

# ISABELLE LASSERRE

Diplomatic Correspondent for *Le Figaro*

**Virginie Robert, Foreign Desk Editor at *Les Échos*, Vice President of the European-American Press Club in Paris**

We are going to start the discussion with Isabelle who will give us a roundup of this election year so that we have a good grasp of what is happening. 44 countries are going to either have a new president or new parliament, and we also have elections in Europe, so it is something quite extraordinary.

**Isabelle Lasserre, Diplomatic Correspondent for *Le Figaro***

2024 will be an incredible year in terms of the elections organized absolutely everywhere, in India, the world's biggest democracy, South Africa, Iran, Brazil, Nigeria, Taiwan, Russia, maybe Ukraine of course, the European elections in Europe and the USA. I will try to understand if all these elections will represent continuity or rupture with the major geopolitical trends we have seen in the world in recent years. My guess is that it will be continuity because other than the USA, most of the elections around the world will have very little impact on the geopolitical trends we see today. There is no suspense around the Russian election, very little around Iran and the same for Byelorussia: the majority of the autocratic regimes will organize themselves to win the election.

Coming to democratic countries, even if the power of the BJP is challenged there is little chance that India's multi-alignment foreign policy will change. I came from Taiwan three days ago and the opposition, which wants a policy of appeasement with China, is not expected to win, but even if the ruling DPP loses the election, you will not see Taiwan becoming part of the China area again from one day to another. The important elections have already taken place in 2023 with Poland and Slovakia in Europe, which have changed their political direction, as well as Turkey with the re-election of Erdogan.

Of course, you might say that there is a big exception, which is the American election and if Trump is elected there is a perspective of major consequences first on aid for Ukraine and second, the future of NATO. However, even that is uncertain because can we really expect Donald Trump to sell-off the future of the Western world by cutting aid to Ukraine from one day to the next? I am not really sure. My point is that even if Trump is elected and comes back to Washington next year, this election will only accelerate the existing geopolitical trends. These trends do not favor the Western world at all and if you liked 2023, you will definitely love 2024 because on the menu we have the use of force being generalized, which month after month is replacing the rule of law. We will have the continued collapse of the international order from 1945 and with it the international institutions that were a guarantee of peace, such as the UN as well as the disarmament treaty. We will also have new challenges to the Western world, the continued decrease in democracies and increase in autocracies. We will have the continued split of the world into two parts, not camps but parts that are more like families, the Global South and the Global North. This trend will continue and be boosted whatever the results of the elections in India, South Africa and Russia or even the United States.



For me as a Western journalist travelling around, rather than elections the determining influences on geopolitical trends in 2024 will be first, who wins the war between Russia and Ukraine, and second the consequences of the war between Israel and Hamas. Meanwhile, while waiting for the next international order with new rules that everyone will have to work on, the previous one will continue to collapse and there will be more crises to come in a world that is becoming a jungle. One may be the crisis between Taiwan or China, there could be others in the Balkans, and of course in Africa.

I will end by quoting from Joe Biden in a conversation yesterday with the President of Chile. He said, 'In my view there comes a time maybe every six to eight generations where the world changes in a very short time. Here we are and I think what happens in the next two or three years is going to determine what the world looks like for the next five or six decades.'

**Virginie Robert**

A very defining moment but not coming from the elections in particular, as you said, because the most important ones were this year in Poland, Slovakia. Nevertheless, there is the big one next year that everyone is looking at and it is 2024.