

Round Table

THE TRANSITION FROM UNIPOLARITY TO REAL MULTIPOLARITY: THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW GEOPOLITICS

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Conference Hall of the Radisson Royal Hotel

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A. S. ZAPESOTSKY: – Good afternoon, dear friends! Today, the moderator of our discussion is Igor Ivanovich Buzovsky, Deputy Minister of Information of the Republic of Belarus. He will perform this function brilliantly, no doubt about it. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that live broadcasting and audio recording of our discussion are being performed. I kindly ask you to speak very succinctly, energetically and concisely, so that our discussion does not turn into a set of monologues. This is very important, since the Likhachov Conference dedicated to the dialogue of cultures was originally conceived by Academician D. S. Likhachov and I as dialogues of scientists, people of science, culture, education, art, outstanding thinkers – generally, the best humanitarians not only of Russia, but also of the planet. We are lucky that our main activity is what we are really interested in, which we enjoy a lot. I sincerely wish you pleasant communication and success in our common work!

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – The issues of our round table discussion have been sufficiently elaborated at our previous meetings – the plenary sessions and the panel discussions – but we will try to make sure that today everyone has managed to express their thoughts not only to the participants of this round table, but also to those who is listening and watching us, because we are starting to receive feedback to the ideas articulated in the course of the plenary meetings. The floor is given to Maria Vladimirovna Zakharova, Director of the Information and Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

M. V. ZAKHAROVA: – It is important to understand that the current, obviously unstable situation in terms of international relations is the consequence of destructive actions of the West, committed in a frenzy, an intoxication induced by what they consider success in the Cold War. The ideology pursued by the regimes ruling in the West can be interpreted as ultra-liberalism or liberal dictatorship – I like the latter term more. The essence of the actions of the former pole in the bipolar system and their theoretical comprehension is that the collective West merely went wild, trying to determine the limits of what is permissible, but in fact, perhaps, just to crush everything that somehow restrained it. It should be noted that they've gotten away with many things. The first try was the Republic of Haiti. Then the decision on the intervention of the US troops, if you remember, was made with the UN Security Council's approval. Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria followed; there were nuances in each case, but the essence remained the same. A number of geopolitical catastrophes are a long and sad track record of Washington and NATO. Does this mean that in the future multipolarity, this pole will continue to cause destruction? No, it doesn't. And this needs to be understood. I am very well aware of the fact that for our supporters of the West, and for the West itself, this comprehension will not come immediately and will be very painful. But we still have to squeeze a slave out of ourselves.

Any system is seeking to balance itself. The well-known American economist Jeffrey Sachs, whose position on the Ukrainian crisis is at odds with one dominant in the West, wrote that the current global situation, the catalyst of which was Ukraine, is based on two American provocations. The first one is expansion of NATO and announcement of inclu-

sion of Ukraine and Georgia in this organization in 2008, the second one is establishing its own, not even pro-Western, but simply its own regime in the territory of Ukraine, which eventually lit the fuse.

Let's consider Ukraine as the most striking example of such political engineering. It was unnatural to try to embed this region that was part of Russia for centuries into the Western civilization; even more so, doing this in the accelerated, staged mode. We know perfectly well how civilizations develop, how they disappear or give rise to new civilizations. But all this should happen naturally, and not through crushing the traditional order, arrogantly demanding for the progress report on the plan implementation. We saw what ugly forms it can take. I will give just two examples: Poroshenko's statements about Ukrainian chivalry and the horrors that neo-Nazis from the banned organizations "Azov" and the Legion "Freedom of Russia" committed. But Washington went even further – it wanted to make Ukraine not just a flank of the West, but a real Anti-Russia.

History, including the recent times, contains enough similar examples – with peoples divided, with states disintegrated into parts, and with governments in exile, which the West loves so much. For instance, what is the Guaido project in Venezuela or the Tikhonovskaya project in Belarus? They are the same: forming an anti-state, anti-country, anti-society. In case of Ukraine, the project has been more ambitious, but its essence remained the same. Where is Guaido now? Nobody knows. He was expelled, and not even by his sponsors from Washington for whom it is normal to expel, exclude, get rid of those projects that did not play out (and those that did, too). Guaido was rejected even by his supporters within Venezuela. And what has Tikhonovskaya turned into? Exactly the same kind of a traveling salesperson, anathematized by both her country's people and those who initially placed the bet on her. It is clear that every similar project, as well as any sect that develops in opposition to traditional religions, will always have its own flock, up to a certain point.

But let's get back to Ukraine. All this has led to the serious tragedy which we are witnessing today. It is safe to say that a system responds to any external irritant either by crashing, if it is unstable, or by a reaction, if it is stable. The stress test that the world is currently undergoing consists partly from the legacy of the bipolar world order of the 20th century, partly from the United States' attempts to impose its hegemony on the world at the end of the 20th – the first quarter of the 21st century, partly from the emerging multipolar world order. And this clearly demonstrates the following: balance cannot be achieved if some centres of power seek to gain advantages at the expense of others. This is a very important feature of multipolarity. Yesterday we talked about features that centres of multipolarity can have. And this is an example of an anti-feature, that is, the feature that should not be characteristic of the emerging multipolar system, the one this system resists. And here we come to the main thing – to mechanisms of the future world order.

Currently it is obvious that mutually respectful communication among various poles is the basis of a stable, prosperous system of interstate relations. The modern world is both global and multipolar. Attempts to isolate Russia, surrounding it with a kind of a cordon, turn it into an outcast, as you can see, have failed either to reach the extent that was intended, or even to play out as a mechanism of influ-

ence. The states, in which about 85% of the world's population lives, do not perceive the collective West as an ideal of democracy, freedom, and well-being. They see its imperfections, and sometimes outright ugliness, more and more clearly.

And against this background, we continue to implement the independent, self-sufficient, multi-vector foreign policy, increasing the activity in various geographical areas. The Russian-Chinese strategic partnership keeps deepening, which is an important balancing factor in the global situation. Today, according to both the leaders of the two countries and experts, relations between Moscow and Beijing are the best in their history. Moreover, as you understand, this is not the end point, this is the highest indicator compared to the past, and the future is open. Relations within the particularly privileged strategic partnership with India steadily develop. Ties with Brazil and Iran, the UAE, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and many other countries strengthen, as well. Holding the 2nd Russia-Africa Summit in July 2023 in Saint Petersburg is intended to contribute to the largest expansion of Russian-African relations. By the way, I cannot but note that in response to any insinuations about the opportunism of our appeal at this stage to the African continent, we can simply remind that this is the second summit – the first was held in 2019. Holding the second summit, which will involve heads of African states, requires very serious and lengthy preparation, so it's clear that the idea has emerged not today. These are the points to keep in mind.

The focus of the global economy, followed by politics, keeps shifting from Euro-Atlantics toward Euro-Asia. Who or what contributes to this? First of all, Euro-Atlantics itself. Everything they have done over the past decades and before has caused reversals, revolts, or the focus shifts. The goals of their neocolonialist policy of the 1970s and 1980s were to locate production in Asia, use local resources for a penny payment, without applying the Western human rights standards there. They believed that everything would remain that way, simultaneously forgetting that they themselves launched the process of globalization, actually intended to enlighten certain parts of the world, develop other regions of the planet. But that's ridiculous! A fantastic story! It is also necessary to understand to what extent those regions, which they moved their production to, are susceptible to experience and how they have historically developed this experience on their own ground. And then, these two processes completely converged, resulting in appearance of a new powerful economic centre. And who is to be blamed for this? In the United States, Republicans talk a lot about this. The society's conservative part, which advocates promotion and support of real production, knows that they had done it themselves, with their own hands.

The European Union can no longer claim political, economic, and value leadership in the Eurasian space. It cannot and will not, because it delegated its leadership, and not partially, as we could say five or six years ago, but completely. Over the past year, the process of renouncing its own sovereignty in the European Union has ended. With the Brexit, the European Union was subjected to public humiliation, consolidating its entirely dependent role. The way Brexit took place, the way negotiations were going on, the way this event was presented to the world community – all this was the beginning of completion of the process of re-

nouncing any sovereignty by the European Union. Another factor in this context was open placement of officials and representatives of the bureaucracy in key positions in the European Union, who were not only focused on some liberal attitudes, but were fostered and brought to power by the hands of Washington. In fact, Washington did with the European Union the same thing as with Ukraine, except for a smaller civilizational rift, but in generally the same manner, walking with its tank tracks across fine European settings, completely destroying them.

The states-continent have real freedom to choose their development models, international partners, as well as opportunities for participating in various integration initiatives. One of the most dynamically developing regional associations is, of course, the Eurasian Economic Union, where Russia is chairing this year. Efficiency and relevance of the EAEU is evidenced by its extensive economic ties. Collaboration within the framework of the CSTO remains an integral factor of regional stability, and cooperation within the CIS develops as well. Within the CIS, this year has been declared the Year of the Russian Language as the Language of Interethnic Communication. Striking examples of multipolar diplomacy, mutually beneficial, equal, multilateral partnership in Eurasia and in the world as a whole are interstate associations, such as the SCO and BRICS, in which Russia actively takes part. There are neither leaders nor followers there, decisions are made on the basis of consensus, taking into account opinions of all the countries, even those that have recently joined. The process of accepting new members is not conditioned by strict requirements of the "either-or" type, at the level of blackmail, as is done in other block organizations. The lengthy negotiation process of joining our integration associations takes into account details, nuances, traditions, developing through harmonization, correlation of interests, and does not occur in the ultimatum manner, in which, for example, Brussels talks to Serbia now. This country, perhaps, would have existed quite well on its own, if it had not been put in such conditions, under which, willy-nilly, it has to move toward European integration. And now we understand perfectly well that this is not movement, but extreme-degree humiliation, and not behind the scenes, but explicitly demonstrative. We must give Serbia its due, it passes these trials with dignity.

In conclusion, I would like to say that efficient, established consensus is the key to successful multipolarity. We consider those who are always trying to blur the principle of consensus on various international platforms to be the most rabid opponents of multipolarity. But this, again, is either the American hegemony's intrigues, or attacks of the US satellites that have totally lost their independence. However, the dialectic of the historical process dictates further development logic of the situation. More and more states will understand the inevitability of forming the truly democratic international world order, and Russia's voice on this issue will sound increasingly louder in full solidarity with the voices of representatives of the global majority. I believe you are aware of the global online conference on multipolarity that took place on April 29, 2023. It was organized on the initiative of political scientists from Brazil, India, China and Russia. The event was unprecedented in its format and geographical scope. The marathon lasted for 17 hours, and involved over 120 speakers from more than 60 countries. The absolute majority of the participants of the meeting

agreed that there is no alternative to the multipolar world order. This event is just one of the evidences of emergence of the new fair world order. It will be a very difficult journey, but it has already been started.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – Maria Vladimirovna, I would like to understand, based on your thoughts, who is to be blamed and what to do in context of the fact that the United States placed their people in key positions in Europe? Not only the Russian Federation is outraged by this. For ensuring the transition from the unipolar world to real multipolarity, we need to know why and how this became possible. Due to economy, intelligence, or something else?

M. V. ZAKHAROVA: – We said yesterday that there are increasingly more examples of a real global hoax. The problem is that, although we are aware of staged nature of false messages of a number of states called the collective West, we cannot lose such a concept as trust, because we will all go to hell without it. These are the Scylla and Charybdis, which you need to pass between: we cannot either succumb to these false promises, nor completely abandon trust as part of international relations. We see remarkable examples of how different players' trust in each other, with all attributes of their own policies and their own interests, becomes the key to successful implementation of projects and the most ambitious plans. Now people often recollect the collapse of the Soviet Union and the situation that immediately preceded this event, because our current problems are rooted in this period. Many people say that we should have been smarter, more cunning, more right, etc. I don't even want to discuss it. I will express my personal opinion: there was certainly a chance to build the new world, when the Cold War was over. And looking back, we see how the West took advantage of this chance.

It has to be written in huge letters in all textbooks on political science that one of the clearest examples of not just a false essence, but the global unscrupulousness of the West was its policy in 1980–1990s. At that time, there was a unique opportunity to build the new fair world, including globalization in a good, right way, moving toward global deconfrontation. But this chance was destroyed by the West. Under the guise of processes related to integration, cooperation and the like, there was another planning of dividing the world into sectors: some should supply raw materials, the others should provide territories, the third ones – labour resources, etc. This historical period, in my opinion, should remain in scientific analysis as the most striking example of the essence of the collective West's policy. And, after all, I have not given any judgments now, neither positive nor negative ones. Let's recall: there was detente, disarmament, opening borders, liberalization of domestic legislation in our country and in other countries, and opening the markets in full – everything for building cooperation focused on the future in the global and peaceful way. And it was all trampled. NATO's expansion, coups in Ukraine, Libya, Syria are local examples. The global example is how the collective West responded to the end of the Cold War, considering that it was its victory, and not seeing the main thing – countries' desire to build the new world order.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – The floor is given to Andrei Dragomirovich Khlutkov, Director of the North-West Insti-

tute of Management of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Doctor of Economics, Professor.

A. D. KHLUTKOV: – Yesterday I said that it is pointless to argue about multipolarity, it is an obvious fact. The subject of discussion may only be some considerations about centres of power; although, to my mind, everything is clear about them. Perhaps only more precise coordinates can determine the global location of these centres of power. Now, I believe it is very important to raise the question in context of the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, adopted two months ago, on March 31. This is a very serious and relevant document that answers many of the questions we are facing today.

When analyzing multipolarity of the world, it is important to clearly structure and understand our own disposition. Russia has often resisted aggression, acted as a peacemaker, and participated in settling international conflicts. But we have always acted in the framework of some kind of a block, not alone, but together with our allies. The same thing is happening now. Maria Vladimirovna mentioned Serbia. We cooperate with this country very closely. I have three years of experience working closely with Serbia on the part of the Saint Petersburg Committee on Foreign Relations. And, of course, we understand how difficult their current situation is. I would like to draw your attention to, in my opinion, an unprecedented case illustrating the civil society's attitude. Last year we were at the site of the University of Belgrade. This is essentially a kind of an association of all Serbian universities, more than 100 thousand students study there, to be trained as specialists in almost all areas – from medicine to advanced level mathematics and nuclear physics. So, the professors of the University of Belgrade say, “We have been closely monitoring the Serbian government's actions. If we feel it deflects somewhere to the left or to the right of the Russian-Serbian agenda, we immediately write memos to the president, aligning the course in respect of strategic partnership with Russia.” It seems to me that this is a most valuable achievement when educated people, who, of course, largely express interests of ordinary Serbs, including those who study at the university and those who used to work there, participate in foreign policy. I consider this to be the highest level of people's democracy in the most civilized form, when through science, through discussion, through publicity, the political leaders of the country are supplied with important data and roadmaps.

I cannot but say that it is necessary to define a kind of a pool of allies, which is needed in any multipolarity, because the stronger the pole is, the more numerous and versatile it is. And, of course, from all points of view, this can be attributed only to competitive advantages of this pole. The former Warsaw Pact Organization is the most striking example of our allies' consolidation. We are probably working out the draft of a new “Warsaw Pact”, it is obvious by all signs, and this seems to me an absolutely right vector. At different stages, we had decisively separated from some actors, as Vladimir Ilyich said, but it is precisely for uniting in the future. And I believe that we need to keep this in mind all the time: not just to state that someone is at a certain pole, but also to fight for people to switch from other poles to ours and unite around the Russian Federation. It is important to emphasize that any serious work, including

that under the banner of civilization, requires strengthening the civilization itself. And at the heart of this, of course, lies the educational process.

I am still impressed by yesterday's meeting of the Council of Rectors of Saint Petersburg Universities, which was a tough discussion about ways of transforming the Bologna system. We actually abandoned it in favor of returning to the proven Soviet model. We have no reason not to trust it: if I ask now to raise hands of those who studied for four years at the bachelor's degree program, there are no such people here, as everyone graduated from a specialty program. I just want to remind you of one historical fact: at the beginning of the 1950s, a very serious delegation of congressmen from the USA came to the USSR on a visit. They studied the phenomenon of our victory: how the Soviet people managed to win the Second World War and, having suffered huge human losses, restore the almost completely destroyed economy of the country's European part in the shortest time period. The final closed report of the US Congress contained the conclusion that if the Soviet system of higher education is not transformed, the Russians will never be defeated in any war – either cold or hot.

Now it is very important that we consider the education system as a strategic area of our security and our strength. Therefore, when today they say that it is necessary to return to "basic" education, but leave four years of study, it is, of course, entirely wrong. We must take into account our own interests and, of course, focus on the consumer. And at present, the consumer is our industry, which is being restructured, focusing on the principle of technological sovereignty. And much of what is happening, including various events and processes in the international arena, suggest that first of all, we should rely only on our own strength. As the saying goes, there was no happiness, but misfortune helped. This is very important, and national and strategic security not only of Russia, but of our entire block, depend on our capacity to prepare a generation of qualified specialists who, *inter alia*, are able to make right management decisions. Almost everything depends on it. Therefore, management issues should also be included in the current agenda as part of adjustment of our approaches to improve the higher education system.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – Andrei Dragomirovich, your idea is very close to my mind; from time to time I think that when talking about transition from unipolarity to multipolarity, we often tend to think of technocracy, economy, processes in the real sector of economy. And, in my opinion, a certain balance with the humanitarian and social spheres should still be achieved, and education is one of the key areas. It was not by chance that I asked Maria Vladimirovna the questions "Who is to be blamed?" and "What to do?". Promotion of ideas was performed not only and not so much through economy, and apparently allowed the United States to integrate into key management mechanisms of the EU and other world communicants due to goal-setting, which was determined primarily not through technocratic and economic priorities, but through values. Therefore, today in the Republic of Belarus, the Sustainable Development Goals have been declared as the national strategy.

Literally the day before yesterday, in Belarus, Ioanna Kazana-Vishnevetsky, who acted since 2018 as the Per-

manent Coordinator of the UN within the competence of the Sustainable Development Goal in Belarus, resigned her powers. Her career at the UN was built in Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania, and before coming to Belarus – in New York. Since April 2019, the position of Permanent Representative of the United Nations Development Program in Belarus has been held by Aleksandra Solovyova, a citizen of the Russian Federation, Master of Public Administration at the University of Colorado, Denver. Since November 2012, the office of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in Belarus has been headed by Olga Shcherbina, Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Mississippi. She is responsible for development and implementation of the IFC strategy in the country, maintaining the dialogue with the government, developing the investment program and supervising IFC advisory assistance projects implemented in Belarus. These are key things that are not confined to the economy, and are strategically and vitally important for the state. These are goals, strategies for developing contacts at a completely different level, formation of loyalty, parities of thought development in relations not only between countries. Why does this happen? Does this have an economic justification: investments in social projects, in the educational system? And aren't all these experts a kind of a Trojan horse? That's what I'd like to speculate about.

M. V. ZAKHAROVA: – If you look at the number of such American specialists travelling around the world, and joining regional programs, and multiply this by the endless concern with matters all over the world expressed from the rostrums of the Washington State Department, I would say: you should visit Philadelphia, just walk there, go along its streets. I am sure they wouldn't be the way they are shown in the famous videoclip for the same-name song. This is real hell on earth! And these are not consequences of a natural disaster, nor a zone of destruction after a global catastrophe where one cannot enter without harm to health, nor an ice floe with polar explorers which cannot be moored, nor a sunken ship. It's just a city in the territory of the United States of America, which a long time ago turned into a real sewer, a natural disaster that struck thousands of people. Isn't it possible to use all the power of American expert thought to get Philadelphia out of trouble at least? And there are a huge number of such cities in the USA! Ghost towns where people have lost all human dignity and no longer even understand what a man essentially is. And it's because all kinds of experiments are allowed and legalized. I'm sorry, but in New York, stores selling drugs are absolutely legally advertised, and are located approximately every 50–100 meters. Just think about it! Isn't it possible to direct the power of the US expert thought to overcome certain problems within the States? I am absolutely serious now: as soon as the administration of some US president shows the world that it is capable of solving the problem of at least one of its cities, hope will dawn. Everyone will understand that they can do it. And how is it possible to deal with problems from Myanmar to Sudan – and we see the results of their activities: people are already moaning! – if a particular city is plunged into the abyss in the territory of the United States? That's all I have to say about experts from Mississippi.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – The floor is given to the RAS Deputy President, Member of the RAS Presidium, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Scientific Director of the Institute of Immunology and Physiology of the RAS Ural Branch, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor, Honorary Doctor of SPbUHSS Valery Aleksandrovich Chereshev.

V. A. CHERESHNEV: – Concerning the sewers, which Maria Vladimirovna spoke about. I remember my first visit to Austria in the 1990s. We approach the Schoenbrunn Palace in the centre of Vienna, and what do we see at the entrance? Hippies are lying on the ground, fifteen or twenty people. There is an ambulance nearby, nurses inject them with narcotics using sterile needles. I ask, “How is that possible? This is a crime!” They answer me, “No, no, these are sick people, we know them all. If we don’t inject them with the narcotic, they’ll crush everything here.” “But how is that?” I continue resenting. “Is there really no police?” And they answer me, “We can’t turn everyone over to the police. This is a mass phenomenon, they need to be re-educated.”

M. V. ZAKHAROVA: – Substitution therapy.

V. A. CHERESHNEV: – Exactly. And in Amsterdam, they generally serve everyone. The trailers stand everywhere, so that – God forbid! – two or three people do not use one syringe, because in the West, HIV is transmitted via injections in 80% of cases, and not through sexual intercourse. Therefore, they carefully monitor that one syringe isn’t used twice. Wow, what a service! Heights of democracy! We are outraged, “The sewer! Terrible!” And they answer, “We take care of everyone.”

Now think about it: how did the United States become a hegemon of the world? It’s a whole system! I give lectures on immunology, and can assure you that in the beginning of the last century there were no Americans in this field. Who received the Nobel prizes? Europe. A little bit – Austria, France, Russia, and a lot – Germany. Almost a year later – Germans, Germans, Germans in all fields. And what’s next? When the Nazis came to power, America took all the scientists. Karl Landsteiner could not receive the Nobel Prize in Austria and immediately received it in America a year later, for the blood group discovery, although Paul Ehrlich had already done it before him. In Europe, there is a discussion; they argue, they reason, and in the USA they promote everything instantly. The Nobel Prize was awarded 970 times, of which more than 400 went to the United States. We have a little over 20 Nobel laureates in our country, and they have 400. Do you feel the difference? They now have ten Nobel laureates working at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, eight at Harvard, and six at Stanford.

At Stanford, tartan-covered running tracks are laid throughout the university. And along one of these tracks, under the glass hood, there are sculptures by Rodin – 110 figures. Not copies, but originals. In 1930, Rockefeller bought the entire collection from Rodin, the first six variants, and presented it to Stanford University. At first they stood in a building, then – in the basement of the library, then – in the museum, and later it was decided to place them near the track for running, and they were put outdoors: “Gates of Hell”, “Bronze Age”, “Thinker”. And there are no

guides, only bronze figures, and the signs saying “Rodin”. The marbles are under the hood, the bronze is also protected. People run... and become more cultured. I come to Paris for a conference in the Pasteur Institute. I go to the Rodin Museum: “How many sculptures do you have?” – “78.” – “Why 78? There are 110.” – “Well, you know, our collection is not complete... billionaires have bought it out.” The Rodin Museum has 78 sculptures, and the runners at Stanford – 110. Why am I saying this? The United States has become a force not of a sudden: it has been moving toward this monopolarity for a hundred years. Science, culture, education – absolutely everything was used.

Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov believe that it is necessary to understand in detail what the multipolar world is. Diplomats, historians, etc. express their opinions on this issue. In this context, the concept of “informal empires” arises, around which the main poles of the world will be formed. The first empire is the United States of America, the second one is China, and the third one (in question) is Russia. It’s in question because empires interact between each other, for example, the United States and China. And many countries have broken off relations with Russia, and now the only thing that binds us to the US is arms control. As the Russian Ambassador to the United States A. I. Antonov rightly said, in our relationship with America, we’ve come to the end of the line. What role will Russia play in the multipolar world if relations with our country are deliberately severed, and we are isolated? These important issues need to be analyzed in detail.

In the course of today’s discussion, results of the reforms were also talked about. As an outcome of reforming the state academies of sciences in 2013–2014, three academies were merged (the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences and the Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences), real estate and property were transferred to the Federal Agency of Scientific Organizations (FANO), and then the Ministry of Science and Higher Education formed the corps of experts of the Russian Academy of Sciences for scientific support of the work of public bodies and expert evaluation of important state projects, etc. But we were not explained what this management system should lead to.

Two main functions of scientific and methodological expertise can be distinguished: expert evaluation and building a future prospect (analysis made by scientists). But for performing scientific and methodological guidance, it is necessary to conduct constant monitoring. However, even if a project receives a negative review, nothing will happen, according to Russian laws: funding will not stop, and the work will continue.

There are two management systems (be it the state, science, etc.). The first system is centralized, the vertical of power, as in the army. But how can this principle be implemented in the field of science? The second system is democratic. In science, until we discuss everything and reach a consensus, no approval for implementation will be given, and this is what we invite the experts for.

Science inherently presupposes constant opposition of the minority to the majority. It is always required to prove something, to justify, and the majority says, “It cannot be.” And the state should take all this into account. We follow the informal slogan, “Long live all the things that make us despite all odds!”

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – Maria Vladimirovna, please.

M. V. ZAKHAROVA: – The discussion touched upon the issue of European health centres, which are gradually disappearing because of the so-called “overflow” of specialists. I would like to articulate two points in the context of this thesis.

The first point. Germany, which has been positioned as a leader in the healthcare sector until now, failed to provide a product as a response to the spread of the virus during the pandemic. This served as an indicator. How did this become possible? The largest manufacturers of medications are concentrated in Germany, strict discipline is in effect, the role of this country in regulating the pharmaceutical market is great, but it could not provide the product.

The second point. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, purchased the American Pfizer vaccine worth tens of billions of euros to provide the entire European Union with it. The investigation on this matter is underway now. If the European Union has so much money to buy the vaccine, then it should have allocated the funds to research and stimulation of its own production based in Germany, France, and Italy. But the industry is gradually collapsing, which indicates the next stage – destruction of the European identity: we are witnessing not only the re-purchase of medications and licensing them in their own manner, but doctors are also re-purchased, and people destroying the EU identity from within begin to be introduced.

The same thing happens in sports. The EU had its own sport built on this principle. What happens now with Russian and Belarusian athletes and sports in general? While the Europeans had the opportunity for outbidding our athletes, they made it possible for us to develop our sport and participate in competitions, because it was profitable for them. We trained athletes on the base of our infrastructure, and they outbid them at the moment of takeoff. But everything changed when athletes themselves wanted to stay in their countries. As soon as athletes decided to compete for their country for a number of reasons (financial, material, ideological, etc.), began to stay inside the country and work for sporting achievements, a blow was dealt at the Russian sports.

The next stage is establishing preferences, then destroying those who previously ensured these preferences. There are a lot of similar examples in medicine and in sports.

V. A. CHERESHNEV: – In Russia, several vaccines against COVID-19 have been developed by N. F. Gamalei Centre (A. L. Ginzburg, D. Yu. Lagunov), M. P. Chumakov Research Centre for Development of Immunobiological Medications, and the Novosibirsk VECTOR Research Centre. Names of developers of the domestic vaccines against COVID-19 are known, unlike in the European Union, because Germany and France did not participate in developing the vaccines. Huge pharmacological concerns operate in the territory of these countries, but pharmaceutical companies are not interested in research to be carried out by individuals, which is prescribed in their charters and is related to distribution of profits.

Having compared two academies of sciences – Russian and Chinese, we can draw the following conclusion. When the Chinese Academy of Sciences was established on No-

vember 1, 1949 (simultaneously with formation of the People’s Republic of China), the USSR Academy of Sciences (branches, elections, etc.) was taken as a model, but the Chinese refused from the two-stage system: they have only academics and no corresponding members, though the number of members is the same as in the Russian Academy of Sciences – 800 persons. In 1977, the Chinese Academy of Sciences spun off the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences from its membership into the independent state academy – the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In China, besides two large academies, there are also small academies: medical, arts, etc.

The Academy of Social Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Sciences thrive, as academic science is at a high level in China. They work using the Russian system, but there is a nuance. Over the past 30 years, Russia has spent about 1% of GDP on science (now it is 1.07%; in 2012, when the President’s May Edicts were issued, it was instructed to increase this figure to 1.78% by 2017). In China, expenses on science in 1949 amounted to 0.5% of GDP, and in the last 12 years – 2.4%, in the United States – 2.9%.

As for the issue of ideology that has been touched in course of the discussion, I’d like to state that ideology must be returned. We must educate patriots of our country. Let me give you an example: if China asks its scientists who work all over the world to return to the country, 99% will come back; and if we do the same, hardly 10 people will return.

A. D. KHLUTKOV: – Commenting on vivid examples from the fields of medicine and sports, we should say that not only sports and medicine, but also the entire financial system is in the hands of the same people. Attempts to correct this, to develop the national financial system, to switch to national or regional currencies in international trade meet resistance. Perhaps the main reason for our opponents’ dissatisfaction is that we ventured to rebel against the Bretton Woods system, and proposed using national financial systems, regional currencies, based on the principle of fairness, proportionality and benefits of national participants in the global economic process. Not only in medicine and sports, but in almost every industry, we can find evidence to back up our words.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – The floor is given to Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus Aleksandr Gennadievich Shumilin.

A. G. SHUMILIN: – I would like to introduce a number of economic categories into the discussion about the multipolar world, try to diagnose and determine the method of treatment. All this is required to understand the deep processes taking place today.

The cyclic nature of the economy is indisputable. Approximately every one hundred years the socioeconomic formation changes, development of economy and the state slows down, and humanity comes up with something new. In the United States of America, this change occurred at the turn of the 20–21st centuries, when the liberal economy, which was built all over the world and was based on money, demonstrated the lack of the necessary pace of development, i. e. slowdown in its development began. This was overlapped with the coronavirus pandemic. The liberal

global economy has shown its developmental inconsistency under the Covid restrictions, which outwardly manifested in vulnerability of the world system construction.

Over the past hundred years, 55% of the economical resources have migrated from the material segment to the so-called intellectual segment. Today, 55% of the world's resources is the intellectual capital, not machines, other equipment, natural resources and energy. It is safe to say that the world is ruled by technologies that increasingly determine the development of the civilization.

During the crisis, the first thing that Western countries did was disconnecting Russia from international payment systems. This limited our economies to a certain extent, but Belarus and Russia quickly coped with the problem. Besides, our countries have been restricted in technology. And it hit us harder. For example, they stopped supplying Bosch ABS systems for cars. Although they are not difficult to be made technologically, it will take time. Also, we do not have chips to manufacture microelectronics, and, as in any complex technological process, it will not be possible to quickly organize their production.

Meanwhile, the digital economy emerges, and it is pure intelligence. That is, the approach to economic processes has changed in its essence. Writing a program code does not require large investments and resources. All high-tech companies, such as Google, Microsoft, Tesla, are growing. Well-known oil campaigns are more than a hundred years old, and who knew about *Tesla* ten years ago and could imagine that today its value would be over 44 billion US dollars?

The main problem of the multipolar world is emergence of artificial intelligence. Elon Musk suggested suspending its development. But artificial intelligence has already been created, and it is better than human. Unlike our intelligence, it learns quickly. Today, a computer program draws well, writes texts, and sometimes it is even difficult to distinguish which text was written by a machine and which by a person. Computer-generated paintings, houses and land plots are already being bought in virtual reality.

We live in the ever-changing world. At present, the humanity cannot realize what development of artificial intelligence and technology will lead to. Creation of a steam locomotive, automation of production, emergence of electricity – all these discoveries led to increasing labour productivity. No one can currently predict how technology will affect the world as a whole.

A Soviet movie “Adventures of Electronic” was about a robot. And when the robot (actually artificial intelligence) was in fact designed, representatives of unfriendly countries asked how it can be stopped and limited. If there is a button, an AI can be stopped. The Electronic, that is, an artificial intelligence, at one point decided that he wanted to become a human being, get out of its creator's control and live like an ordinary person. Even then, the following idea was expressed: AI might want to become a human being. At the end of the film, Electronic voluntarily returned to its creator. What if he hadn't come back and started living among people?

When talking about the multipolar world, we understand it traditionally: as the government, the state, the people. And in ten years, a technological definition may appear. Are we ready to realize and discuss what will happen? Are we ready to compete with AI, a completely new reality that is already on the threshold? Perhaps in the future, scientists

will need to realize where to go next and how to influence these processes, which are already influencing the humanity. The multipolar world may look very much unlike the traditional models.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – There are different opinions about how the decline of Europe will happen: either it will have to be done manually, or it will just occur by itself. Aleksey Anatolievich Gromyko, Director of the RAS Institute of Europe, knows the answer to this question.

Al. A. GROMYKO: – This discussion was started by O. Spengler, and it will continue in the 21st century. At the Plenary Session and the Panel Discussion, we talked about Europe, about polycentricity, what it may be, how new centres of power will be distributed, about their combination and political geometry. But, to my mind, in the context of European studies and view of the world's state, it is necessary to say a few words about problems of arms control. This important issue has not yet been touched upon.

We often use the expression “strategic stability”, referring to the system of checks and balances that was developed in the 1960s and 1980s in relations between the USSR and the United States of America. However, the term “strategic stability” appeared only in the late 1980s. I remember from speeches and communication with Andrei Andreevich Gromyko that at that time the country's top political leaders talked about establishing military-political parity in essence. At present, the situation with strategic stability is miserable. It is considered that in the framework of strategic stability, ten agreements were concluded between the USSR (later Russia) and the USA, of which only the Treaty on Measures for Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START III) is actually in effect. Russia suspended its participation in the START III Treaty after 20 years of its implementation, after the United States, neglecting the strategic stability, withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Systems Limitation Treaty in 2002.

I must say that in our case this is just suspension of the START III Treaty, not withdrawal from it. The Treaty was signed in Prague in 2010, and its validity period ends in 2026. The Treaty has been suspended, but the Parties to it continue to comply with the Agreement between Moscow and Washington on Notifications of Launches of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles signed in 1988.

Now experts are elaborating scenarios of what will happen if a new form of the Treaty is not proposed in 2026, which could replace START III. They recall the fate of the START II Treaty, which was not ratified by the US Congress in 1979, but until 1984, the Parties adhered to the principles specified in it.

Today the important factor is China, which continues to actively and rapidly increase its nuclear triad. According to American experts' forecasts, by 2030, China will have created about one thousand nuclear warheads, and by 2035 – one and a half thousand units, that is, in fact, it can match Russia and the United States by this indicator. Since the time of D. Trump's presidency, Washington has been doing everything to involve China in negotiations on strategic stability.

In 2023, Russia (represented by its President) raised the demand that France and Great Britain should also join these negotiations, since de facto, and in some ways de jure, their

nuclear arsenals are part of the combined military power of NATO. There are other negotiation “strings” for involving them in discussing this issue, since these countries are members of the official nuclear club and permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Today, the European security system actually has ceased to exist. Its remains are in ruins. One of the root causes of this is NATO’s expansion, about which much has been said over the past 30 years. Russia, the State Duma and the Federation Council recently denounced Russia’s participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), transferring to the legal field what has de facto been happening with the CFE Treaty for 20 years, if we recall the history of this issue, starting with the Istanbul Summit of 1999 (confidence and security measures in Europe under the OSCE umbrella, the Vienna documents, etc.).

But I must say that communication is still maintained between Russia and the leading military command structures of the West, the United States and NATO, and, if necessary, the Defense Ministers and the Chiefs of the General Staff can be in touch. We have seen this several times in 2022–2023. The Agreements (they were concluded between the USSR and the USA in 1972 and 1989) are also observed, in order to avoid incidents on the high seas, in airspace, and conducting dangerous military activities.

As for the Russia – NATO Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security, the Parties have not yet declared that it is null, but de facto it is. NATO’s eastern flank is turning into a kind of a bastion. There, the infrastructure and contingent of troops are increasing from the battalion level to the brigade level: about 40 thousand NATO troopers are quartered in the countries comprising the eastern flank.

I wonder what will happen at the Vilnius NATO Summit in July this year. There are grounds for believing that NATO may move from the concept of flexible response to the concept of prohibiting access or prohibiting enemy attacks; in other words, the number of military personnel, warehouses and, accordingly, infrastructure in countries that border with Russia or are in close proximity to it, will continue to increase. Let me remind you that Finland has already joined NATO, and Sweden may also join this organization in 2023.

The issue of security is very important for Europe, as well as for us and other countries, in particular, in terms of the situation’s development after the USA’s withdrawal from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. In the USA, the ship multi-functional combat information and control mobile missile system Typhon, which is capable of firing Tomahawk cruise missiles and SM-6 anti-aircraft hypersonic missiles, has already been developed and even engaged in experimental firing and testing.

In principle, nothing, even in theory, can guarantee that in two or three years new medium- and shorter-range ground attack systems will not appear in the territory of Europe. This is directly related not only to the European theater of military operations, but also to the nuclear doctrine. If this happens, the flight time to Moscow, Saint Petersburg and other decision-making centres (in the political and military spheres) will be 2–3 minutes, not 8–10, as it is now. And then, according to the experts, there will be

no other way out than to make a decision on transition from the retaliatory strike concept to the concept of a preemptive strike. The situation will be much more risky and uncertain than it is today.

In 1968, when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was signed and its ratification began, only five countries owned such weapons (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States); to date, nine countries have already joined the Treaty (including India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea). In the West, they say Iran is highly likely to join these countries sooner or later. Recently, we have heard statements from high officials of Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Japan that if the situation changes, these countries may think about producing their own nuclear systems.

Now, I’d like to say a few words about the statement that everything in Europe currently revolves around the Ukrainian crisis. It is not so much self-sufficient as it has exposed contradictions in international relations that have appeared even before 2022; by the way, the same thing can be said about the pandemic in 2020. In the spring of 2020, much has been written about the chance the world has finally obtained to jointly confront the common threat, forget about contradictions, bury the hatchet, etc. But the COVID-19 pandemic has led to just the opposite result.

The Ukrainian crisis has developed along divergent trajectories: the more Russia defended Minsk-2, the more actively the other party developed plans to inflate the confrontation. Now in Ukraine, the West is waging a de facto proxy war against our country. This is a huge challenge. The situation, as it has been said more than once today, is very tense, but in the coming years we will have to deal with this fact anyway – with maximizing the tasks to achieve the goals that were set in February 2022.

Having risen to the global level, we can say that in the coming years, there will be the struggle for minds and wallets, and for hearts of the global South. The centres of power are in the West and in the East, and it is clear that no one can become a leader and gain a foothold in these positions alone. It is necessary to gather coalitions of those who want to do it, albeit informal; but to do it together with those who share our views, tactical or strategic.

Assuming that external factors will provide maximum opportunities for development is wrong. The society and economy of a country that claims leadership should be stress-resistant. This country needs to have the ability to regulate conflicts in its sphere of influence. For example, recently the Kremlin made a big step forward in settlement of the relations between Yerevan and Baku.

The last thing I’d like to draw your attention to in the context of strategic planning is that we must make forecasts based on the less convenient scenarios, and not the best ones. If we assume that the situation will develop according to a less favorable scenario, and respectively prepare for the fact that much more reserves and potential will be spent than in a more favorable scenario, then this will be the key to our success and victory.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – Aleksei Anatolievich, you said that in the short term, the East may determine the future. I would like to develop this topic. The floor is given to the teacher from Norway, Jan Stokseth.

J. STOKSETH: – I will express a few thoughts, but I will start with the words that seem to me more beautiful and important than the sayings by Henrik Ibsen, Dostoevsky, or Tolstoy. I hope you will understand where these words come from. This is the basis of our culture, and it is very important to keep this in mind when discussing the multipolar world that we may be heading toward. These are the words, “And God created man in His own image. In the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and possess it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every animal that creeps on the earth.”

In the world on the threshold of which we stand, these words can be regarded as hateful, since they indicate differences, for example, two sexes are distinguished: there is a man and there is a woman. In the new world, it is used as a weapon, mainly against Russia, Iran, Hungary, because the leaders of these countries say that there are two sexes. And when we imagine the multipolar world, I also see it divided into two poles.

There are people who profess different religions – Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam. They will say that there are two sexes – man and woman. And this is the basis of their picture of the world. In Norway and in the West in general, this is the main point for attacks on these countries. It’s childish, but it really is.

Let us take Hungary as an example. In this country, the standard of living is growing, people are happy, but in Norwegian and Western newspapers its residents are considered homophobic. As Maria Vladimirovna said, mentioning Philadelphia, it does not matter whether the standard of living in your country is high or low if you are homophobic. And in future, transgender people will appear on this path. And what is transgenderism? In my mind or in my dark imagination, this is just a rehearsal for transhumanism. It is about artificial intelligence and the combination, fusion of man and machine. It’s possible. Scientists have made significant, if I may say so, progress in this area. So transgenderism may be needed to prepare us for the future with transpeople.

To my mind, in the multipolar world, there will be a division into believers, for whom religion determines the concepts “man” and “woman”, and those who go beyond this platform and for whom everything becomes possible. If we are created by God, then we have a certain responsibility. If we are descended from nature, then it is a matter of survival of the strongest. In this case, everything is allowed. You have no moral obligations if there is no starting point, at which the Lord determines your existence.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – The floor is given to Vladimir Konstantinovich Mamontov, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the newspaper “Komsomolskaya Pravda”.

V. K. MAMONTOV: – Discussions held at the Likhachov Conference are very interesting and represent a kaleidoscope of opinions. Then there comes the one who arranges the pieces of glass in various colored patterns. This is highly valuable.

I don’t quite understand the term “multipolarity”. From the school physics, I know that there are only two poles, for example, in the radio tube, there is a cathode and an an-

ode. Everything else is various adjustments. The story that we lived in the bipolar world, and now the unipolar one is coming, is unbelievable. This situation is impossible, even according to school physics, not to mention the advanced sciences.

I like to restore old equipment, among which I single out the Soviet radio set “Symphony” (player and radio receiver), one of the best tube radios. Talented scientists worked on its creation, who, by the way, also launched Gagarin into space and created the nuclear reactor.

If we survive the current stage, and the multipolar world is created, I will say, “Stay, fleeting moment! You’re divine!” But today nothing will come of this, as we do not yet know how long the balanced post-war situation will last. In fact, the current situation resembles the one that developed after 1945, when everyone was already tired of the war: having counted the losses (except for Americans, who counted their profits), the people said, “Let there be multipolar world at least for a while.” But this situation did not last long. We have seen how this can work and by what efforts it is achieved.

However, I feel that the “Symphony” with its old radio tubes will not last long. People who own technology and have different views of how the world should develop will come and say, “Remove the lamps!”

In the course of today’s discussion, it was already mentioned that there is a struggle for hearts, minds and wallets. But contradictions constantly arise. And if the wonderful time comes – the multipolar world, and no war, – it would be great! It would have been a symphony reminiscent of the old days, which, as it turns out, are possible, but we have forgotten a bit about them.

I like stories about artificial intelligence. I believe that all this is targeted at perfection of man, his immortality, prolongation of life. If in the past the one-legged John Silver had a wooden leg, now athletes use high-tech prostheses. Cyborgs, which were embodied on the screen by A. Schwarzenegger, are the path to immortality. Computer technology is the way to make the human brain more perfect.

God said: go and own (birds, fish, etc.). But we burn ourselves in the furnace of evolution, producing transhumanism, etc. When all this is merged, a new monster will arise. The story about artificial intelligence is from the same series. It was impossible to imagine even yesterday.

I consider everything that happens at the Likhachov Conference useful and important. The kaleidoscope of opinions is being created. When you look at its arrangement, you see that the beautiful pattern is formed from various pieces of glass. And we make our small contribution to gradual buildup of this pattern.

J. STOKSETH: – One very interesting point concerning the subject of your speech. If cyborgs or transpeople appear, will they be responsible for their actions? For example, if one person kills another, (s)he will be tried. If a cyborg or somebody with an artificial intelligence kills somebody else, will he be legally responsible for his deed? What will the man be like?

V. K. MAMONTOV: – I will give a short and truthful answer in the style of “Komsomolskaya Pravda”: I don’t know, I’m not sure. This is a matter of our responsibility.

But by and large, everyone is responsible for tomorrow's events. Let's admit that my intelligence will be transferred to a new, more durable medium. Am I responsible for this? Probably, yes. But is there anything I can really do about it? I don't know, I'm not sure.

M. V. ZAKHAROVA: – Your words can be regarded as an indicator of the problem. You propose to look into the future and answer the question whether an artificial intelligence or some creature based on artificial intelligence will be responsible for killing a man. Today, if one person kills another, the criminal must be held accountable. But the problem is that this is not quite true. We have exhausted all possibilities to follow this path. What kind of responsibility there is in this case? Moral? The society is ready to justify the criminal, having provided him with medicines and psychologists to make him less nervous, and saying that he is not to be blamed for what happened, because circumstances forced him to do this. Legal responsibility? This is a question of money (it is not about corruption or illegitimate use of it) and quality of defence (lawyers, involvement of the media capable to make a hero out of him, etc.).

What responsibility did the Norwegian terrorist A. Breivik take? He killed a huge number of young people with extreme cruelty and invented a political and ethical basis for his deed. For many people, he became a hero. And as the result, he received the most comfortable conditions of stay in the penitentiary institution (it can't be called a prison), more like a nursery in an Ikea store, as well as attention of the media, which satisfied his painful ambitions, and endless justifications for his actions by political scientists, experts, psychologists, etc. He became an iconic figure. Humanity must take responsibility for such actions, but, unfortunately, it does not, and the system of progress supports this irresponsible behavior.

In order to be saved, we need to think not about whether an artificial intelligence will take responsibility in the future or not, but about whether the current natural intelligence of a man will enable him to bear such a responsibility. Because a man can be saved only if he is responsible for himself.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – The Likhachov Conference welcomes Mr. Guy Mettan, a representative of Switzerland. Please, you have the floor.

G. METTAN: – I would like to highlight historical prospects for developing the multipolar world. I believe that creation of the multipolar world has never been so close to success. There are three reasons for this.

The first reason is that many things have changed over a hundred years. For example, the Cold War and the bipolar world no longer exist. During the Cold War, there was no opportunity to create the multipolar world, since the main task of all countries was to maintain balance between the United States and the USSR.

The second reason is also related to the Cold War. Now there are no hundred states that would claim to be a centre of power. Five or six strong powers are enough to form poles. Besides, the countries are not divided, they cooperate in the framework of the SCO and other organizations, i. e. there is no separation, and the states desire to cooperate.

The third reason is the existence of the unipolar world: the United States and its vassals. But this single pole

has undergone a significant reduction. The situation has changed, compared, for example, to one after the Second World War, when in 1945, the United States provided 40% of the world's economic development, while today this share is only 18–20%. Its influence has been reduced twofold, which indicates prerequisites for transition to the multipolar world.

But in order for multipolarity to be successful, three problems need to be solved. The first problem is that currently, the West still dominates the world and controls the entire narrative, using various fake values, such as democracy, human rights, ecology. This narrative should be questioned and revised, in order to succeed. The second problem is that the West still dominates the financial sector. Dollarization of the economy has significantly increased the West's dominance and control, and measures to be taken in this area should include controlling debt and overcoming dominance. The third problem is that multipolarity implies several centres, so it is not a united world. Now the West will strive to apply the "divide and rule" policy, therefore it is necessary to prevent the policy of dividing and stimulating conflicts by the West between various countries, such as India and China. The West will try to do so, but the attempts must be stopped.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – To expand this idea, I would like to give the floor to Professor Olivier Roqueplo from Sorbonne University.

O. ROQUEPLO: – First of all, I want to speak about history. The moment we are in today seems to be similar to the period before one very important event of which we almost forgot. Perhaps, it was the very first world war. I mean the Seven Years' War. England, France, Prussia, Austria, Spain and Portugal, as well as Russia, participated in it. Military operations took place both in Europe and overseas: in the North America, the Caribbean countries, India, and the Philippines. This war is considered colonial, since it was a collision of colonial interests of Great Britain and France.

Multipolarity, first and foremost, means the end of colonialism, which originated in 1763 with the victory of England over France in the Seven Years' War. The colonialism that we know is engendered by the British.

Why do I talk about this today? If the trends of philosophy, culture, politics, economics coincide, you can guess what will happen. In Western Europe and the USA, we witness the end of rationalism, democracy, liberalism. In France, they begin to openly state that principles of liberalism (separation of legislative, executive and judicial authorities) are no longer important and the parliament does not play any role, since the president ignores it.

For comprehending what development opportunities remain, it would be interesting to compare the world of the early 18th century and one of the early 21st century. Modern Europe is similar to the one that existed at the beginning of the 18th century, that is, before the colonial era. Modern China is similar to the great China of the beginning of the Qin Dynasty. The Spanish-speaking world is as important today as before. Turkey and Iran are striving to regain their former status.

In conclusion, I will add that colonialism as the main tool of globalization has almost disappeared, but not yet completely, and now it is destroying itself. Today we are

witnessing the phenomenon of self-colonialism, because colonialism has not disappeared from the minds of people who live in Europe and North America.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – Dmitry Babich, a columnist for the news agency “RIA Novosti”, Member of the Union of Journalists of Russia.

D. O. BABICH: – I think everyone noticed that in March this year, a so-called arrest warrant was issued for the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. But since Russia did not join the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, its decisions are insignificant for us. Nevertheless, I suggest recalling similar cases when the International Court of Justice attempted to judge the state leaders, and what this led to. Initially, it was assumed that the main purpose of such decisions was moral condemnation by the people of the country which is headed by the leader. Therefore, when this illegal, from my point of view, decision regarding Vladimir Putin appeared, the Berliner Zeitung newspaper published the review article considering whether it was possible to get the population to condemn their leader at least once.

The most interesting data in this regard is related to the Nuremberg Tribunal. When the Nazi criminals were tried, the German population was strongly opposed to them. It must be admitted that back then, the United States tried to convince the Germans living in the territories controlled by Americans that they, the Americans, have nothing against the people of Germany, but condemn only the Nazi bosses who unleashed this terrible war. According to sociological studies, during the Nuremberg Tribunal most of the German people demanded harsh punishments for the Nazi criminals. But then, in the 1960s, when Hannah Arendt and other German philosophers and historians who left for the United States began to claim that not only Hitler and his henchmen were to blame, but also the society that allowed that situation, the mood of the Germans began to change. They began to state that the Nuremberg Tribunal was unfair. This happens after any war: whoever wins, judges the defeated. I think we all here believe that it was necessary to condemn the Nazi criminals, of course, and imposition of the blame on society is to some extent justified. Nevertheless, fluctuations in public opinion are of a certain interest.

It is curious that this phenomenon repeated, as the authors of the article in the Berliner Zeitung noted, after the war in Yugoslavia. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was established in 1993, and Russia supported its creation in the UN Security Council, because we expected it to be a fair court. Russia’s representative to the UN Security Council, Yuri Vorontsov, speaking after the vote, said that for the first time, it is not the winner who judges the defeated, but the entire international community, represented by the tribunal, will render its verdict to those who trample not only the norms of international law, but also simply human ideas about humanness. As Maria Vladimirovna said, we really wanted to believe then, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, that humanity had come to accord, and we would build beautiful and just life together. But, alas, we know the results of the ICTY: 92 convicts were Serbs, 33 – Croats, 8 – Kosovo Albanians, 7 – Bosnian Muslims. That is, the Serbs made up the absolute majority of those convicted. But the most terrible

thing is (and this was noticed in the Berliner Zeitung) that the Serbian people did not accept the decision of the tribunal. When former members of the Serbian military leadership were released, they were greeted with flowers. That is, the tribunal actually turned out to be illegitimate. You see, the fiasco is not even that not all the perpetrators were brought to justice, but that there were more Serbs among those convicted than representatives of other ethnic groups. It is obvious that at that time the system began slipping.

And it has completely failed in Africa, when it was not even possible to detain Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir, although by that time he had already been overthrown. Now there seems to be nothing preventing his extradition, but the Africans are in no hurry to do it.

The decision regarding our president was clearly made for political reasons and is intended primarily to limit his opportunities for foreign visits. However, it misses the mark because it is not supported by public opinion in Russia and in many other countries, especially in the global South. Why, by the way, did the African Union help bring Omar Al-Bashir to justice? Not because it took his side in the civil war in Sudan. It’s just that Africans know that the situation is very complicated, it does not fit into the Hollywood template of “good guy versus bad guy”. In the Sudanese case, it is almost impossible to determine who is right and who is wrong, but Americans and Europeans pretend that everything is clear to them.

It turns out that the humanity, primarily through efforts of the West, has lost its ability to determine truly common values for all. Therefore, we can say that the international justice system is in the state of crisis, and its urgent reform is required. To my mind, this reform should provide for increase in the weight of non-Western countries in international justice, for the purpose of preventing repetition of the case as with Omar Al-Bashir. Before judging an African, ask the Africans what they think about this. Before judging a participant in the war in Yugoslavia, ask the citizens of the countries that were parts of the federation. I am convinced that this is the principle that we should defend.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – I hope that the experience and traditions to be developed by us will become the basis for future reforming of international law. This will make it possible in the future to make right decisions in the most difficult situations in the multipolar world, so that they serve the cause of progress and creation.

The floor is given to Vitaly Nikolayevich Punchenko.

V. N. PUNCHENKO: – We talk about multipolarity, implying that the poles can be represented by large states that meet certain criteria: strong army, diplomacy, GDP and other resources. However, let’s look at it from the point of view of small- and medium-sized states that do not have such resources, and not only from the position of their governments, but also with the eyes of their people. Is it possible to imagine a more compromising image of the future multipolar, post-conflict world? Most likely, it will be the world in which each state can be considered a separate pole, since it will independently determine its place in geopolitics, without fearing to lose its subjectivity and dissolve due to the gravity of large poles. This is not an easy way. Belarus and Russia are passing it right now. Perhaps the history of Belarusian-Russian integration will eventually reveal to

the world a new format of multipolarity – the union of the two poles strong in their own way, in fact, two cores of one pole. I believe that multi-core poles are quite possible. And if our experience turns out to be successful, then, of course, it will spread.

We notice much attention to the integration processes from other member countries of the EAEU, the SCO, and other associations. Therefore, the most efficient journey to multipolarity is creating the territory of success. This is not easy, because we mean not only the economy, but also values and perceptions of each other. Not all issues are settled or even discussed, we often keep silent about topics that we consider potentially conflicting. However, differences in ideologies are not a vulnerability, but an advantage to be used to its maximum. Therefore, we need to conduct more intensive research, implement analytical media projects, and develop the mutually respectful expert dialogue. This is already being implemented, but there is still a long and difficult way ahead.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – I invite to the microphone Professor Vladimir Aleksandrovich Shamakhov.

V. A. SHAMAKHOV: – I am an engineer by my first education, so I have rather mundane views. I believe that any indicator should be measurable. In general, no one has yet officially formulated the criteria of multipolarity. In my opinion, this has to be done, because, using this term, different people may mean not quite the same thing. Probably, we will still consider states as the poles and, accordingly, their economy, military potential, technological development (although the latter is unlikely to be decisive). But traditional values, religion and culture continue to be in the first place. In this regard, I would like to thank Aleksandr Sergeyevich Zapesotsky and his colleagues once again for continuing to deal with the topic of the dialogue of cultures; after all, this is the key thing in the modern world, and, to my mind, the situation will not change in the future.

Losing to us in traditional values, our opponents seem to have decided to bet on electronic technologies like transhumanism. However, this destructive trend threatens to destroy not only culture, but also the familiar world in general. The worst thing is that it is aimed primarily at children. We talk a lot about the future as the world in which today's youth will live, but a person's worldview solidifies much earlier, so it is necessary to appropriately educate children in elementary schools and even in kindergartens. We discuss problems of higher education that need to be solved, forgetting about secondary school, though reforms are also required there. During the Soviet period, educational work at schools was conducted at a superior level.

And, of course, we cannot do without ideology. Here the choice is simple: if there is no ideology of our own, it will be someone else's. Therefore the ideology based on traditional values is very much in demand today, and ideological work should be carried out starting from the children of preschool age. We must unite our efforts in fighting for minds of next generations, and therefore for the country's future.

M. V. ZAKHAROVA: – As for transgender people, transhumanism and many other technologies, I want to give an example illustrating the benefits of such "achievements".

In the late 1950s, twins were born in Canada – two boys. Both had a minor medical problem that required surgery. One was properly operated, and he became healthy, and with the other boy, a medical mistake was made, which put an end to his reproductive function. And then an American doctor who dealt with issues of child and gender psychology joined in to solve the problem. He offered to change the child's gender. He explained to the parents that babies did not understand whether they were boys or girls, so we would correct the child's anatomy, and you will raise him as a girl, later we would add hormones.

How did this story end? By the age of 15, the child had committed several suicide attempts. The parents decided to disclose to the child what had happened shortly after his birth. Having reached adulthood, the young person rushed to a surgeon – to regain his natural sex. After the operation, everything seemed to be fine, he even got married. But the imbalance created over the years turned out to be so traumatic that at the age of 38, he still committed a suicide. His brother did the same, because for some reason he considered himself guilty of the tragedy. What a terrible story!

But what happened to that American doctor? Nothing! He did not admit his mistake, and the society did not condemn him. He lived a long life, wrote articles, gave interviews.

So, the most terrible thing is that such practices have now become the new normality. We make a mistake when we say that this is just fashion, and it will pass soon. It will not pass by itself if we do not fight these ugly phenomena in the most resolute way.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – Yes, it's true. And now I propose to listen to the opinion of sociologists. Sergey Grigorievich Musienko, please, you are given the floor.

S. G. MUSIENKO: – Yesterday at the Plenary Session Valery Aleksandrovich Chereshev expressed the idea which seems to me very important – that science is an integral part of culture. It resonates with the idea of Sergey Georgievich Kara-Murza, who wrote the book "Ideology and its Mother Science" 20 years ago. Today, ideology must be approached from the scientific point of view. In this regard, it is difficult to overestimate the role of the Likhachov Conference, which has been broadcasting this understanding for decades. Today we see the fierce ideological struggle, when monuments are demolished, symbols are banned and entire cultures are abolished.

At one time, in my Candidate thesis, I tried to prove that the elite of the state are those people who are responsible (and aware of this responsibility) for the past, present and future of their country. In the National Security Strategy of Russia issued in 2021, there are words about protection of traditional spiritual and moral values, culture and historical memory. In two years, this Strategy has largely lost its relevance. However, the Concept of Security was developed in Belarus 25 years ago! Therefore, I propose to use opportunities provided by the Likhachov Conference to put forward some proposals regarding the future concept of the security of the Union State, which sooner or later will have to be jointly adopted. We were working on such a document in Belarus, but with the beginning of the Special Military Operation (SVO), we suspended this activity because it got clear that many changes would have to be made to it

later. In my opinion, this new concept should have the section “Cultural Security” based on “Declaration of Cultural Rights” created by Academician Likhachov in cooperation with SPbUHSS. In response to Academician Shumilin’s concerns, I can say that only culture can prevent the negative consequences that development of artificial intelligence can entail.

I have a feeling that the ideas of UNOVIS (the Affirmers of New Art), the association created in 1920 by Malevich, are now being implemented in the West. Anyway, this style has been adopted by designers of branded cars, clothing, etc. This leads to their self-destruction, so our task is to prevent such phenomena from occurring in our reality.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – And another sociologist from the Republic of Belarus Irina Valerievna Lashuk. You are welcome.

I. V. LASHUK: – I have been engaged in sociology of culture for many years – the area that is currently often called culture sociology, and for many years I have been stating that culture determines a lot in various areas of life. But, since the topic of culture is not among the key ones at the University of Economics, I performed a sociological study and received quantitative data showing (in percentages!) the contribution of the sociocultural component to economic, sociopolitical and cultural development of society. Expanding the topic, I began to study such a phenomenon as sociocultural consolidation of the society. I agree with the idea of measurable indicators, but how can such consolidation be expressed in numbers? In this regard, I will take the liberty and advertise my work, in which I offer tools that are useful, in my opinion. If we join forces to monitor this most important area – the socio-cultural one, it will be our great victory. And let’s remember that this field takes a long time, many years, to form, but later it is almost impossible to destroy it.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – Galina Valerievna Naumova, writer, translator, anthropologist. You are given the floor.

G. V. NAUMOVA: – Probably, the term “cultural anthropologist” is the most fitting for my specialization. Like Vladimir Aleksandrovich, I think we lack a precise definition of multipolarity. The world-famous political scientist of the 20th century, Samuel Huntington, proposed his own version (perhaps the most correct one), assuming identification by a cultural principle. What is this principle? This is a whole set of criteria combined according to the magnet model, as Maria Vladimirovna said. Such “magnets” attract common structures of collective thinking and action. A good example is the collective West. Huntington does not talk about cultural diversity of the West, but considers the West as an integral phenomenon. Slavic-Orthodox countries are one civilization, Hindu countries are another. The Chinese civilization stands apart, and Huntington defines it on the basis of Confucianism, and this is correct, because religion plays the fundamental role for identification. And, of course, the countries of Islam also represent a separate civilization.

Cultural identification includes the whole set of anthropological features that determine the relationship between a man and a woman, a person’s attitude to death, time, na-

ture, etc. The latter factor plays a huge role in Confucianism and other archaic cultures, for which nature is the meaning of existence, it is their symbol. Today, the problem of human survival has become more acute and is associated with such phenomena as transhumanism and artificial intelligence. When I met Marvin Minsky in Massachusetts in the second half of the 1990s, in the course of our conversation he was suddenly lost in thought for a long time, and then said: “We will take the soul away, the soul interferes.” In my opinion, this is the answer to all questions: no soul – no God, which means there is neither spirituality nor morality.

In order for humanity to survive, we all need to join our efforts and work out some common solutions, and this requires thinking on a planetary scale. But at the same time, we, Russians, need to realize at last that we will never be close to the West, so we should not trust it. Every time we talk about the Russian soul at a conference, colleagues from Western countries get extremely agitated. It is the Russian soul that irritates them, and it is our greatest value which we must preserve, despite all historical twists and turns.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – We will listen with pleasure and attention to Yekaterina Vladimirovna Radevich.

Ye. V. RADEVICH: – As philosophers, we know that culture is a very multifaceted phenomenon, which can be regarded from different points of view, while applying informational, activity-based, semiotic and other approaches. Philosophy studies any problem in dynamics, but as far as culture is concerned, I, as a philosopher, insist on the axiological approach. Culture is, first and foremost, the system of values, which forms the core of cultural tradition in any society. And this is what may help avoid the divergence that we are witnessing today. It is the culture comprehended in terms of the axiological approach.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – Professor Dmitry Valentinovich Mosyakov, please, you are given the floor.

D. V. MOSYAKOV: – During our discussions, many interesting ideas were expressed. Firstly, Maria Vladimirovna voiced her wonderful idea about the struggle between culture and anti-culture. Which one of them will win? A society with a highly developed culture consists of people who are used to taking into account other people, there are a lot of restrictions for them. A lack of culture means absence of red lines, when people do not consider it necessary to curb their darkest instincts. What can be opposed to them? History knows many examples when barbarian tribes turned out to be stronger than highly developed civilizations and destroyed them. Therefore, this problem is not only philosophical, it requires the search for a practical solutions.

Secondly, we live within the new system of international relations. International law is actually invalid, and any conflict is resolved under the rules that regularly change in accordance with interests of those who set these rules. At present, for example, conflicts arise every now and then over decisions made by the West. The historical context does not matter, and conflict resolution is performed on the basis of the current circumstances. A good example is the dispute between the Philippines and China over some islands and waters in the South China Sea. Court decisions

have been made in favor of the Philippines, but the Philippines cannot take advantage of this, because China is a larger and more powerful country, and has a strong army.

Thirdly, the culture of compromise seems to be a thing of the past. Peace-loving communities wishing to resolve the conflict try to find a compromise and make peace as soon as possible. Today we see a different logic: let's fight until one of us wins, and then we will be ready to negotiate the terms of the peace agreement.

Finally, fourthly, everything is shrouded in such a phenomenon as post-truth. In my opinion, post-truth is one of the most powerful tools of information warfare and pressure on the opponent. What is it? Post-truth is obtained when some nuances are added to the true information, which are beneficial to those who transmit it. It is especially scary that these sources have monopoly on information, they have the largest audiences, their version is always considered the main one, and others can only publish refutations.

All these new realities represent a kind of an integrity in which we already live. We need to fully realize this and think about strategies to help in this difficult situation.

Maria Vladimirovna expressed another interesting idea – about global hoaxes. Indeed, we observe simultaneous existence of all the principles I have described, and as a result, a certain picture develops. And here I want to recall the history of Ancient Greece, in which there was multipolarity (Athens, Sparta, Thebes), followed by a period of non-polarity, disintegration, and after that the Macedonians came.

In the future, events may develop in different ways, but we must find solutions. How to live in absence of universal international law, how to respond to the post-truth, etc.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – Maria Vladimirovna Zakharova, your remark, please.

M. V. ZAKHAROVA: – What is the main purpose of culture? In the number of theaters, museums, stadiums? Of course, not. Culture is one of the ways to preserve the man in his nature, in the human essence, in the part that distinguishes us from all other animals, even such intelligent ones as dolphins.

In 2004, I came to Washington for the first time. And in my parents' family there was a rule: in any city, first of all, visit its main museum – art, historical, local history – basically, the most representative one. And I went to the National Gallery of Art. Let me remind you that the Gallery exists largely due to donated private collections and donations. I reached the hall of medieval Western European art, walked past the sculpture composition in the centre, and suddenly an African-American caretaker of about 55 years old stopped me. "Wait, madam!" My first reaction was, "Oh, my God, what rules have I broken?" And he replied, "I work here, and what you can see are, of course, great masterpieces. But I would put your shoes on this pedestal."

It's funny only at the first glance. It turned out that all visitors come to the Gallery in sneakers, and not only to the gallery: they wear sports shoes to theaters, and to visit someone, and generally everywhere. And I was wearing elegant shoes. That is, the meaning of culture is not only to collect great works of art for everyone to see. A person should maintain an understanding that theater and museum are spaces different from everyday life. You are in contact

with the beautiful, and if you have the appropriate look, this indicates your personal culture.

I think we need to return to deeper and eternal meanings. Previous generations have created a lot of things for us, and our task is not only to use this heritage, but also to develop and improve it.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – The floor is given to Ruslan Vasilievich Kostyuk. You are welcome.

R. V. KOSTYUK: – Talking about multipolarity and problems of the new geopolitics, we often use such expressions as "collective West", "golden billion", etc. These are pretty wordings; however, we must comprehend that in fact there is no internal unity among the countries of the West. The now active socio-class protest movement shows how many contradictions there are in Western European societies. The functioning of the European social model raises many questions, at least the leaders of the left-wing parties and the modern trade union movement have been talking about this for a long time. Unemployment, growth of prices and utility tariffs, decrease in the citizens' purchasing power, together with the ongoing policy of privatization, raising the retirement age and other actions of the authorities – all these are manifestations of the neoliberalism policy. This policy faces criticism from the left and the right, so the trend toward radicalization of socio-political life becomes increasingly pronounced. In 2022–2023, the protest movement in Western European countries – Germany, France, Great Britain, in the south of the continent – became more active.

In this regard, I will note one important point. During the Cold War, the struggle for social and labour rights in capitalist countries was an important topic of all the congresses of the CPSU, this movement was seen as an ally of the USSR. And it wasn't just words, it was a real situation. Today we have no such allies. In European countries, the position of the leading left-wing parties and the trade union movement – both industry trade unions and pan-European ones – is negative regarding Russia's actions. Nevertheless, these movements strike blows at the socio-political situation in Western European countries. Recent events in France have shown this, as well as the fact that methods used by Macron, the representative of French liberalism, are not liberal at all. As the result, he is criticized by radical representatives of both the left and right flanks. Examples of this kind can be seen not only in France. Therefore, to my mind, we should analyze these phenomena in terms of changes in modern international relations.

I. I. BUZOVSKY: – I remember the old Soviet film "Time Has Chosen Us". The picture was about the Great Patriotic War, but today I would like to repeat the words: time has chosen us. You and I. In order to test us once again. Of course, these are not the horrors that our grandfathers had to go through, but what we are going through today is also the hardest test. I know that the light will win. It is also inspiring that the leaders of our states, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Aleksandr Grigorievich Lukashenko, are not functionaries, but persons who sincerely worry about the present and the future.

Thank you for participating in today's insightful and interesting discussion.