

## TRANSCRIPT

### BBC WORLD DEBATE: THE WEST UNDER CHALLENGE

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**Discussants:** **Amb. Richard Holbrooke**, Vice Chairman, Perseus LLC; **The Hon. Konstantin Kosachev**, Chairman of the International Affairs Committee, Russian Duma State; **The Hon. Bernard Kouchner**, Foreign Affairs Minister, France; **The Hon. Radosław Sikorski**, Foreign Affairs Minister, Poland

**Moderator:** **Mr Nik Gowing**, Lead Anchor, BBC World

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NIK GOWING: Welcome from me, Nik Gowing, to the European Union's headquarters in Brussels, where a summit of national leaders ended on Friday. Twenty-seven nations representing 500 million people together. This growing power of the European Union and the well-established superpower status of the U.S. are the leading forces in what we loosely call the West.

But for how long? There is fast-growing evidence of some kind of earthquake underway led by Russia, China and a wider influence of Islam. The West's power and liberal democratic values are being challenged and even marginalized by what is increasingly labeled as the new authoritarian capitalism. Two weeks after his election, how far is Russia's next president, Dmitry Medvedev, planning to continue Vladimir Putin's policy. Through BBC's World Debate, how fundamentally is the power of the West under challenge?

So how are the rules of the global power game changing now? How fast? How fundamentally? Leading analysts ask questions like, "Can the liberal system survive?"; "Is there a return of the authoritarian great powers?"; and even speculate about a world without West. Over-dramatic? Or confirmation of a stark new reality that the great powers of the West have fairly begun to realize.

Well, joining me here at the Brussels Forum, which is convened by the German Marshall Fund, are Bernard Kouchner, who is the French Foreign Minister in a right-wing government, formerly a Socialist health minister, former U.N. special representative in Kosovo, long known as pro-intervention and a passionate campaigner, especially on humanitarian affairs.

Radosław Sikorski, Poland's Foreign Minister, formerly defense minister in the previous government.

Richard Holbrooke, former U.S. Ambassador to Germany and the United Nations; twice assistant Secretary of State; an architect of the Dayton Peace Accords in the Balkans; and spoken of as a possible Secretary of State if a Democratic Party president is elected to the White House.

And Konstantin Kosachev, who is Chair of the Russian Duma's International Affairs Committee; before that, a diplomat at the Russian Foreign Ministry; and an adviser to four Russian Prime Ministers in the past.

First, the West under challenge -- Bernard Kouchner, you said this week the “magic is over” for the United States. Do you mean just influence and respect, or naked political and economic power too?

BERNARD KOUCHNER: I said so answering to a journalist, because I was talking about Ahmadinejad in Baghdad. It was a reality. And I don't want to shock and to insult my American friends. On the contrary, if the magic is over, U.S. is not over. And it will come back. And, of course, they are resourceful and looking to the future, et cetera. I was just talking about that. Yes, the reality is sometimes awful.

GOWING: Is it just influence and respect you're talking about, or naked political and economic power?

KOUCHNER: It was this image of Ahmadinejad in Baghdad. But for the rest, yes, we have to talk about. But that is not to say that they are not powerful, and they are not only part of the future, but our hope. Certainly yes, they are, the U.S. people.

GOWING: Do you believe therefore -- I'm just trying to work out what you said and what you meant.

KOUCHNER: And I answer you.

(LAUGHTER)

GOWING: Does that mean America is losing power, in your view, and influence that other non-Western forces are successfully beginning to eclipse the United States?

KOUCHNER: Another time I will to explain you. I was talking about Iraq and Mr. Ahmadinejad, the President of Iran. And I was talking about the Middle East. And I said that magic is not enough. I think the magic is over. Yes, we have to work facing reality with our U.S. friends, close to our U.S. friends. But that's all. I was not condemning the U.S. system.

GOWING: But you make an important point, surely, when you're comparing Iran with the United States. You're suggesting that something is moving here.

KOUCHNER: Yes, something is moving. What is moving is that we succeeded in having a surge resolution, the U.N. Security Council, with the Russian, with the Chinese, with the U.S. people and the Brits and the French and the Germans. We were preparing that.

On two issues about Iran: sanctions, showing our teeth, and on the other side, but very forcefully, dialogue -- dialogue, dialogue. We have to talk to the Iranians.

GOWING: Richard Holbrooke, do you recognize this? Do you feel that the magic is going out of the United States? Do you accept the West and the U.S. especially are becoming damaged brands?

RICHARD HOLBROOKE: Ah, la magique, c'est lui, Bernard. He is...

KOUCHNER: C'est bien, comme c'est ca.

HOLBROOKE: Merci. Bernard -- I understand what Bernard meant. I read the interview with Roger Cohen quite carefully. And knowing Bernard as well as I do, it was not in any way an attack on the United States. The only issue I would raise, Bernard, is you seem to suggest that it didn't matter who would be elected president, that it couldn't be retrieved.

I agree with you that this has been a very rough eight years for the United States internationally. There's no question about it. And we all know why. But I believe the capacity for renewal in the United States is so great -- the strength of the people, its diversity, its energy, that under the proper leadership and more national unity, what you call the magic would come back. But the world situation will never again be what it was in 1995, because the balance of forces have shifted -- not among the countries on this state so much, although Russia has come back a long way, but with the rise of other countries, like China, especially, and other countries in Asia.

GOWING: When...

HOLBROOKE: But I don't think that the U.S. -- that this, what you call, magic -- it's your word, not mine -- is finished. I think the unique American role remains, if we have the right kind of leadership. And I didn't feel you reflected that in the part of the interview that was printed in the Herald Tribune.

GOWING: A year on from when President Putin spoke at a big conference in Munich, when he said...

HOLBROOKE: I was there.

GOWING: ... the United States has overstepped its national borders in every way. I come back to that question. How much is the brand being damaged? We're talking about the challenge, now, to the West.

HOLBROOKE: And your question is whether I agree with Putin or not? Well, I obviously don't, because he made that comment in the direct context of Kosovo. And that was the point. I was sitting in the room. And he was lecturing Chancellor Merkel and the American delegation about how they would oppose any attempt to give Kosovo independence. They did oppose it. It happened anyway. And the Russian intervention only created unnecessary tension in a situation which was inevitable.

Now, nobody wants to return to the Cold War. And we're not going to return to the Cold War. And the Russians have every right to reassert themselves on the world stage. But in this particular case, in Kosovo, the Russians -- starting with that speech, Nik, that you referred to -- the Russians began, not simply to back the Serb government in a passive way, but to actively support the ultra-nationalist elements within the Serb political structure -- Kostunica, Nikolich and so on.

That is what they did. And the result is the significant heightening of tension. As recently as today, a group of Serbs marched on and seized a large building north of the Ibar River in Mitrovica. That is now the most explosive spot in Europe. That kind of thing could have been moderated by the Russians, had they used their very real influence in the Balkans for a moderate, rather than an extreme, approach.

GOWING: Let me go to Mr. Kosachev, then. Let me put to you -- I could see you were disagreeing vehemently with Richard Holbrooke. But do you recognize this description? In recent years, the Russian wolf has run rings around the free countries of the world in general, and European ones in particular.

KONSTANTIN KOSACHEV: Definitely not. I do not believe that Russia has somehow changed its approach as far as collective security is concerned during the recent years. And if I will speak about the main topic of our discussion -- West under challenge -- I think that the main problem for the West is that the West has not decided whether Russia belongs to the West or to the challenge. And this is a big problem, because we Russians have made the choice. And we do belong -- I do not like the definition "West" -- but we do belong to the same...

GOWING: Well, we have no other better description at the moment.

KOSACHEV: ... same community of common values. And we confirmed the choice by withdrawing our troops from Poland, and the Czech Republic, and Bulgaria and Romania; and laying down our military bases on Cuba and Vietnam; and doing many other things, which were supposed to contribute to the common solutions. And our specific position on Kosovo is not so much specific, because we are now among 170 countries who do not recognize independence on Kosovo.

GOWING: Let me...

KOSACHEV: But the independence on Kosovo is not in effect yet, because it is recognized just by several countries in the European Union and few countries outside.

GOWING: You said you didn't recognize the wolf running rings around. But let me quote to you the power audit by the European Council on Foreign Relations, talking about the European Union's relationships with Russia: Despite its economic strength and military might, the E.U. has begun to behave as if it is subordinate to an increasingly assertive Russia. Surely, you recognize that.

KOSACHEV: Well, it may be a feeling which exists within the European Union, but definitely does not exist in our side; because we consider ourselves as a European nation. We do believe that we have just to win on having as good relations with United Europe as possible. And we confirm that by our cooperation in different fields, including the field of energy security. We do have certain disputes with countries like Ukraine. But it is not about us trying to blackmail the European Union or any other partners of Russia in that field.

GOWING: Right. Let's move on to that shortly. But let's again talk over the principles. Again, you made a speech earlier this week in which, Bernard Kouchner, you talked about not just a new diplomacy, there's a new world.

KOUCHNER: Yes.

GOWING: The British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, in a speech to all his ambassadors, said: Power is moving from West to East. Radosław Sikorski, the Polish Foreign Minister, what's your assessment as a new accession country to Europe, now in a core position, seeing the power shifting or not?

RADOSŁAW SIKORSKI: Oh, first of all, thank you for formulating the subject of the debate in a very central European way. We are fervent believers in the West. Next year, we'll have an anniversary of the fall of Communism. And certainly as Solidarity people in those days, we believed ourselves to be spiritual members of a community from which we were severed by artificial means.

And I still think that the West, which is to say the United States and Europe, together -- we are 700 million people, \$20 trillion economies jointly. When we act together, we usually prevail. And I'm very glad to hear what Chairman Kosachev said, that Russia sees itself, at least potentially, as part of our community. Because I don't think that anybody owns the concept of the West. Surely, Japan, Australia are also members of the community because it is signified by values and procedures and institutions.

GOWING: But do you accept what Mr. Kosachev has said? I mean, is that your perception. Is your perception the same as his perception from Moscow?

SIKORSKI: Well, energy prices, of course, have their influence, but I think when the thesis of the End of History was formulated, namely that liberal democracy has established itself as the best system. I think this is, perhaps, what Chairman Kosachev means, that Russia wants to belong to that community which recognizes those institutions and procedures. And the rest, you know, a particular position on the recognition of a rather small piece of territory in that context is of lesser importance. If what the new Russian Prime Minister might do is to modernize Russia according to our principles rather than some kind of authoritarian model that obtains in other parts of the world, that would be a victory for the West.

GOWING: Now, but I have to put that to you, Mr. Kosachev. You wrote in a big article at the end of last year: "By what right does a group of states dare to reshape the world order according to their own ideas without taking into account the views of other countries?"

Let's get to the heart of the debate. I think you're all being a bit polite at the moment. Because the kinds of things you've written are really tough on this issue about the challenge that there is now from the West and the assumptions of the West about the kind of country Russia should be.

KOSACHEV: Well, I think that the so-called West has missed a unique chance in the early '90s to establish a completely new system of global security. The choice -- there was the wrong choice made in that moment to continue this NATO enlargement and by that the United States and their allies in the West maybe won central and eastern Europe, they maybe are winning some post-Soviet countries, but they're definitely losing Russia.

GOWING: But do you...

KOSACHEV: Because, because...

GOWING: ... accept the kind of thing that Mr. Sikorski has just said, the kind of aspirations of Western nations?





KOSACHEV: I do not believe that Russia wants to belong to any club. Russia does belong to the same community with the same values already, and there are no crucial differences between Russia and other European countries.

GOWING: Richard Holbrooke?

HOLBROOKE: You know, in fact what Konstantin is saying is one version of history. But having participated in this period, I must offer another. My view of what happened in the '90s is quite different. President Yeltsin and President Clinton worked very closely together over eight years. NATO enlargement -- we knew NATO enlargement would be controversial. President Clinton went out of his way to explain to the Russians, including your president and your foreign minister, that NATO enlargement was no longer anti-Russian. We kept the door open for Russian participation in NATO, gave them a lot of special places, did not even preclude Russia joining NATO itself if it wished to. And every step of the way, especially with the country that really mattered here -- Poland -- we worked with Moscow. It is my view -- and I worked harder on getting Poland access to NATO than almost any other issue except the Balkans -- it's my view that enlarging NATO prior to 9/11 was a historic plus for the stability of the region, that Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and the others are benefited by it, and that none of this was an encirclement of Russia.

Now, your current government chooses to interpret it differently. But you were consulted at every inch of the way, and nothing about the new NATO members is a threat to Russia.

GOWING: But clearly there's a major fissure here. Konstantin?

KOSACHEV: This is exactly what I mean. Because this is a kind of an old-fashioned manner of thinking within the pre-determined limits. Because NATO -- yes, it did exist and your version is that Russia could've been invited there, but my idea is that NATO is not good enough to answer the new challenges which exist in the world like proliferation of mass destruction weapons.

HOLBROOKE: But that's, Konstantin, that's not the issue...

(CROSSTALK)

KOSACHEV: Just a moment. Let me...

HOLBROOKE: ...we agree on the other issues.

KOSACHEV: ... Let me finish, Richard.

NATO has a rather unsuccessful operation in Afghanistan. And nobody feels...

(CROSSTALK)

KOUCHNER: Were you successful in Afghanistan, sir?

KOSACHEV: ...nobody feels happy about that. Because our interests -- please -- our interests in Afghanistan, I mean Russian interests and interests of the so-called West, definitely coincide. They do not contradict each other. And we support that operation. But the format of the operation, having it as a NATO operation, has excluded from the very beginning a possibility of Russia being a real participant there. Because to be a participant in an operation which is commanded by an organization where Russia does not have any role and any possibility to influence, limits the possibilities to have a successful, and more successful operation there.

GOWING: Foreign Minister Kouchner?

KOUCHNER: You were not so successful in Afghanistan. It was Soviet Union, I remember that.

But let me tell you something: We are working with the Russians in Afghanistan. Now, this is not a good example, because Afghanistan is a very particular country -- Nik and I we know that very well -- and we were talking three hours with our colleagues yesterday about Afghanistan. This is a very difficult problem. But we are working with you. And we want to implement and enforce the work with Russia, certainly yes.

But let's take another example, because Afghanistan, my dear, we'll see. First, West is not a good expression. Democracy is it better? Certainly...

GOWING: Come up with a better phrase?

KOUCHNER: OK. But let's say now we are all together facing -- yes, thank you, Richard -- a new world. This is not a new democracy, a new politic scientist people working on the same object -- no, this is a new world. Because of China. Because of India. Because of the developing countries. And in that sense we are not so far from Russia. Believe me. Last example, twenty years ago they were the core of Communism -- Russia, Soviet Union. And now, look at the huge difference. We are not only talking playing, working, but we are in the same team, in a way. That's very different.

GOWING: Foreign Minister Sikorski of Poland, do you feel that the West, the brand -- I'm putting the same question as I've put to Mr. Kouchner and Mr. Holbrooke -- do you feel the West's brand, if you like, is under challenge at the moment, not just the United States, but even here in Brussels, the European Union of which you are now full members?



SIKORSKI: Talk of decline of the West is as old as the West itself. ...

GOWING: But it doesn't mean to say we shouldn't talk about it.

SIKORSKI: ...We've been through difficult times before. I think democracy, free market, security structures is the most successful alliance in history. We are still pretty strong. Mistakes have been made, but we can recover from them. And I hope that Russia may find its place in that system. Because I think in this room we're hearing a contradiction. You know, you're speaking of Russia as a member of the West and of the West as a challenger to Russia at the same time. It would be nice to have a straight answer.

GOWING: Yes, please?

KOSACHEV: I think that West is as challenged for the world which is not supposed to belong there, and I do believe that number of countries which will feel like that, like a challenge, will increase after West trying to push forward the recognition of Kosovo independence, for example, by the way the West is doing it, without respecting international law, without respecting resolutions by the Security Council. And I do believe that number of terrorists increasing in the world somehow depends on the activities of the West trying to democratize the other parts of the world. And I do believe that Iran may be developing, may be considering a possible development of a military nuclear problem, does draw conclusions from the experiences from Iraq. I've heard that from many Iranians, not confessing that they are doing something, but I've heard from them that Saddam Hussein failed to rule the country until the end of his life for the reason he was not good enough at developing nuclear weapons.

GOWING: What I'm trying to do is explore, though...

KOSACHEV: ...And this is a very bad experience for the world.

GOWING: What we're trying to do, though, is explore how power and influence is shifting. And not just about Russia, it's about China as well. It's about other parts of the world. And this shift which is being identified from the West to the East and how much it's changing the way the West is going to operate, if at all. I'm asking the question.

Now, Mr. Kosachev, you have written very clearly that Russia is in the process of restoring its influence while the West is seeking to retain influence of its own. Are you suggesting now that really, in many ways, the Western model when it comes to Russia is spent, is broken, it's not something you want to engage in? You want to engage in a new form of democracy, your sovereign democracy. Help us understand the way that Russia is now moving as an example of this shift from West to East.

KOSACHEV: Well, I do not believe that we are inventing anything special which would differ much from the model which exists in the West. We are on the same basic grounds, like liberal economy, like democratic multi-party political system, like great big large high social responsibility of the state, and other things which are completely compatible with our region of the world. But what we dislike is that sometimes in the international relations some states are starting to act not according to the international law but according to their own national interest which are proclaimed the global interests of the world but which are not that.

GOWING: Minister Sikorski, do you feel guilty when it comes to that? Because, after all, you've just said a few minutes ago here, "We would like Russia to do certain things the way we would like them done."

SIKORSKI: Well, I think there are two models of managing a modern market economy: a democratic model, the Western model, and an authoritarian model. And the question is: Where does Russia want to fit? The democratic model includes the idea of elections whose outcomes cannot be predicted so precisely in advance, for example.

KOSACHEV: Have you mentioned that for Mr. Saakashvili in 2005 when he won with 95 percent of votes and was proclaimed as a pure democrat by the West?

SIKORSKI: Well, I think Western institutions OSCE, for example, should send more observers to the Georgian elections that are coming up, and it was unfortunate that Russia was unable to receive the OSCE observers during its recent elections.

GOWING: Still, I'm coming back to this issue of are you trying to impose the way you would like things done on a sovereign state like Russia, as a close neighbor?

SIKORSKI: No, I think we as the West, NATO, you, we are communities of free nations. And it actually took us in Central Europe several years of aspiring, adopting 80,000 pages of legislation, for example, to join the EU, establishing democratic civilian control over the armed forces to join NATO, settling -- we didn't actually have any, but aspiring members have to settle territorial disputes with your neighbors before you can join NATO. These are good things in themselves, and I hope Russia does in the practical institutional sense, what Mr. Kosachev says is the case in the spiritual sense, of Russia being a member of our community.

GOWING: Now, I have to underline, we're not trying to put Russia in the dock here. We're trying to understand the way things are moving...

HOLBROOKE: No, they put themselves in the dock.

GOWING: Why do you say that? I...

(CROSSTALK)

HOLBROOKE: Because what we're having here -- to my mind, we're having a really stupid discussion about a non-issue. The short history of the period we're talking about begins with the collapse of the Soviet Union. At that point, the Soviet Union was in great disarray: economically, politically. The United States appeared to have what some commentators fatuously called -- and I stress the word fatuously called -- a unipolar moment. There never was a unipolar moment. At the height of this so-called unipolar moment, we confronted as our major issues Bosnia and Kosovo. The U.S. couldn't do it without the cooperation of its NATO allies. And at the same time we enlarged NATO and we worked very closely with Moscow. And I want to make one key point, Konstantin, your comment about Russia being excluded from Afghanistan, you can't function. You sent troops to Bosnia and Kosovo under NATO command. It worked very well. It was a high point of collaboration. It could've been done in Afghanistan, except for historical reasons because you have a lot at stake.

But I want to go back to this. The so-called unipolar moment never existed. The Russians got back on their feet. We all applaud that. None of us wanted a Russian vacuum. And we understood the economic achievements of President Putin and his government. Concerns arose over certain issues in regard to Kosovo, Georgia, Ukraine, and a few other regional areas in the former Soviet Union. And secondly, in regard to energy policy, and third, in regard to internal policy. Those are to be debated. Meanwhile, along comes 9/11, and we have a common interest. And we have the rise of China, and we have a common threat emanating from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. That's where we are, and we haven't discussed it at all.

GOWING: ...

HOLBROOKE: If you wish to talk about the decline of the West, you can. But it is journalistic gibberish. What we're really talking about...

(CROSSTALK)

GOWING: Mr. Holbrooke, it's not just me who's raising this...

HOLBROOKE: I know.

GOWING: ...it's others out there who are writing respectable peer-reviewed papers about this.

HOLBROOKE: I don't care. It's journalistic gibberish.

(LAUGHTER)

There has been a major readjustment of comparative power centers in the world. As President Clinton himself said while he was president, the U.S. was never going to be the unipolar power. There were going to be multiple centers. We all saw the rise of China. When I was Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia under President Carter I made speeches predicting this. It's fine to have multiple centers of power. We're talking as though a rise of other countries is inevitably to the detriment of the European Union or the U.S. That is not true.

GOWING: We're just testing whether that stands up, and you're rejecting it. Others are saying it is the case.

HOLBROOKE: No, I'm saying that we have a -- I'm saying that this --

The countries represented here on this platform -- the United States, the EU and Russia, which is an enormous part of the world's GDP and power -- have common problems, not one of which we've discussed: energy, climate change...

KOUCHNER: But that's why I wanted to talk about...

(CROSSTALK)

HOLBROOKE: ...the rise of China. On those issues, we have so much to work together.

GOWING: Well, I'd like to talk about that. But can I ask, Bernard Kouchner...

KOUCHNER: Yes, please, yes, please...

GOWING: ...you will be the presidency of the European Union in three months time. You had a meeting a few days ago with the Russian foreign minister, Mr. Lavrov...

KOUCHNER: Yes.

GOWING: And you talked about the need to develop a new strategic relationship. But you talked about continuing tensions and misunderstandings still.

KOUCHNER: No, not at all.

GOWING: Well, I can quote you here. You're talking about contradictions...

KOUCHNER: On Kosovo, that's all. On Kosovo, and I don't think...

(CROSSTALK)

GOWING: (Inaudible)

KOUCHNER: On the contrary. It was a very (inaudible)...

GOWING: And you said the right tone has not been found between the EU and Russia.

KOUCHNER: Yes, in Kosovo, for Kosovo. And unfortunately it is still true. But, okay, we can talk about Afghanistan, about Kosovo, about all the crisis of the world. But please, we are in Brussels. And just the Council of -- European Council was out two hours ago. This is the West also, part of the West. And how to find another future that acting, being, doing together. Twenty-seven nation: this is the best invention of the last century after the Second World War. We are together. To say "we" and not "I": This is a very difficult, very difficult, let's say, obligation. To talk to the other, to believe that they have some culture, some history different from your own: This is also democracy. And this is a fantastic hope. Let's talk about that. There is a European position on Kosovo. There is a European position on Afghanistan. Facing, not facing, but being with Russia. Yes, we spend one day with Lavrov -- he's a good friend of ours because we were all together on Kosovo, and I remember '99, 2000, etcetera. OK. So we are not completely in agreement, but I recognized with Lavrov that they were wise enough not to put oil on the fire, the Russian friends. Yesterday, yes, I took over this tribunal up to the Ibar river. But we want to turn down everything. There was no -- I want to explain you, this is not a big difference. We are not just cutting with the scissors, I mean, the map by pleasure, for our own pleasure. It was not possible because of your attitude, also, sir.

KOSACHEV: Sir...

KOUCHNER: Sorry, no, sorry, sorry -- it was not an insult. I know that you were against, and we are supporting, Milosevic and the Serb. It was not a good attitude. And because of that we were obliged --

(CROSSTALK)

KOUCHNER: Because we were unable, you were unable, to let them talk to each other. For years we tried to find a solution, a peaceful solution, the Serbs and the Albanians from Kosovo. And step by step, for years we tried. Unfortunately we don't want to repeat Cyprus and to get -- because we want the Serbs coming into European Union, our Serbian friends. For that it's impossible to come with a sort of, let's say, a curtain of blue helmets. This is impossible.

(CROSSTALK)

GOWING: Mr. Kosachev, your response?

KOUCHNER: We are working for the future of Serbia and Kosovo in the same...

(CROSSTALK)

KOSACHEV: ...you need to have some discussion on Kosovo. And my teacher, Mr. Primakov, being of that moment the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Russia, told me how he discussed the issue of Kosovo with Madeleine Albright and others there in the year of 1998.

KOUCHNER: Yes.

KOSACHEV: At that moment, independence for Kosovo was never mentioned by anybody including Madame Albright.

(CROSSTALK)

KOUCHNER: They're not...

KOSACHEV: ...Then we had bombings of Yugoslavia...

HOLBROOKE: That's just not true. I was in those...

KOSACHEV: Yes.

HOLBROOKE: It's not true. I was in the meetings. Everybody ...

(CROSSTALK)

KOSACHEV: In any case, afterwards, we had bombings of Yugoslavia. And then...

HOLBROOKE: That's true.

KOSACHEV: Thank you very much.

(LAUGHTER)

You were there as well.

HOLBROOKE: I was there, yes.



(LAUGHTER)

KOSAVHEV: And then, what happened then....

(CROSSTALK)

KOUCHNER: I was under the bomb.

KOSACHEV: The next thing was that Kosovars afterwards received the signal from the West: Look, sooner or later, you will be independent. So please wait for your turn. And they had no motivation during these years. Some countries pretended that the negotiation process was going on. It was never going on because one part had no motivation for seeking a compromise. Sooner or later independence would come. And it came. And this is an extremely bad signal. Towards all other people in similar territories now thinking about whether to seek a compromise with a metropolitan country or not.

GOWING: What I'd like to find out is the way things are now moving. Radek Sikorski for the Polish point of view, again quoting from the European Council on Foreign Relations, they say that, for example, Russia is the most divisive issue in the EU since Donald Rumsfeld and the Iraq War.

(LAUGHTER)

Are you getting this kind of feeling -- we're talking about the way things are moving, perceptions are changing. Are these exaggerations, or something fundamentally happening like that?

SIKORSKI: Well, we are trying to have a normal relationship with Russia and the new government. Prime Minister Tusk made a visit to Moscow. He saw President Putin, he saw Deputy Prime Minister, now President Designate Medvedev -- we are neighbors; there's plenty to talk about. And there certainly are issues, particularly to do with energy security. Poland, I think, was a leader on this issue some years ago. And it wasn't really treated that seriously in Europe yet, and now it is. Because we believe that energy should be a tradable good and should not be subject to monopolies. We want to buy energy from Russia. Russia wants to sell it. But the principles should be equitable. And that is why we would like before we raise the veto on the EU negotiating with Russia a new partnership agreement for some of the principles of the Energy Charter, which Russia has signed, to be part of that negotiation. And I hope we'll get a consensus on that, because I think it's mutually advantageous.

But coming back to the main topic, I would like to endorse what Bernard said, because I think that speaking in sort of stock exchange terms, the West still has growth

potential, both internally and externally. You know, in December we raised border controls between Poland and Germany -- an epochal event, voluntarily. That is enormous event in the history of Europe. Today at the European Council, France put forward a motion and got its way about strengthening the Barcelona Process and creating a Mediterranean Union so that the North African and Middle Eastern neighbors of the EU would be more closely involved. And we have proposed, and it's also been accepted, that we should also strengthen our relationship with our eastern neighbors: Ukraine, possibly with a future democratic Belarus. In other words, our way of doing things by consensus, peacefully, by legal democratic means, is still spreading. It's still gaining adherence.

KOSACHEV: This is the West. Is Kosovo included in that list?

SIKORSKI: In future, absolutely.

(CROSSTALK)

KOSACHEV: I mean treating things in a peaceful democratic way.

SIKORSKI: Absolutely. Look, a month ago at the European Council we discussed offering a partnership, an association agreement, to Serbia. And the only reason Serbia did not get it was because Serbia has refused to turn over two suspected war criminals to the Hague Tribunal.

(CROSSTALK)

How responsible is it to stake the future of your country on the fate of two unpleasant people?

KOSACHEV: And there are not other contradictions between Serbia and the European Union? Just these two people? Nothing else bothers Serbia?

(CROSSTALK)

SIKORSKI: Nothing else but a ...

(CROSSTALK)

KOUCHNER: Sorry, but look -- How symbolic is it that the presidency of the European Union is now Slovenia. It was the first piece of the former Yugoslavian Federation to leave out, just after the beginning of the war -- in the war, inside the war. And now, they are in charge of the EU presidency to welcome Kosovo as an independent nation because there is no possibility or no other possibility, and to offer to Serbia to come in. And this is symbolically something very, very interesting.

GOWING: Could I broaden this about the issue of the Western, the concerns. How far do you plan in Russia now to use energy and economic power to squeeze and to almost control the Western liberal power?

KOSACHEV: Have we ever done that?

GOWING: I'm asking whether that is an aspiration.

KOSACHEV: No. It is definite, no, not our aspiration. And I do believe that we have all just win on having good cooperation on energy sector. Russia is supplying Europe, unfortunately not with energy but with raw materials for producing energy. And this is a big difference to my mind. And I would have preferred to keep that raw material on the Russian territory and produce energy and fertilizers and other things out of our oil and gas. But still, we are leaving a very essential part of our possible profit to our partners in the Western Europe, in Europe.

(CROSSTALK)

This is our contribution, more or less.

GOWING: But the reason I'm asking that is, obviously, with the question about whether the West's position is under challenge. One of the concerns has to be about whether you are using energy, particularly, as a form of new political power...

KOSACHEV: No.

GOWING: ...to make yourselves more powerful as opposed to necessarily benefiting the other end.

KOSACHEV: Definitely not. All we have proposed to our partners in the West is extremely simple. One is to exchange shares in our companies producing, distributing and selling energy goods. And the other thing is to make long-term agreements, like to the year of 2013, 2014, and so on. And some countries, like Italy, like France, like some other countries, have made that choice, and then they're happy to see that development. And any other countries very much welcome to...

(CROSSTALK)

GOWING: Radoslaw Sikorski, do you accept that?

SIKORSKI: Well, look, Russia is an energy producer. At times of high energy prices, Russia has an advantage. And countries do generally take advantage of their strategic assets. Nothing wrong in that.

But, actually, Russia is a gas net importer. It's to do with reciprocity. If Russia wants to invest in our energy distribution networks, we believe she should also open her energy distribution networks, for example, the pipelines to the transportation of energy from other countries through its pipeline network. I think that would only be fair.

And we have to find the right legal framework for the trade in energy to become predictable and to benefit both the producers and the consumers on a more or less fair basis.

GOWING: How would you define the way Russia is using its energy power at the moment?

SIKORSKI: Well, the Soviet Union was a superpower. Russia has inherited from the Soviet Union its nuclear potential and obviously its energy resources. Russia has now reserves, is making investments, and I think it's in Russia's interests to reassure everybody that it is treating this as an economic project rather than as a geopolitical project.

GOWING: Can you reassure us...

SIKORSKI: Given the history of your behavior in my part of the world, you can't be surprised that we are nervous.

GOWING: Can you reassure us, Mr. Kosachev?

KOSACHEV: Definitely yes, in case we will have a fair discussion with all companies included. While having that dispute with Ukraine, I was very much surprised, two years ago and recently, that nobody in the West, in the European Union ever cared to take a discussion on the responsibility of Ukraine to be a good transit country and to fulfill its commitments.

It was never the case. Everybody was speaking about Russia threatening Europe, threatening Ukraine, blackmailing everybody. This is not true. And this is not a fair discussion.

In case, we will be ready for such a debate. I do not see any problems.

GOWING: I'd like to...

(CROSSTALK)

SIKORSKI: This is a very positive development and a promise to ratify the energy charter, which includes provisions for resolving disputes.

KOSACHEV: May I respond? This is a very interesting position about the energy charter. You know, if we want to build up a sustainable system, which works, which functions, then we need to have a system where interests of countries supplying energy goods and countries consuming energy goods are well (inaudible).

Let us now imagine that Russia is for some reason not happy with the existing energy charter. There are two possible ways to react on that from the European Union side. One is to say, "We do not care. Russians are obliged to ratify the energy charter and they will do that."

And the other possible way of handling things is to say, "Look, in case Russia is concerned about something, let's have another debate with Russia and let's establish another construction which will be comfortable for any participant." But you never do that. You insist on us ratifying the energy charter, though we have some problems with the content of that.

GOWING: We've got involved in a lot of detail here. And Richard Holbrooke has rather dismissed the basic premise for this discussion.

I'd like to ask you, Richard Holbrooke, what do you think the premise should be about the West, before I go to those who are joining us in the audience?

HOLBROOKE: I find it very indicative and rather sad that we have now talked for a rather lengthy period of time about the differences among the Western countries -- and Konstantin began by defining Russia as a Western country -- instead of the fact that, post-9/11 and with the inflamed extremism in some parts of the Muslim world, and the situation in Africa, and the energy and infectious diseases issues, that the countries...

(CROSSTALK)

HOLBROOKE: ... and the poverty in the world...

(UNKNOWN): Thank you.

HOLBROOKE: ... that we don't focus on these issues collectively. I understand full well the failure of American leadership in the last eight years that has contributed to that. That is why I began by saying that the election would be a critical moment testing whether we're going to have a renewal or not in the United States. I'm an optimist about it.



And I understand why Europeans are worried about "energy blackmail," quote, unquote, from Moscow and why the Russians are upset about Kosovo. We understand the Russian positions, just that Kosovo doesn't set a precedent for other areas, and the Russians have created a problem that they could have minimized.

But the fact is we're -- the intensity of this discussion is a great boon to the countries in the world which are rising while we squabble about second-tier issues and to the enemies of all the countries here. And we have real enemies out there. Russia is not an enemy of NATO. NATO is not an enemy of Russia.

But Konstantin suggests that the U.S.-led enlargement of NATO is a threat to Russian security. I categorically reject that. It is not.

But we do have issues that we ought to work on together: Iran, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Africa. All the countries represented here voted for a resolution to send a peacekeeping force to Darfur, 14-0, China abstaining. And then none of the countries represented here actually send many resources, except France, which took some leadership role.

The United States, having called it genocide, did nothing. Russia, having voted for the resolution, did nothing. That's the kind of issue that we could collectively make a difference on.

GOWING: Right. Who would like to join us in this discussion with some brief comments, please? Who would like -- please, at the back. Could you get a microphone there, please, first of all? Right up at the back. Do sit down, actually, probably. That's the best thing. No, don't sit down. The camera can't see you.

(LAUGHTER)

Now, could you introduce yourself, please? But, remember, this issue is about the West under challenge. Debunk it if you want, but I want to know what your view is.

SALAME SAMADASHVILI: Certainly. I'm afraid that I have a question, rather than a point of view here. My name is Salome Samadashvili. I'm Ambassador of Georgia to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg.

And building up on the question which was put out by Mr. Holbrooke, I would like to put a question to Mr. Kosachev. You have opened your statement by saying that Russia is part of the West. At the same time, you have made it clear that you're opposing expansion of NATO.



And I listened very carefully to your comments regarding why West can be perceived as a challenge for Russia and other players. And you have mentioned several factors.

You have mentioned Kosovo; you have mentioned terrorism; and you have also mentioned forceful democratization; you have also spoken about inefficiency of NATO as a security organization and inefficiency of NATO operations.

So I would like to know, what is exactly the motivation of Russia's opposition to joining of NATO by my country, a decision which was supported by 77 percent of Georgian voters?

Are you concerned that West will actually recognize independence of Abkhazia and Ossetia? Are you concerned that we should join a better, more efficient security organization? Or do you think that we'll be forcefully democratized by NATO?

GOWING: Mr. Kosachev, could you...

SAMADASHVILI: I would be interested to know that. Thank you.

GOWING: Mr. Kosachev?

KOSACHEV: Very shortly, I am very much concerned that, in case Georgia will become a member of NATO, it may create huge difficulties for peaceful solution of conflict with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

My question to you back would be, what are the borders of that possible membership of Georgia in NATO, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia? There were no referendum on NATO membership there, as you perfectly well know.

So my idea is that we should, by all our possibilities, avoid any further complications of those conflicts, exclude possibility of using military force there. And I think that, in case Georgia could take on itself binding obligations not to use military force in these conflicts, that could ease the situation there very much.

And then a possible membership in NATO for Georgia, in case the people of Georgia wants that, in case these two conflicts are peacefully solved, it's definitely an option.

HOLBROOKE: But, Konstantin, if your statement were true, why has your country closed the borders, closed mail, expelled Georgians from Russia, and been accused, I think with some evidence, of trying to undermine President Saakashvili?

KOSACHEV: Well, accusations about trying to undermine President Saakashvili, I think that was expressed by President Saakashvili himself by that humiliating his own people, because the reaction of opposition there was never manipulated from any country, including Russia. That was a choice of some political forces inside Georgia, which should be respected.

GOWING: Thank you very much for the question.

Over here, please. Could you introduce yourself?

VYACHESLAV NIKONOV: Vyacheslav Nikonov, Russkiy Mir Foundation, Russia.

On the question of Russian-NATO relationship, to like a military alliance to issue do not belong is a pervasive feeling. So I think that's why Russians are somewhat reluctant to recognize the expansion of NATO is in Russian national interest.

As for the challenges to the West and why this, you know, growing dissatisfaction with the West in the world, I think it is very important for the West to rightly define the challenges. Because if you think that Russia's energy imperialism is the challenge, it's just the wrong definition of the challenge. Russia has been the most reliable supplier of energy to the West for 40 years.

I think what is undermining Western prestige now is the war in Iraq, which was a mistake. What is undermining the prestige of the West is slow economic growth. And the West is the slowest growing economies in the world. It is the military expenditures, which are 40 times higher than in Russia.

So you should also look at the policies of the West and in the definition of challenges, which I think is very important. And, of course, Russia is not a challenge. If you think that the major challenge is whether Russia fits into a certain model of democracy, I do not know what is the model of democracy, that is not a challenge, because Russia is definitely more democratic than many of the democracies you would name that way.

GOWING: Right, could I move across here? We're getting short of time, so please be quite brief. One moment. OK, go ahead.

HRYHORIIA NEMYRIA: My name is Hryhorija Nemyria. I am Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for European integration. And it has to do with the challenges and with the West and with Russia.

GOWING: Do you feel comfortable with that word "the West"?

**HRYHORIIA NEMYRIA:** Yes, as far as it's a synonym of democracy and it's something opposing to the autocracy, I agree with that. I am comfortable with that term.

But the question is about the future. And my view was always that, before a country decides what it wants to be, it must define what it is. And for Ukraine, the defining moment was the Orange Revolution. For our Polish friends, it was Solidarity movement.

So what's the question to our Russian friends: What do you think, after the break-up of the Soviet Union, what was the defining moment for the modern Russia that would have a strategic impact on your decision of what country you want it to become in the future?

**GOWING:** And can you answer that along the lines of how assertive Russia does wish to be in the future? Is it about equality with however you define the West or is it something else?

**KOSACHEV:** Well, answering the question, I think that the defining moment in our modern history was the year of 2000 when Mr. Putin was elected as the president of Russia, because at that moment we understood pretty well that how we will live, how we will feel ourselves inside the country and in a global context depends just on ourselves.

And in case we will be efficient, in case our people will feel safe, in case we will have a democracy, which is good and functioning for the Russian people, not in order to be approved by anybody else, that was a right choice. And then we're happy as a Russian citizen that that choice was done.

**GOWING:** And the level of assertion now for the future Russia, please?

**KOSACHEV:** Well, we are absolutely sure that we are on the right way and we will continue that way, definitely not being aggressive in our policy. This is not in our interests, but protecting our national interests the same way other countries do it.

**GOWING:** Economic aggression, though? Political aggression?

**KOSACHEV:** Definitely not, not economic aggression, not political aggression. We are absolutely interested in living in a good cooperation and conformity with the outer world.

**GOWING:** Bernard Kouchner, do you see that as the Russia of the future?

**KOUCHNER:** I hope so. And we cannot in the same time always be critics against or facing Russia and in the same time, as I said, on Lebanon, on Middle East, on Iran, et cetera, looking for a sort of alliance.

They are not perfect at all. This is not the model of democracy. I don't know which the model of democracy. But the progress are evident. They want to come back to the great role they have to play, because this is a great country.

And the way they did it is a bit sometimes too much. The way they are talking to the rest of the world is not completely smooth and calm. OK, this is your way for the time being.

But another time, we need -- because the future of European Union is certainly turned also to Russia and the relations in between Russia and European Union are key for that.

So I think -- look, we were talking about Darfur. And this is much more important than talking about the past, sorry to say, but the future is the killing of the people right now in Darfur. OK, we were not only working with the Russians, but they offer us helicopters for Chad. They are involved in the research, looking for peace, et cetera. So this is a real asset for us.

GOWING: Right. Two more comments, please. One here. Again, the issue, whether you accept it or not, on whether the West is being challenged.

EMANUELIS ZINGERIS: Absolutely. So...

GOWING: Your name, please?

EMANUELIS ZINGERIS: My name is Emanuelis Zingeris. I'm a Member of Foreign Affairs Committee of Lithuanian Parliament.

So talking about the last topic raised by Mr. Kouchner, what is important still is realities important for us. Well, for example, we have accidents (ph) in the life who are possibly occasional and possibly not (ph). We have brilliant relations with Russia. We're a member of European Union and NATO. But after we have sold our refineries to...

GOWING: Could you address the issue though, the West under challenge?

EMANUELIS ZINGERIS: Yes, our refineries to Poland, the pipeline in Russia, pipeline of oil was occasionally broken. How we can avoid this occasionally accidents? Thanks. We're talking about oil supply and energy security and using the energy sources not for geopolitical reasons.

GOWING: But I want to throw this back at you. I'm being very specific. You have the microphone at the moment. Do you accept this issue of the West being under challenge on many of the values it stands for, not just from Russia, but from China and elsewhere?

EMANUELIS ZINGERIS: Yes, absolutely, yes. Yes.

GOWING: All right.

MIA DOORNAERT: (OFF-MIKE)...in Brussels, one of the people who write gibberish, but at least we are not killed for that in our countries. So, yes, I accept the thesis that the West is being challenged, but mostly by governments who, indeed, pretend that they are a model of authoritarian capitalism and that they are creating wealth.

But if you look not at government but at ordinary people -- and we are talking about that, too -- it's maybe a simplistic argument, but the people who migrate prefer to go from authoritarian countries to Western countries with democracy, with human rights, where they are respected.

Most ordinary people still seem to prefer to live on their feet than on their knees. So I think we should take that into account, too. The West is challenged by many governments, but it's still very much loved by many ordinary people.

GOWING: Please, at the back?

JANA HYBÁŠKOVÁ: Yes, I think that...

GOWING: One moment. Could you introduce yourself, please? I think you maybe have to stand up.

JANA HYBÁŠKOVÁ: Jana Hybášková, Member of European Parliament. I think that we have a problem which was not mentioned here, and this is the rule of law.

Europe is not defined by president. It's not defined by army. It's not defined by territory. But it is defined by the respect to common law, which is called "acquis communautaire".

And my question to Mr. Kosachev is: Is Russia going to respect the basics of the Western value which is the rule of law and what concerns demonstrators, the other Russian people, and the journalist? Please answer my question.

KOSACHEV: Because...

JANA HYBÁŠKOVÁ: And, please, one last thing. Yesterday, European Parliament voted very clear resolution on the situation of the rule of law as the main and basic value of the West. Would you be so kind to convey this resolution to spokesman of Duma? Thank you.

GOWING: Would you accept, though, that this is at the core of the observation that there are differences of values which are creating the questions about the West under challenge, certainly for you in Russia and in other countries, on sovereign democracy and the standards you want to have?

KOSACHEV: First, about that resolution from yesterday by the European Parliament, I hope you will be able to confirm that, out of approximately 700 members of the European Parliament, some 60 were present and some 20 or 25 voted in favor of that resolution, 20 out of 700. If you call that a democracy, I will definitely convey that definition of democracy to Russia.

Otherwise, Russia has joined the European Convention on Human Rights. And Russia is a member state of the Council of Europe, subscribing under obligations of rule of law, democracy, and respect for human rights.

And Russia is a member state of the Council of Europe, but not for the reason we are member states of the Council of Europe, but the reason that this is our interest and this is our choice. Yes, we do respect rule of law and democracy and human rights.

GOWING: Anyone else quickly? Elmar Brok at the front, please, German Member of the European Parliament.

KOSACHEV: Is it true that that resolution of yesterday was passed by 20 votes out of 700?

ELMAR BROK: Konstantin, I do not know that, because I was not present.

(LAUGHTER)

(CROSSTALK)

GOWING: Do you want to make a comment or a question, Mr. Brok?

ELMAR BROK: My question -- I think this is right. Democracy and the rule of law are important questions for the definition, for the quality of a country, and important values of the West.

But on the other side, we have a new situation on Europe. Poland, the Baltic states and others now are protected by the solidarity of the European Union, of NATO. They have not to be afraid of the things of the past.



And we have to make Russia aware that they have not to be afraid of things of the past, too. Is this now not a time -- we get a new administration in the United States, we get a new administration in Russia, that we look now into our common interests, too, that (inaudible) and we'll tell you when you are breaking the rules of democracy, but on the other side -- and Bernard Kouchner said that -- Iran, Middle East, energy security, a lot of questions, I would feel better that Russia would be on our side and not on another side, China, India and all that questions.

And is that not a time, this moment, this year, that we sit together to define our common interest and try to make an agreement on our common interests to go forwards in order to get progress together, instead of fighting the fights of the past.

GOWING: Right. At that point, I'm going to begin to bring it to an end. But on that point, are you interested in common interests? Or are you about sovereign Russian interests?

KOSACHEV: I am definitely in favor of common interests, because Russian sovereign interests do not contradict interests of other Western countries. And in case we will be able to find points of coinciding interests, we will make very good progress.

But in case we will continue to discuss issues the way we are doing it now, trying to find contradictions and disagreements, instead of coinciding interests, we will be just not moving ahead.

GOWING: Radoslaw Sikorski, the final thought. There's been a lot of challenge as to whether we should even be talking about the challenge to the West. Do you think it's a redundant argument to have had?

SIKORSKI: No, it's not. It's said that, for example, demography is destiny. And I think it's the best illustration of what's actually happening, which is not that the West is weakening, but that the others are rising and that we are, for example, becoming a smaller and smaller proportion of the world's humanity. And that does have geopolitical implications.

GOWING: Do you accept that, Richard Holbrooke, finally? I mean, you dismissed the discussion of this kind of thing as journalistic gibberish, but surely that is a fundamental reality of the demographic shifts and the massive shifts that are taking place globally? When you have foreign ministers who are saying that, not just the Polish Foreign Minister, but the French Foreign Minister, the British Foreign Minister and others?

HOLBROOKE: I agree with what you just said. And there are plenty of European and American statesmen and women who have tried to focus on the larger issues.

What depresses me about today's discussion is that, no matter how hard Bernard and I tried to talk about Afghanistan, Darfur, climate change, infectious diseases, and poverty, issues on which we have a common thing, this group of people continually return to the same, old issue.

And if you do that -- and I speak now to the Europeans, who I've committed much of my career to -- you're just playing into the hands of our rivals, our competitors, and, yes, our enemies. And there are enemies out there. We need to define the common issues and work towards them.

Maybe it was a function of the way this conversation was structured, but it seems to me more it's a mindset. Of course we have problems with Russia. And the Kosovo one was real. But we have far more common interests with Russia.

By the way, Georgia is real, also, and I completely side with the sentiments of the ambassador on that. But these are manageable issues, and they are second-tier compared to the global problems, which we simply didn't discuss today.

GOWING: Do you think there's a mindset problem, finally, Bernard Kouchner, representing France, this issue of the West, in other words, the West convincing itself it's not really as big a problem as some are now suggesting it is?

KOUCHNER: I knew what was the West, and I don't know what is the West now. But I know the future, the common, the world future, and demography is not part of the solution, but part of the problem, certainly, because poverty is part of the problem. And we have to talk about that. And we have a common future in between European Union, Russia, United States of America, et cetera.

What is the way? Do we turn to the future? Yes, climate change. Yes, but poverty, and poverty is not the only reason of extremism. Certainly not. Ideology is. Religion is. But also poverty.

If we are not talking about that, about Africa, about Asia, et cetera, all together with our differences, our background, historical background, et cetera, we are not understanding the new world.

And this is not a new perspective for political scientists. This is the reality. Let's take the reality in our hands. And we are part of the reality, as European Union, because this is a model -- all the rest of the world is demanding to European Union, the way we are organizing a new sort of relationship in between nations and also the historical background of this nation and the future and the government.



This is not easy to start a roundtable, with 27 nations, all one after the other, little nations, big nations, et cetera. One of the reason it takes hours and hours. Yesterday, we were talking on Afghanistan with Minister Sikorski and with 25 others. And (inaudible) well, I don't know -- two years, and I spent a lot of years there, months and months. And I've never been there.

But we were listening, one after the other, to this new kind of, let's say -- this is a sort of difficulties with ourselves, not to be arrogant, but to start a real new ways of understanding a democratic attitude.

KOSACHEV: The problem is that Russia was not present at that debate.

KOUCHNER: Sorry, but you're not part of the Council but you will be.

(CROSSTALK)

KOSACHEV: ... part of a problem, not a part of a solution.

(CROSSTALK)

KOUCHNER: ... this is not already done.

GOWING: That's the kind of faultline we've been trying to get to the heart of. It's easy to ask the question, the West under challenge. Far more difficult to provide any kind of clarity on a question which was even challenged whether we should be asking at all.

From the BBC World debate at the Brussels Forum with the German Marshall Fund, thanks for joining us, from me, Nik Gowing. Bye-bye.

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