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We now move from the world of business to the world of ideas. Our first speaker will be Vuk Jeremic from Serbia which according to public opinion polls holds a rare distinction of having supported Donald Trump by about 90%. Vuk, perhaps you can explain that and many other things to us?

Vuk JEREMIC

Well, thank you Jim. It is a great privilege and pleasure to be back at the World Policy Conference. I do come from Serbia and ours is not your typical country when it comes to analysing the American presidential elections. The Clinton brand is not a terribly popular and strong brand in Serbia. Therefore, we have this outlying data point that is called Serbia. It's a pretty obvious legacy issue. That being said, I would like to concentrate on the broader European view and perhaps certain other parts of the world.

The previous speakers put it succinctly: there is a lot of uncertainty as to what is going to happen. It is really, really difficult to predict what exactly the Trump Administration is going to do, but one thing that looks more or less likely is that there is going to be an attempt at building a different kind of relationship with Russia. This is causing consternation in certain parts of Europe, especially in the Eastern part. At the same time, we see that the prospect of such an initiative is not something with which various people in Western Europe are very comfortable with. Mr de l'Estang spoke about the upcoming referenda and elections in Western Europe.

One can see how Donald Trump's election victory may serve as a boost to populist movements, ideas, and candidates in the forthcoming Western European elections. That is certainly true, and I am sad to say it—especially given that I wrote an op-ed piece in *The Times* on Brexit prior to the referendum, in which I argued very strongly for Britain to remain in the European Union. In any event, something very similar to the Leave movement happened in the Trump electoral campaign. When I ran for the Secretary General of the United Nations earlier this year, I put in my platform policies that are totally opposite to the things Donald Trump advocated during his campaign.

Nevertheless, I also said, one day before the election, that 'I do not think Hilary looks too strong'. My friends from Britain and my friends from the United States were telling me, 'Do not be such a Serbian. That is never going to happen'. I am sorry to say I was right. So I would not underestimate the point Mr de l'Estang was making. In Europe, I think we might be heading for more of the sort of electoral victories that, until recently, we could not have imagined were possible. There is also a bit of self-fulfilling prophecy in the European attitude that I hope is going to wither away as we move forward. I do not think that these have to necessarily be disasters.

First and foremost, I do not think that trying to engender a different kind of relationship with Russia is necessarily a bad thing. There are probably going to be people who win more and people who win less, or even lose out, with the onset of that new relationship. That being said, I think it is going to work—at least in the short term. In any event, I think this is something that Donald Trump is going to try; also, I think that Mr Putin is going to do his best to make sure that this attempt is successful—at least short term. I am not talking about the long term. Long term, of course, as previous



speakers already noted, there is the question of personal relationships versus countries' interests. At the end of the day, countries' interests and strategic interests usually prevail.

Probably one of the first repercussions of a Russo-American rapprochement would entail the two countries working together more closely in the context of Syria. In my opinion, this would bring about a world of opportunities. Despite the fact that this is a sort of opposite attitude to the one President Obama has had with regard to Russia over the past few years, effectively it is not strategically very different in the context of the Middle East. Obama spoke about a balance of power in his latest big interview with Jonah Goldberg in the *Atlantic*. I think the drive to achieve such a balance of power gets accelerated with Russia and America trying to work closely together in Syria and beyond.

If Washington and Moscow are successful in bringing to a halt the Syrian debacle—and I am not going to go into detail about what the parameters could be of that closure—but if there is something that looks like an armistice, if not peace, this would open a world of opportunities. It could open up the possibility of looking again at the Israel-Palestine situation. Do not forget that Donald Trump once said something like, 'This is the toughest deal in the world and I am good at making deals'. It is not inconceivable that he might try and do that, upon starting a different kind of relationship with the Russians. One can talk about the whole world, but let me begin to wrap up at this point, for there are others here who are much more knowledgeable about other parts of the world. But, all in all, I think we should try and wake up to the new reality. We should not be lamenting about what could have gone differently.

Let me make one final point. Juan Gallardo from Mexico spoke about his hope that the TPP is not going to go away—that Trump will not kill it. Well, I think it is dead: it will not happen. Let us not continue behaving as if nothing had happened. There was a very decisive result in the American election. We are going to live in a different world as a result of that. Let us try and concentrate on the opportunities and not fall into the trap of thinking about the negative, self-fulfilling prophecies.

Jim HOAGLAND

Thank you very much Vuk.