

Panel I

How to Overcome Geopolitics and the Danger of a New World War

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Russia's Role in the New World Order

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all allow me to thank the Schiller Institute and Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche personally for this great opportunity of being here today with all of you, and discussing with the interesting and esteemed guests the future of the global world order and the role different countries and regions may play in it.

I'll also share with you the idea that with the current political and economic dynamics, both on global, regional and national scales, it's high time we openly discuss the future of international relations and principles that should guide the interaction between states and regions.

Unipolar, Multipolar, Multilateral

Let us look at some key ideas. First, even though we assumed a unipolar world with an absolute dominance of one superpower, is about to end soon, there is no alternative so far that is clear and feasible, and that is within our reach. A multipolar world, which has long been advocated by many countries, can be no better alternative.

Secondly, Russia's role in the new global order will be determined more by its domestic dynamics, rather than the composition of the world order. However, Russia will play an important part in all the different regions, and possibly globally, trying not only to stabilize its immediate neighborhood, but also serving as



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one of the interconnectors in Eurasia and one of the guarantors of global security and stability. Thirdly—and I guess this is one of the crucial points—we cannot change the global order overnight. If we want an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary change which will imply a global war, we first need to concentrate on rebuilding trust. But trust is also something that we cannot rebuild overnight.

It is widely assumed that the only alternative to the present status quo, is a multipolar world. When we talk about the future of the global order, nearly everyone, in Russia—in

Europe, in China, in the Middle East—agrees that the desired world order should be multipolar. But the idea of multipolarity traces back to the 1970s, with the rise of the Asia-Pacific countries, with the creation of the Trilateral Commission, etc. These ideas were extremely popular during the mid-1990s. However, our world is still not, in essence, multipolar. And what is more, when discussing polarity—multipolarity, unipolarity—people tend to get confused on the definition of polarity.

Multipolarity is, in fact, another version of the Congress of Vienna (November 1814 to June 1815)—a world order dominated by the balance of power and divided by several power centers, competing for the limited global resources. Although such an order is based on the interests of more than one state, it never takes into account the interests of smaller states, and those states that are not part of the global equilibrium, are disregarded by the global players. In a way, this kind of order will be a comeback of geopolitics, the thing we all try to

avoid when discussing the future of the global order.

But what can the alternative to a unipolar or a multipolar world order be? There is a growing debate in Russia about this. Recently, we have published a new article by our director general, proposing that an alternative to multipolarity can be multilateralism. He says that multilateralism can be the best alternative that prevents the world from sliding down into confrontation and, thus, world war.

The key difference between multipolarity and multilateralism, is that multilateralism is based on the balance of *interests* rather than balance of *power*. It is insufficient for such an order to be based solely on the existing structures of the West, like NATO, the European Union, NAFTA, etc.; It must also incorporate the UN, the G20, the OECD, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); and possibly—possibly—we can come to a sort of collective security system for the Middle East and Africa.

However, we should take into account that what Donald Trump is doing is a symptom of an institutional fatigue, not only in the West but also in the East, and therefore, if we want to slide to a multilateral world, we need to concentrate not only on the institutions but also on the regimes, international regimes, and first and foremost, on nuclear non-proliferation and development assistance.

Russia's Role

Talking about Russia's role in the new global order, I guess that Russia's role will, as I said, be largely determined by its domestic dynamics. Putin has entered his last term in power, and now he's likely to concentrate more on the domestic agenda than on the international one. This means maintaining several major economic reforms, dealing with pensions, with the economic output, etc., and of course, the issue of power transition and political stability after 2024.

This, however, doesn't mean that Russia will be leaving the global stage. We have to not be involved in all the matters the world offers to us, but what is crucial about the Russian foreign policy and Russia's position in the world, is that Russia's top foreign policy priority is internal and external security. This means that Russia is not willing, as it is constantly accused of by the West, to destabilize the regions bordering Russia, but is ready to use its military power and even project it overseas, as in the case of the Middle East in Syria, to help foster



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Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) with President of China Xi Jinping at the 2016 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit.

stability and help foster the national interests of the country.

This is how Russia remarkably differs from the EU and China, neither of which is involved in military operations overseas, but also from the U.S., which constantly interferes in global affairs, practically for short-term interests.

Secondly, while Russia is interested in stabilizing its bordering regions, especially the common neighborhood of the European Union and Russia, between Russia and China, etc., Russia will place more emphasis on the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. For Russia, the Belt and Road Initiative is not only an economic project which fosters Russia's position as one of the transport hubs and interconnectors in Eurasia, but is also a way of stabilizing its most dangerous neighborhood, involving the Central Asia countries and Afghanistan, which can possibly explode if we do not stop extremism spreading

there, and if we do not provide the people living there with a suitable economic alternative to raising drugs and terrorism. This is why Russia will continue its cooperation with China, especially with the co-development initiative President Putin and President Xi Jinping agreed to, concerning the co-development of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Also, when talking about Russia's foreign policy identity, I'm rather skeptical about the idea of "Eurasianism" in Russian foreign policy. I personally prefer the term "Euro-Pacific" power—in which we assume that Russia is a European country. But Russia has access to the Pacific region; it will be involved in all the matters, all the problems, all the conflicts that will go on in the Pacific region; and Russia can also serve as one of the parties interested in resolving these conflicts, especially the North Korea case and having access to the Asia Pacific gives Russia special relations not only with China, but also with the Republic of Korea and Japan, and also with the United States.

We can anticipate further Russian engagement in Syria, especially after the situation is stabilized and the terrorism is defeated. What Russia constantly proposes, apart from the postwar reconstruction of Syria, involving the European Union, the United States, of course, China, is creating a collective security system for the Middle East. This should also include not only Syria, but also Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iran, China, the United States, and the European Union and Russia, of course—as the guarantors that longstanding peace comes to the region.

I like the idea of the Eurasian Land-Bridge, but it's not only about the infrastructural project building rapid train lines from Germany to Moscow. It is also about people-to-people contacts. When we still have the visa regimes between the European Union and Russia, it really impedes the human, people-to-people contacts, and exchange of cultures, exchange of ideas, and exchange of opportunities.

The Trump-Putin Summit—What to Expect

Last but not least, as we all understand, the global order cannot be changed overnight. We can still propose some quick fixes in the meantime that would help stabilize Russia-Western and especially Russia-U.S. relations. First and foremost, I guess that many people here are very much looking forward to the upcoming Trump-Putin summit in Helsinki in July, but I guess not as much as they looked forward to the Trump-Kim

Jong-un summit—but still. I think we should not anticipate, much, these talks, especially because the two countries are coming in with an explicit roadmap of restoring the bilateral relations and getting Russia-West relations back on track.

But still, I think that if this summit happens, it will be a major breakthrough from the past four to five years, because I guess the last such summit was held six years ago in 2012, between Obama and Medvedev. The Putin-Trump talks can create an atmosphere of trust and cooperation that may help restore relations. This is also true with regard to the possibility of an upcoming visit of representatives of the U.S. Congress to Russia.

Meanwhile, Some Quick Fixes

What could be the possible quick fixes? Firstly, we need to restore the diplomatic representation of the United States in Russia and that of Russia in the United States. Expelling diplomats not only severely affected the political dialogue, but also people-to-people contacts—getting visas for Russian citizens to visit the United States now takes up to half a year or a year, and I guess the same is true for U.S. citizens wishing to visit Russia.

Once we have a political dialogue going, the most urgent issue the two Presidents should discuss, is maintaining the strategic stability. This includes not only the new START Treaty, its possible extension, and all further nuclear disarmament, but also the future of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Preserving the latter is vital for European security, and soon—as we want to avoid an ever-greater arms race and its possible, unprecedented escalation. We need an open dialogue between not only our politicians, but also our technical specialists, including the military, on the problems we have in implementing these treaties and what other actions we can take in order to resolve our differences.

The next steps will be, of course, talks on Syria to stabilize that country, and of course, taking control away from the terrorists and restoring it to the legitimate government; and also dealing with the Ukrainian problem. However, I'm not expecting that much will be done in the meantime regarding Ukraine, but still, if we have an atmosphere of trust and if we have an atmosphere of cooperation, we will be able to resolve it.

Once again, thank you so much for your attention, and I'm looking forward to your questions.