



ALEXANDER PANOV

Member of the Advisory Board of the Security Council of the Russian Federation,
Professor and Head of the department of diplomacy of MGIMO

Igor YURGENS

The last but not least speaker on our list is Alexander Panov, Ambassador Extraordinaire and Plenipotentiary. When he was ambassador to Japan, we probably had the best relationships with this country. However, the deterioration was not caused by his return to Moscow, where he became the Dean of the Diplomatic School, one of the best diplomatic institutions in the Russian Federation. The floor goes to Alexander Panov.

Alexander PANOV

I want to be brief and to return to the subject of how Russia will be in 20 years. It is very easy to make a prognosis, and I follow the advice of Prime Minister Winston Churchill. He said, 'The obligation of a diplomat is to prepare a very convincing prognosis for leaders of what will happen in the days ahead. When this prognosis is not realised, then you should prepare an even more convincing report about why it did not happen'. I am sure that in 20 years, I will not be able to prepare a new prognosis, but now I can say anything, and in 20 years, please check whether you remember what I said.

In my view, in 20 years, we will definitely have a bipolar world, as was already mentioned, between China and the United States. In 14 years, China will already have 30% of world GDP, and the Chinese dream of the revival of China is a very serious one. America simply does not know what to do with China. Trump will go to China, and he is going to talk. He mentioned before leaving that he was going to talk about trade and North Korea. Is it really a problem between North America and China? No, it is not, but it just shows that America does not have any strategy towards China. Before, there was an idea to create 'Chimerica', as you remember. China rejected the idea, because in such a configuration, China will be a weak power. China has never wanted to be a lesser friend or a lesser partner to anybody.

I think that China is already preparing for such a situation, when it will be a bipolar world. They approached the United States 3-4 years ago, when Xi Jinping met with Obama and said, 'Let us divide the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific Ocean is big, and for us, it means the South China Sea and the Eastern China Sea. You may take the rest.' America said, 'No. We cannot allow you to prevent us from free navigation.'

For China, it was the fact that America said. We will block your naval route in some cases of emergency'. Then China reacted with the one belt, one road programme. They said, 'We will not need these sea routes. We will go to Europe freely, without your permission'. Now, also, China is starting to create or change financial systems, creating their own localised bank systems. They are saying that yes, in the future, China may ask not only to reorganise the IMF or World Bank, but the Chinese positions in such organisations will prevail, and will be above the American position. This is quite possible.

In such configurations, what might the place for Russia be? It is an interesting question. For Russia, there will not be any other way but to join China. Europe, however optimistic the prognosis, will not welcome Russia, whatever we do. For Europe and the EU, Russia in Europe means the end of the EU. They will do anything possible to keep us out of this organisation. We also see who is the most anti-Russian now. It is Germany. For me, it is rather strange.

You already heard the academician, Mr Dynkin, say we lost 42 million lives during the war. I do not understand what moral right Germany has to impose on us any sanctions after what they did, and after Gorbachev gave a green light for the unification of Germany. Germany is now once again pretending to be a great power once again, at least in Europe. Russia will be an opponent and will be a rival, so no way. Some are saying that it is simply that America does not like



Putin, and Putin's dog is afraid of Merkel. When Putin met with Merkel in Sochi, Putin's dog frightened her and that is why she does not like Putin.

That is a joke, but in reality, it is the case that the most anti-Russian state now is not even Great Britain, though Great Britain traditionally was not happy with Russia. It is Germany. For Russia, there is only one way, to go to China. Under what conditions will this be? There will be some kind of union. It will not be an alliance, because China does not want to have allied states, and traditionally, they did not have such states. However, it will be some kind of partnership, where China will have economic might and Russia will have military might and also might in technology to some extent. It has resources, which are so necessary for China.

We talked about energy, oil and gas, and said that someday all cars will have electric power. No one realised that we will have such a picture. Several million cars will be recharging their batteries in one night. How much electricity will it be necessary to have, and where will we get this electricity? Electric power stations should generate it, but using what? Is it water or solar power? No. It will be gas and oil, the same.

We will still have all the possibilities ahead, for at least 20 years, to be a very powerful country, with all these resources. In the future, we will also have water resources, which are enormous in Russia, along with timber etc. Without these, life is not possible, even in the digital era. For Russia, being a minor partner for China is not a possibility, but on the other hand, a combination of these two powers may be stronger than the combination of the United States and Europe. The possibility of Russian diplomatic skill and Chinese economic skill will be quite a powerful means in international relations.

Using this power, Russia and China may also reorganise international politics and international law. We talked yesterday about international law, saying that someone did something that was not in accordance with international law. Where is international law? It does not exist anymore. It is just on paper, because it was violated so many times. It is difficult to say who is now following international law. Even we in conventional diplomatic relations saw how the Russian Consulate was treated in the United States. It shows that such international regulations and rules are not respected.

I think that Russia and China should call some kind of international conference and say, 'Let us get together and formulate new rules of international law'. What is international law? It is not what Moses received from above. It is people who created this international law and it was adopted and respected, but it is not respected anymore. What is the difference between Kosovo and Crimea? This was debated yesterday, but it is clear that you can treat international law in your own interests, and to explain it in your favour. However, what is non-interference in internal affairs? For Russia and China, if both countries would like to be the leaders of the world, it will be a chance to create a new international order using new international laws. It is a place for Russia to take a leading role in such a process. I do not want to be long.

Igor YURGENS

We still have Q&A, so can you wrap it up? We will start questions and answers.

Alexander PANOV

To sum up, the future is very bright and it is shining, but the road to this future is very difficult and painful.

Igor YURGENS

There are those who think there is no difference of opinion or heated debate in Russia. You saw how the young generation of diplomats from MGIMO, and older generations of diplomats in Dip Academia, which is the same institution more or less, fight each other on the future of Russia. This is very good.