

# IGOR YURGENS

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**Steven ERLANGER**

Igor, over to you, please.

**Igor YURGENS**

Russia sees Trump as both a cyclical and a historical phenomenon. Similar change from Carter to Reagan symbolized the cyclical change from the policies of social justice to those of economic efficiency. Traditionally in foreign policy and bilateral relations Republicans were easier for the USSR and Russia than Democrats. Same happened two years ago. But the historical aspect of Trump consists of the existential change of the role of the USA in the world. Trump's protectionism has a geopolitical root. If China's strategy "Made in China 2025" is successful, the US economic and political future is gloomy. Internally Trump represents the fear of losing white dominance in the United States by the middle of the century due to demographic evolution.

By the same token Trump is a great catalyzer of the return to the bipolar world – authoritarianism vs liberalism. China, Russia, Vietnam, Iran, Turkey in the foreseeable future cannot be liberal democracies. However, in a way it is a more balanced international system than unipolar world if we manage to negotiate global security system like we did in Helsinki in 1975.

Trump is the obstacle on the way to benign global governance. Protectionism, demagoguery, populism are not the way forward but are the retrograde movement. By moving backwards we exhaust the planet and civilization we live in. New enlightenment, new convergence of religion and science, of socialism and capitalism – these are the problems we have to address at forums like World Policy Conference.

Thank you very much Steven. Special thanks to Thierry de Montbrial because this is an excellent opportunity for the Russians to say what they think about global governance, which is an enigmatic thing for most of us. Looking at Trump from this Soviet-Russian retrospective, there could be two options. First, this is cyclical, meaning that for the Soviets, the change from Carter to Reagan was even worse, so for us it is a cyclical thing when this great nation changes course, social justice versus economic efficiency. Trump symbolises, at the moment, a boost for the economic efficiency of the ruling class.

The US could easily rise or it could fall, as Paul Kennedy said in his book, *The Rise and Fall of the Superpowers*, because the US can overextend itself, and it looks as if protectionism, demagoguery and populism could overextend the US. We were talking about trade wars, and we all know that protectionism has its limits. It will backfire in terms of the demand and supply chain sooner or later. This war with China has its limits. I am on the side of those who think that the American people will give their answer to these questions through their history, institutions and traditions, and they will temper the President. Trump's obsession can be cured by American history and institutions.

Trump, for Russians, is a great catalyser of a return to the bipolar world – authoritarianism versus liberalism. We had, at the start of this century, naïve ideas and hopes that Russia would join the European family as one of its members, and now this is over. We are pushed into a natural or unnatural alliance with our great partner China and with other authoritarian regimes like Turkey, South America, Vietnam and so on, so from this point of view he catalysed the creation of a bipolar world.

However, in a way it is a more balanced international system which we know how to handle. We do remember this bipolar world which managed to create the Helsinki agreement, which managed to do many other things, because by definition we cannot all be liberals, and by definition certain nations cannot be nations of the rule of law, liberal democracy, open markets and so on. We are much closer at the moment to China than to Europe, and he catalysed this by his behaviour.



It is a good question which side of the equation he is on, and this creates a kind of imbalance. I do not want to speculate on the results of Mr. Muller's investigation. We will see this soon. If Trump is manipulated by Putin, the American people will see that. I have my doubts that we are so powerful. We never were.

However, from the point of view of those gathered here, we can go back to the question on global governance and what to do in this situation of bipolarity, big question marks, uncertainty and so on. There are different questions and challenges for the mid- to long term. We know that four billion people will very soon have problems accessing fresh water. We know that 11 of the megalopolis cities of this world will run out of fresh water in 10 years' time. We know that around USD 30 trillion are hidden in offshore jurisdictions and are not used for the betterment of the places we live and the commodities and services we need.

Therefore, we have to talk about good global governance because we are extinguishing the civilisation we are living in. Therefore, from this point of view, new enlightenment, a new convergence of religion and science, new recipes for the convergence of economic efficiency and social justice, of communism and socialism – these are the questions that a gathering like this should be occupied with much more than this particular very difficult stage of the existence of Trump as the leader of the free world.

**Steven ERLANGER**

Thank you.