

IGOR MORGULOV

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Thierry de Montbrial, President and Founder of the World Policy Conference

Thank you very much. I would remind you that tonight's dinner is being hosted by the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Yun Byung se, and I am sure that we will continue this discussion with him, starting off from this morning's speech by President Park Geun hye. I am sure that Ambassador Oshima will also comment on some of these issues when his turn comes.

Another point that I wanted to make in terms of talking about Japan being de nuclearised and so on is that we should remind ourselves that Japan has reached the nuclear threshold state, which is not nothing, and that should also be part of our thinking.

Let me now give the floor to Mr Morgulov. As I said, Russia has two feet, with an Asian foot and a European foot. The floor is yours.

Igor Morgulov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Thank you, Thierry, and let me also thank the organisers for inviting me to address such a distinguished audience. I was named as the only acting diplomat here, but I can see a lot of friends and colleagues that I have met throughout my life and career in different positions in various parts of the world, so I feel that I am amongst colleagues and in the right place.

In the Russian Foreign Ministry, I am in charge of Asian policy, so in my presentation I will put the accent on Russia's vision on ways of ensuring security in North East Asia. However, before I do that, in response to what has just been said by my colleagues, I would like to note that we need to understand that we live in a time of a fundamental transformation of the system of international relations and this explains the growing number of conflicts and the multifaceted and dramatic challenges and threats that we are now facing. This is not because of Russia's assertiveness or confrontational behaviour, as my colleague, HAN Sung-Joo has just said, or obviously the desire of President Putin to restore the Russian Empire; it is because the era of unipolarity is past history and I believe that nobody should be left in any doubt about this. A new balance of power is being established and with that there is global competition, which is often unfair and aggressive. Let us also not forget the rivalry of values, which is another very important issue that we are now all facing, with moral values and things of that kind.

Against this background, certain states' claims for global leadership are being accompanied by aspirations to have the whole world suit their interests and impose on others their own visions of how to live and carry out domestic politics. These policies often ignore domestic considerations, local traditions and national considerations. The so called coloured revolutions initiated or supported from abroad are no less than a policy of regime change and there is the so called export of democracy, a slogan that, in my view, is more destructive than constructive, if we think of its influence on international relations and the multiplication of crisis zones.

In my view, the situation in Ukraine is a tragic example of this short sighted policy of those who advocate geopolitical engineering and let me assure you that, given the common history and many centuries of life together with the Ukrainian people, no one in the world is more interested in ensuring the earliest possible restoration of peace, security and stability in Ukraine than Russia. Reaching this goal is obviously in the interests of Europe and the rest of the world and Russia has been doing and will continue to do everything to promote a political settlement in Ukraine, the road to which lies in an all encompassing national dialogue, with the participation of all the regions and political forces in that country.



Thierry is absolutely right. Russia has two feet, or, as we prefer to say, two heads, as our national emblem, the eagle, looks towards the east and the west. We are situated in both Europe and Asia and we therefore feel the need to strengthen the mechanism for global security particularly strongly. As was rightly mentioned, it took decades to build an instrument for maintaining security in Europe and this has now grown into a certain system. This is not perfect and the Ukrainian crisis has proved that this tuned mechanism fails from time to time.

Against this background, we are concerned that no mechanisms whatsoever on security have been established in Asia Pacific and Russia believes that it is becoming increasingly urgent to elaborate common rules of conduct, which would promote an atmosphere of cooperation, trust and mutual understanding, preventing confrontation and the unhealthy competition which I mentioned. The importance of building an advanced, sustainable and robust security architecture in the region was underlined by all the leaders of the ASEAN countries and their dialogue partners, including Russia, China and the United States in their speeches at the recent East Asia Summit in Naypyidaw. I was there and was delighted to hear all the leaders of the major countries participating in the meeting expressing this idea.

Russia proceeded from this very understanding when it proposed last year, with the support of China and Brunei, an initiative on framework principles on strengthening security and developing cooperation in the Asia Pacific region. Substantial steps in carrying out this idea have already been made. We have had three seminars, with one in Moscow, one in Bandar Seri Begawan and one in Jakarta and these clearly demonstrated the urgency and importance of such dialogue. Our proposal correlated to other similar national initiatives and we all remember President Xi Jinping's initiative on new security in Asia, which he took forward during the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building (CICA) meeting in Shanghai in May. There is also the Indonesian initiative on the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and there are some ideas from our Indian friends on Asia Pacific security. We also heard today about the initiatives of the President of the Republic of Korea, Madame Park Geun hye. Altogether, therefore, this could provide the basis of some synergy from all these proposals and on that basis we could start a serious dialogue on how to proceed with security arrangements in this part of the world.

Russia is very determined to continue this work with a view to establishing a common instrument for ensuring security in Asia Pacific, the need for which will increase steadily as the role of the region in global affairs grows. As a major objective for the future, we see the conclusion of a legally binding document, with some kind of treaty or agreement on security in the greater Asia Pacific region. We are not, of course, idealists and understand that this is easier to say than do, and the task will probably be able to be attained step by step at a pace that is comfortable to all. However, we believe that this should be set as a goal in our movement towards realising this security initiative.

I will not dwell on the Korean Peninsula, as the next session is devoted to the issues in that region, but we obviously understand that the situation in this particular part of the world is especially important for security arrangements. I believe that the problem here is that we have old lines of division. Thierry said that we do not need to make new lines of division, but here we have old lines of division and we need to remove them. By the way, these lines of division are a legacy of the Cold War and are ideological. While they are not removed we cannot achieve anything in building an effective security system in this sub region. We should therefore elaborate the idea of launching a kind of sub regional Helsinki Process in North East Asia and, again, this could be discussed in greater detail during the next session.

In conclusion, I just want to underscore that Russia's policy in Asia Pacific has no hidden agenda. We are open and transparent. Our main goal is to establish a system of inter state relations which would correspond fully with the present realities and respect the interests of all the countries in the region. This should be done on the basis of broad dialogue, with the participation of the maximum number of regional players and this system should provide opportunities for the development of multilateral trade, economic and investment cooperation, the overcoming of existing security challenges, the prevention of the emergence of new threats and the promotion of the creation of integrated economic and political space. We are open for this cooperation and I believe that we have everything we need to achieve this goal.

Thierry de Montbrial, President and Founder of the World Policy Conference



Thank you very much, Igor. That was a very interesting intervention. Let me ask you two short questions. Firstly, you used the term 'geopolitical engineering'. Could you elaborate a little more on what you mean by this unusual expression? Secondly, you know that at the first World Policy Conference in Evian in 2008 President Medvedev was there, as Jean David reminded us, and he made a speech which I personally thought was very important, where he proposed to update the Helsinki CSCE Final Act of 40 years ago – next year, we commemorate its 40th anniversary. My question therefore: is the proposal to update the CSCE process still on the table?

Igor Morgulov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Regarding geopolitical engineering, we sometimes feel that some people, and I would not name these forces, are interested in running some geopolitical experiments and they sit far away from the places where these events take place. These people just like playing games, and they are playing games with serious issues and the lives of people, as we can see in Ukraine, for example.

Thierry de Montbrial, President and Founder of the World Policy Conference

Would you say that Zbigniew Brzezinski is the kind of man who likes geopolitical engineering?

Igor MORGULOV

I would not like to name names here.

Thierry de Montbrial, President and Founder of the World Policy Conference

However, that is one name among others. It is the great chessboard.

Igor Morgulov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

You may know some names, but I would not name them. However, this is quite a serious issue and we believe that it is very important to understand that we cannot play with issues such as security in Europe and Asia. This is too important an issue for geopolitical engineering.

I am sorry, but I did not get your second question.

Thierry de Montbrial, President and Founder of the World Policy Conference

It was the idea of updating the CSCE, which was the substance of President Medvedev's speech in Evian in October 2008 at the first World Policy Conference. Is this proposal still on the table from the Russian viewpoint?

Igor MORGULOV

Let me come back to this question, as I am not sure that I am ready to give you an answer right now. I can check with my colleagues and let you know.



Thierry de Montbrial, President and Founder of the World Policy Conference

If you check before you leave and give us any hint, that would be quite interesting.

Igor Morgulov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

I will do so.