

## THE ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM – 2009

4–6 JUNE 2009, ST. PETERSBURG

### THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND NEW CHALLENGES TO GLOBAL SECURITY

#### Moderator:

**Konstantin Kosachev**, Chairman of the Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee

#### Panellists:

**Sergei Ivanov**, First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation

**Binyamin Ben Eliezer**, Minister of Industry, Trade and Labor of Israel

**Alexander Kononov**, Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation

**Robert Legvold**, Marshall D. Shulman Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science,  
Columbia University

**Ivan Safranchuk**, Associate Professor, Moscow State Institute of International Relations  
(University, MFI of Russia)

**Dr. Andrew C. Kuchins**, Director and Senior Fellow, Russia and Eurasia Program Center for  
Strategic and International Studies

Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee, led the discussion on the economic crisis and the challenges to global security. He noted that, as recently as five-to-10 years ago, post the collapse of the USSR, global security appeared to improve dramatically with the development of technical capabilities to fight the war on terror. However, the reality has turned out to be very different. First Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov picked up on this topic and outlined a number of serious and important security concerns. In particular, he suggested that the economic crisis has increased the risk and incentive that nuclear technology will be sold to terrorist groups. He emphasised that the US and Russia must play a leading role in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons by setting new, much stricter, standards. The deputy prime minister said that, one possible way is to establish international uranium enrichment centres, such as in Angarsk in Russia. This facility is run by the International Nuclear Energy Academy. Here, other countries are guaranteed to receive energy-grade nuclear fuel. Another concern is that the worsening economic conditions could result in illegal migration and piracy. The deputy prime minister commented that the Somali pirates situation had demonstrated the need for an international mechanism to foster military and legal cooperation.

Professor Robert Legvold of Columbia University stressed that, many of the failures of the former Bush Administration were related to unilateralism and the resort to military power, and it was not the economic crisis that resulted in a change in policy. Binyamin Ben Eliezer, Israel's minister of industry, trade and labour, followed up on the discussion with comments on these risks in relation to the Middle East.

Ivan Safranchuk of Moscow State Institute of International Relations drove the discussion to classify the security threats in relation to issues on a global scale (new rules and new players, such as BRIC countries), at the regional level (the formation of new power centres, competition for energy resources); and the local level (where a complete destabilisation appears to be taking place).

Andrew C. Kuchins of the Russia and Eurasia Program Center for Strategic and International Studies, returned the discussion to US foreign policy. He suggested that US foreign policy has not changed because of the global crisis, but that the crisis helped US President Barack Obama to win the presidential election, with the obvious policy consequences. Kuchins said that last year was also signified by a crisis in US-Russia relations, which, following the war in Georgia, reached its lowest point in over 20 years. The turnaround that has since occurred is indeed incredible: Russia has now allowed NATO to transport supplies to Afghanistan through its territory.

The panellists concluded that the security situation has changed markedly, partly due to the global economic crisis, and partly because the usual problem-solving tools have become obsolete.