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Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks and answers to media questions at the Primakov Readings International Forum, Moscow, November 27 2023

Mr Dynkin,

Colleagues, Your Excellencies,

I see many friends in the audience. The tradition endures, and the Primakov Readings are becoming more popular with each passing year. This serves as a tribute to the memory of our teacher, Yevgeny Primakov, and showcases the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO)'s efforts to uphold his legacy and to promote the principles that he championed in international relations that are more pertinent today than ever.

Collaborative intellectual work is what we need today. Yevgeny Primakov initiated situational analyses, which were vastly popular among scholars and NGOs. These analyses were used to develop numerous proposals that were subsequently applied in practical diplomacy.

Global events are unfolding dynamically. To say so is an understatement. Many erstwhile "international relations constants," including major trends that are shaping the multipolar order, are being tested for strength and adequacy in the face of new realities. This process is intricate and all-encompassing. It did not begin yesterday and will take some time, even by historical standards. The outlines of a polycentric architecture have already begun to take shape.

We have frequently discussed the emergence of new global development centres, primarily in Asia and Eurasia, the increasing autonomy and self-awareness of many developing countries, and their refusal to blindly follow former colonial powers, which are gradually, but objectively, losing their power and influence. Everything Yevgeny Primakov wrote and spoke about insightfully many years ago is unfolding before our eyes.

From a historical perspective, multipolar systems are not new. They have existed in one form or another, such as during the Concert of Europe in the 19th century or between the two World Wars of the 20th century. Clearly, there were not many independent players on the world stage back then compared to today.

Therefore, what could be considered the embryonic stages of multipolarity formed in a much narrower circle than the number of sovereign states we have today. After the Great Victory, the founders laid the foundation for multipolarity. The five most powerful nations became permanent members of the UN Security Council, reflecting the global balance of power and interests in 1945. In addition to the special position of the Big Five, the UN Charter embodies the principle of equal rights for all countries regardless of their size or the specifics of their history. Today, this is the cornerstone principle around which universal multipolarity will be built. The UN has fulfilled its primary role by preventing a new global war, but the noble idea of universal cooperation, equality, and prosperity did not come to pass. Cold War logic swiftly pushed the world toward division into opposing camps and ensuing opposition.

The key difference of the current edition of multipolarity is the chance to acquire genuinely global proportions, relying on the fundamental principle of the UN Charter: the sovereign equality of states. Previously, decisions of global importance were driven by a small group of countries with the predominant voice coming from the Western community, for obvious reasons. Today, new players representing the Global South and Global East have stepped onto the international political stage. Their numbers are growing. We rightfully call them the Global Majority. They are strengthening their sovereignty in addressing pressing issues, demonstrating independence, and prioritising their national interests rather than someone else's whims. To back this up, I will cite my Indian colleague, Minister for External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar who said that the world is much more than just Europe. Clearly, this statement means that the world is much more than the West. Russia consistently advocates the democratisation of relations between countries and a fairer distribution of global benefits.

To be continued...



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