally. I think that it is, of course, the same in East Asia for countries such as Japan and Korea. However, I have a question mark here after what happened in Syria in August of last year when there was a red line on the non use of chemical weapons. The use of chemical weapons took place and there was no action. I think that this sent an unfortunate message, not only to the countries in the region, but also well beyond.

I will therefore conclude on that. Again, I am delighted to be here with you today.