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Our next speaker is Artem Malgin. Alongside Lissovolik, those are two people who will take this from us, older people. They will take it into their hands and carry Russia to victories and greater heights. He is the first vice-rector of one of the best universities in Moscow, which is MGIMO. He is a good friend of the World Policy Conference.

Artem MALGIN

I have two remarks. The title of the session sounds very sad, because neither me nor my colleagues will be at the climax of their life activities and professional activities in 20 years. We will all do our best, but that is why we could be a little bit irresponsible. Second, when Thierry de Montbrial was in Moscow in March this year, he raised this subject. This was especially reserved for the politicians. Two Russian politicians promised him that they would come if he put in this subject as it is. They promised him that they would tell the truth, but the truth that will happen in 20 years. They said they wanted to be very brave, but they did not want to cover contemporary developments in Russia. Ultimately, they are not here, these two brave gentlemen, and that is why we can talk more truthfully even about contemporary things than they planned to.

Michel Foucher's example is helpful, because there are even some thoughts that are in peril. I have given an analysis of foreign policy first of all, because I consider myself much more of a specialist on foreign policy than on other issues. Foreign policy analysis is very similar in France and Russia. First of all, I will discuss the guidelines and trends I see arising in 20 years.

First, in 20 years, Russia will be much more self-centred and self-concerned, with policy and ambitions made-to-measure. We still feel ourselves to be bigger and stronger than we are, and that is why I hope we are going to be less interventionist in 20 years. We realise our scale in global affairs and our resources. This is because many of the problems which we face now are there because of overestimation or simply wrong estimations or wrong appraisals of who we are.

Second, Russia will be more open, at least towards its neighbours, since by that time, we will manage to build this Russia-centred integration, which brings together our Eurasian neighbours. It will also manage to find a modus operandi with the EU and EU-led countries. We want to have immediate geographic resources for these two parts of the Eurasian continent. I do not mean Eurasia politically, which is linked to the former republics of the USSR. It automatically makes Russia more open. Russia will be more participative, more devoted to multi-nationalism, and much more assertive.

The limits of extensive growth by that time will already be achieved. The Russian presence will probably be better established all over the world, but there will not necessarily be this political, state-run presence all over the world. It will rather be Russian companies, Russian investments, and Russian-led but multilateral initiatives, which will be better presented in other parts of the world. Thanks to that, we will find more of a Russian presence in Africa, the Middle East, South-East Asia and Central and Eastern Europe. These are our immediate neighbours and nation neighbours to a great extent.

Fourth, by that time, everyone agrees that Russia will be more developed. I should emphasise that it will be slightly less resource-dependent, and it will clearly be more digital. Russia will be on a steady track towards an old European state standard. Here, I completely agree with Michel Foucher that to the greatest extent, it will be a country like France. It will be big, with a population that will be relatively big but not sufficient to fill the territory properly.

We have a strong culture, but not in terms of “beaux-arts” culture, rather in terms of influence among the neighbours. Here, this diaspora helps us ensure the Russian language itself. Once again, we can make a comparison with France nowadays. People with a good command of the French language and those with a good command of the Russian language are about 300 million. The model for where we are going to is clear, though on completion, it is sure to be bigger than in France.

In addition, there is another comparison and sometimes comparison helps. It is regarding Turkey. Nowadays, we are not talking about the Turkish model, the Turkish size or Turkish trends as it was the rule 10-15 years ago. There are too many uncertainties in Turkey nowadays, and it is not clear how the brands that are present in that region will develop. It is the first area. Regarding the second portion, I want to talk about trends which I have already listed.

They are already set, though not all of them are clear, but they will be shown to the public and be evidenced to the public in the year 2018. The Russian presidential elections of the year 2018 will stress these trends and make them evident. Most of them will result in specific steps, specific policies, and specific actions after the presidential elections. The result of these elections is clear when it comes to personality. Putin will stay in power, since he has no competitors. All those who want to compete in the elections are not as strong, not as smart, and not as experienced. It is clear who will win the elections.

However, President Putin has already proved many times that he is one of the most surprising representatives of the elite nowadays. He has a very strong desire to change, to start a new policy, and to simply be an EU man. Do compare his first term in the years 2000-2005. It was the best period, with the most EU propelled Russian foreign policy. If we compare what we achieved by the year 2005 with the situation nowadays, it looks like it was a completely different country. It looks like it was a completely different president, but it is still the same man.

Now, I am very pessimistic about some policies and some steps. It probably sounds a little bit patriotic, but I believe in this president and I believe in many changes. These changes already started. First of all, there was a strong reshuffle in public administration regarding the regions. More than a dozen governors were removed from their posts and newcomers appeared. Some of these newcomers were completely unknown in Russia and surely abroad. Changes in the cabinet will proceed after the elections, because elections will simply give a pretext to make these changes. In Russia, we always need a pretext. Then, in the last three years, new branches, new industrial policies have proved their results, and it is not because of sanctions. I always compare this with Central and Eastern Europe, because we started from the same point. We have nearly the same GDP when it comes to per-capita GDP. We are nearly the same when it comes to mentality, but look at the economic discussions and social discussions in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech and Slovak Republics. The discussions are about very minor thing from the 1990s.

Russia is marching ahead, and now it is propelled by an idea that is blown-up, but it still propels the digital economy. I guess that this artificially invented thing has moved the Russian economy and the whole Russian economic regulation mechanism towards something new. In addition, I highly estimate the Russian financial market and the Russian financial policy of the Central Bank, which has already surpassed the standards of Central and Eastern Europe. The size means the effects of these changes multiply faster and multiply on a bigger scale. These technical changes will bring democracy. I paraphrase the First Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Shuvalov, whom we mentioned yesterday in our private talk. He stressed it twice, once at the Russian Economic Forum, and a few days ago, he repeated it. Democracy in Russia is very much linked with economic reforms, and economic reforms go first. Only then comes this traditional aspect of demography.

Then, divergences are also sometimes not so noticeable from outside. I can even call it a growing pluralism within the Russian elite. When you observe the country from outside, you can say that it is in a weaker position and structured, with no chances. However, real political life, real political discussions happen among those who are considered as the ruling elite. Sometimes, the divergence is there, and the divergence is a source of change. It is much stronger between the ruling elite and those who pretend to be in a position. When this is turned inside the country, who is who? Who belongs to what grouping? Who should you talk to and who should you not talk to if you belong to this or that grouping? It is evident to nearly everyone. These are people who are not even at the top, but who are approaching it.



The third part of what I want to say is simply that there are four key foreign policy points and changes which I think could happen under the next term of President Putin, or at least in the first part of this term. First of all, we need to develop our relations with the EU, and it will happen. There will be a slight reshuffle when it comes to the hierarchy of bilateral relations. France will go first. I guess we could await the return of Britain after Brexit, because British people simply need additional room for manoeuvre, which they can have simply by activating Russia's policy. There are many other trends, even under this sanction period, which show that the Brits are looking more and more at what is happening in Moscow.

We will be less involved with Germany. There will be strong growth with Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, because now, there are no more emotions when it comes to Russia's policy towards the Balkans. We should get rid of what we previously had, having what is ours and what is not ours in the Balkans. Yesterday's first session with the two Prime Ministers of Serbia and Albania should be shown on Russian TV, to the general public. This is just to stop saying that Albanians and Serbs are destined to kill each other.

The reality shows that they have started talking. For those who continue thinking that all these divisions could be used in Russian foreign policy for the best foreign policy, it is the biggest mistake. Life has shown to us that in the last 27 years, we have tried to find divergences and to play upon these divergences all over the world. However, we have failed to use these intra-imperialist quarrels, as they were called under the Soviets. Under the Soviets as well, we had too many ambitions around this with poor results, and this ended our ambitions.

We will figure out how to deal with integration challenges that derive from the EU and how to re-approach both of the integrations, the Russian-led and EU-led integration. The Ukrainian crisis, at the very beginning, the climax phase of the crisis in 2013, showed a remarkable thing. It was something outstanding which was not so remarkable. You remember that we finally started these consultations between the EU and the Russian ministry of economic development, as well as subsequently with Boris in Ukraine. This dealt with how to create special relations with Ukraine with regard to the economy in Russia. This is in terms of economy and trade, because at that time, all these ties still existed. We demonstrated how to add to this their policy, which moved them towards the European Union.

These consultations came to nothing, but the fact that they started and that they engaged is a very promising thing, which should be repeated in a new iteration, then I will finish. We will experience stronger and faster development in a Russian-led integration, thanks to the smooth relations with the EU and I hope with Ukraine. It will be thanks to eventual changes to Belarus, and thanks to a newcomer to the Russian-led integration, Uzbekistan. This is a country which is open and tremendously rich, both in natural resources and as what you said, in intellectual resources.

It is out of comparison with other central Asian Republics. Under the Soviets, Uzbekistan was always the intellectual leader of the region. It was overshadowed by Kazakhstan's growth and ambitions after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, those who know Uzbekistan well understand that it has outstanding resources of initiatives and of modernity. It has new, positive challenges.

There are two last points. An absolutely key point for the next term is appeasement with the Ukraine and modernisation of relations. Crimea will stay as it stays now. It should be made clear that no one will make any specific moves there, but Crimea should be open towards Ukraine. Three years have proved that 50 years of Soviet rule linked Crimea to Ukraine. It was as linked as it was with Russia.

Crimea could be a starting point for better relations, because of its transport dependence on Ukraine, economic dependence, social dependence etc. However, the conflict in Donbass should be unconditionally stopped. These territories have no choice but to stay within Ukraine. I wanted to talk about states, but I do not want to dominate the discussions. The role of the states will decline, simply because we do not need each other so much in everyday life. For those who want to ask me why, I will explain.

Igor YURGENS

There will be a session for questions. I like the fact that the generation that follows me is much more optimistic than some of us, which is good. I am passing the baton to them.