

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2012

Transcript of the Kissinger-Sikorski Debate on Europe

By Philip Cody

Dr. Zaborowski: My name is Marcin Zaborowski, I represent here the Polish Institute for International Affairs, which together with the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs hosts this debate on Europe. It is a true honour to present our speakers. Let me just start with our distinguished visitor, Dr. Henry Kissinger.

Really the best way to describe Dr. Kissinger is to say that he's the man who simply is the co-architect of the world we live in. A former national security advisor, the [U.S. Secretary of State] in the administrations of presidents Nixon and then Ford, Dr. Kissinger presided over major foreign policy initiatives—initiatives that have really changed the structure of the world, and the structure of the international system. Let me just mention here some of the most essential ones, which by no means exhaust the list of achievements, but perhaps Dr. Kissinger is best known for his role in forging rapprochement with China, which paved the way for the return of China to the international scene, and changed the balance of power in the Cold War.

He's also well-known for ending the war in Vietnam, for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize. And last but not least, an essential role in launching détente, the arms control agreements with the Soviet Union, which certainly, was one of the key factors leading to the end of the Cold War. So, in many respects, we perhaps wouldn't have this debate today, we couldn't debate this freely had it not been for the activities of men like Dr. Kissinger. So, truly, Dr. Kissinger, we are delighted to have you here, and thank you for agreeing to speak at our event.

Dr. Kissinger will be debating with [Polish Foreign] Minister Radosław Sikorski, who naturally needs no introduction here in Poland. Let me just say that Minister Sikorski's speech on the future of the European Union delivered in Berlin last year will serve here as one of the key reference points in this discussion. The debate will be moderated by Mr. Piotr Kraško, a senior editor of the Polish Public Television, TVP. And on this occasion I would like to thank TVP for co-sponsoring this event, and for broadcasting it live.

The subject of the debate is Europe, but I understand that we will also talk about the broader context in which Europe finds itself today, including its relations with the immediate neighbourhood, including relations with outside powers such as Russia, and the United States. Now we are pressed for time, so let me end here, gentlemen, I wish you a successful debate. Mr. Kraško, it's all in your hands now. Thank you.

Mr. Kraško: Thank you so much. Dr. Kissinger, Mr. Minister, it's a great honour and privilege to be here and to have you here, and if we have the Spain–Portugal game in the evening and if we have the Kissinger–Sikorski debate in the morning, it can't be better than that. So, now the dream team is in Warsaw. [It is a] great honour to have you here, sir. Please let me start with the phone issue. Because you have asked one

of the most famous questions in the history of diplomacy, “is there a single telephone I can call in Europe to ask what does Europe think about something, what is going on in the world.” But you asked this question many decades ago. Do you think that now there is a single phone in Europe you can call to ask what does Europe think about something, and do we need a single phone in Europe?

Dr. Kissinger: First of all, let me say what a pleasure it is for me to be here. In my public life, and also in my research on the nature of international relations. Poland, because of its history, and because of its suffering, and because of its heroism, has always played a very special role. And I will not forget coming here with American presidents, under the communist period, and to see the tremendous outpouring of the public, that clearly could not be organised by the government because it was an assertion of freedom. And also, when I was a professor at Harvard, there were some Polish students, several especially from Kraków, who made a deep impression on me. So, I am very happy to be here.

Now on this, on this notorious statement, “does Europe have a single telephone number”, I think it was actually invented by the Irish foreign minister describing a meeting with me, but I take credit for it. It’s ... I’m not sure I actually said it, but, it’s a good statement, so why not take credit for it. There, are two aspects: Is there a single telephone number, and secondly, [who] would you hear answer the telephone?

Now, we have a kind of a telephone number, but it isn’t really absolutely clear [that] if America wants to deal with Europe, who exactly the authorized voice of Europe would be, because there is Lady Ashton and the commission, the other spokesman, and of course there are the national foreign ministers. But, most importantly on many issues there does not really exist a unified European, especially strategic, approach. It’s relatively easier now to get answers to technical questions, but I would say that even if a telephone exists, and even if they answered it, the answer is not always, very clear.

Mr. Kraško: Mr. Minister, what is the most important European telephone number in your mobile phone, if you have to make a phone call, what’s the most common address?

Minister Sikorski: Well I’m a member of the foreign affairs council, which met on Monday in Luxemburg, so obviously the chairman of that council, the High Representative Cathy [Catherine] Ashton, the head of our diplomacy. But, I agree with Dr. Kissinger that it depends on the issue. On trade matters, Europe really does speak with one voice. And there we are a superpower. We are the largest economy on earth, and when we regulate [such companies as] Microsoft [or] Gazprom, we really matter, because we speak with one voice. And the question is, before us Europeans, whether we want to use those economies of scale also in strategic matters. And I think we should, because what concerns the United States a great deal, the situation in the Middle East, for example, that is Europe’s immediate neighbourhood, where we have quite a lot of influence, because we are a

developmental superpower. But as you know, I would like us to go further. I would like us to—and this is actually official policy of the cabinet of Parliament—for the post of the president of the European Commission, and the president of the Council, [to be] united, and for that person to be elected either by the European Parliament, or even more broadly, by the people of Europe. That office, would clearly have the mandate and the legitimacy to speak for Europe.

Mr. Kraško: Dr. Kissinger, do you think there is still a chance for Europeans to be a global superpower, because [although] we are the largest economy on earth, definitely we are not when it comes to the military. And, we have a lot of problems. The next European Summit is just ahead of us, and some people predict the next financial Armageddon, so is there still a hope for Europeans to be a global superpower player?

Dr. Kissinger: I have wondered, may I point out that, the Polish hosts [are] a caring hospitality, [and have gone] to considerable extremes by producing a foreign minister who speaks English better than I do. So, now, Europe as a superpower. The foreign minister's absolutely right, in terms of economy, population, and all the normal indicators of power, [Europe] has the making, the capacity, to be a superpower, to be equal to the United States, or China, or any other superpower, that one can imagine. At the same time, we all know that one expression of power status is the military capacity, [and] of Europe, is preposterously low in relation to what Europe used to do nationally. Now we prefer to be in a world without weapons, but of course the ability of a country to bring about its objectives, there is some relationship to its capacity to fight for it.

Its capacity to fight for it really goes to a deeper point: Is a society willing to make sacrifices for its future? That is the key issue. And, if one debates what Europeans wrote about themselves at the turn of the last century, and what they write about themselves today, one has to say that the willingness to sacrifice in the present, for the future, has declined. So in that sense, Europe has the capacity to be a superpower, but Europe has neither the organisation nor, so far, the concept to be a superpower, and that [a] fully European idea is a challenge.

Mr. Kraško: Mr. Minister, do you agree with this point of view?

Minister Sikorski: Yes, because power cannot be just exercised in soft ways, sometimes you need to back up your diplomacy with force. You can speak softly, provided you carry a big stick. And if your partner knows that there isn't a stick you're holding behind your back, your capacity to influence events is less. And that is why Poland, during its presidency of the EU, worked so hard to improve Europe's capacity to act in the military sphere, and that is why we are in favour of launching permanent structured cooperation, that is, the pooling of defence resources among willing members of the EU with the hope that others will eventually join, too. And I believe this will be welcome to the United States. I think a decade ago there were those in Washington who thought it would undermine NATO, that it would

somehow be a rival venture. I think today the U.S. needs our help and would be pleased if we got our act together, militarily.

Mr. Kraśko: Dr. Kissinger, you are kind enough to [mention] your positive impressions from Poland today, and you were writing in your famous book *Diplomacy* about the past of Poland in the 19th century, beginning of the 20th century, and for hundreds of years, living between Germany and Russia was sort of a problem for Poland, and we used to be the most popular playground in this part of the world. Do you think that nowadays, living between Germany and Russia, maybe it's sort of a blessing, not a problem anymore?

Dr. Kissinger: Well, Poland shows [it's] a tough neighbourhood to live in, and historically it lived between an emerging Prussia and Germany, and an advancing Russia, and it became the victim of the influences. But then it spent a hundred years maintaining the idea of freedom with the extraordinary effort that in almost every war of liberation, anywhere in the world, there will some poets fighting, because they wanted to demonstrate the significance of the universal concept of freedom. I don't know any other country that has ever chosen that road and sustained it.

So then, you know Polish history better than I do, Poland was resurrected at the end of the first world war, but in a strategically very unbalanced world in which the countries of Eastern Europe strategically were extremely vulnerable. And then that ended with another partition. So now, Poland has to establish itself in the face of that history and in the face of the same neighbours. But conditions have changed. Poland is now relatively stronger than it was. And hopefully, and actually, actually, the intentions of its neighbours, are somewhat different. The fact that Germany and Poland seem on the way to a substantial reconciliation is a new factor in that historic Polish equation. And Russia, too, is undergoing an evolution dictated by circumstances. One can never in Poland rely simply on sentiment and on mood, and so, for Poland, one has to protect against [the] worst outcome in a more acute way than countries like the United States, that are thousands of miles away.

Some freedom of action can be achieved through skilful diplomacy. Some through belonging to larger structures. Some by seeing whether there is scope for altering historic relationships like that between Russia and Poland. But one thing is sure, the job of foreign minister in Poland is never boring. And so, more than that [it] always has dramatic aspects and is always overlaid with a consciousness of potential tragedy. Which it is our duty, to help prevent.

Mr. Kraśko: Doctor Kissinger has mentioned Polish-German reconciliation, I have a feeling now that half of our country in the Euro tournament supports Spain, but half of them support Germany, which is maybe the best symbol of reconciliation. Do you agree with that?

Minister Sikorski: Well, it must have something to do with the fact we have Polish players on the German team, but I would say that the job of reconciliation with Germany is pretty much done. We are now at a stage of consummating the actual

Polish–German alliance. We are now treaty allies within NATO, and we are members of the same European family where we have daily business in all aspects, including the internal policies of both countries, so it's a very intimate relationship, because Germany is by far our biggest trading partner, and we constantly negotiate European business. And so, by getting involved in the business of Europe, Poland has found its bearings, and found in Germany a worthwhile and, particularly under this government, a friendly partner.

It's harder with Russia because it's only recently that conditions are here that enable the truth telling, which has to be the basis of reconciliation.

Mr. Kraśko: There were hundreds of books written about the decline of the West, for the last hundred years. So, if they were written in 1918 and we still exist, maybe its not going to happen. But there are some visions that this century is not going to be the century of Western civilisation, what's your point of view on it?

Dr. Kissinger: I'm not sure I fully understand the question.

Mr. Kraśko: There are a lot of articles and books written about the decline of the West, there are emerging superpowers that are going to replace Europeans and Americans as the leading power in the world.

Dr. Kissinger: The United States has had a very unusual experience in foreign policy. When we talk of foreign policy here, you automatically think of invasions, defeats, of suffering, of restoration. America had never had any of these experiences, except the civil war, which was sort of thought of as a domestic affair.

Here's a country whose history was separated from the rest of the world by two great oceans. So Americans genuinely believe that whether we participate in international affairs, it depends entirely on us. We can go in, or out, as we choose. I once gave a speech at the height of the Cold War, in Omaha, Nebraska—that's right in the middle of the country—and in the question period—it was a banker's convention—so, in the question period somebody said to me, you talk of the nature of war and of the problems, but what could anyone want from us in Omaha? The headquarters of the Strategic Air Command was five miles away, down the road. The one city that was guaranteed to be attacked on the first day of a war, was Omaha. But that had not penetrated the minds of the local people.

Now this country, with that history, at the end of the war [World War II], emerged with fifty percent of the world's gross national product. Nobody has ever been in such a position. On top of it we had an atomic monopoly. So for us, for you, the choices of foreign policy are the way with answers of how to deal with various gradations. For us, at that time, foreign policy was the allocation of resources, because any problem we recognized as a problem we could deal with. So the main question was, did we recognise the problem or not.

So compared to that position, we are certainly in decline. Because, no country could ever maintain, or should ever try to maintain, such a position. Europe was destroyed

at the time, Asia was not yet independent, Russia was a threat, but in terms of capacity, not comparable to the United States. So now in terms of it, we are in decline. But we still have twenty-five percent of the world's gross national product. So, we are still the most powerful single nation in the world. But we now have to conduct foreign policy like other countries. We have to make choices. We have to establish priorities. And we have to establish a sort of strategic concept. Now that's not easy in our country. Because our country thinks of foreign policy as problems. So, you get a problem, you solve it, and you can solve it in a limited period. In the 1990's, President Clinton announced that we were getting involved in Bosnia, and that we would solve the problem in one year. And no European would believe that you can solve any Balkan problem, in one year. That, by a European perspective, was impossible.

So, the drama in America now is to develop a strategic view of the world. I think we have enough resources to do the things we should do, and to divide other things with other countries, but our tendency is to focus on one problem at a time. Right now you would think the Middle East and Syria. In three months, it may be something else. So, that's our problem, it isn't that we've become weak, the problem is to develop a strategy for a period in which we still have greater capacities than anyone else.

Mr. Kraško: Mr. Minister?

Minister Sikorski: I agree that we need a strategy, and the strategy is likely to be more effective if America and a more integrated Europe work together, but I want to address your fundamental question, namely, are we or are we not in inevitable decline as the West? And I have to tell you, I'm torn on this question. Because if you look at the demographic figures, or long-term economic trends, it does seem inevitable that the West, Europe and America together, will continue to be relatively weaker, a relatively smaller proportion, of the world's economy and the world's population.

That's if trends continue. But the point is, trends don't always continue. If you look at the world a hundred years ago, Europe—unfortunately Poland was not on the map at the time—was indubitably on top of the world, and nobody could challenge us at that time. But then if you look at the following hundred years until today, in thirty year slices, at each slice the world looked completely different because trends don't necessarily continue, and you can't exclude the fact that some of the current players that seem to be rising inexorably do not make the kinds of mistakes that we Europeans made in the 20th century.

Mr. Kraško: Dr. Kissinger, I hope you are going to forgive me the question that may sound naïve, but I think this is the question of millions of people around the world. When should the U.S. intervene militarily, because the U.S. has been mentioned in Bosnia, in Somalia, in Libya, in some way, but not in Syria, not in North Korea, not in Iran, and [...] so, when should the U.S. and European Union be engaged militarily in a conflict in a different part of the world? What's their role?

Dr. Kissinger: Let me say my general view about intervening. The tragic debate in America over the past half-century has been about interventions, which we undertook with great enthusiasm and great unanimity of opinion, and which we ended with a domestic debate about how to be strong. Now, you should not intervene so that you can withdraw. When you intervene, you must prevail, and if you don't know how to prevail, you shouldn't intervene. This I would state as a general principle.

When I was in government, the administration in which I served inherited 550,000 Americans, fighting in Vietnam, put there by the previous administration, most of whose members then joined the peace movement after they left office. So, we had to fight our own people to continue what had been established. Now, therefore, when people said you have to intervene, I was not. I'm not in favour of military intervention in Syria. But we don't [intervene], because I can't describe what the end would be. I would like to see Assad removed, but that gets into a lot of ... let's talk about the philosophical point.

There are undoubtedly issues, such as the proliferation of nuclear weapons, which effect our security—our security, everybody—in which intervention may be necessary. There are other issues in which there are preferable outcomes, but it depends by what coalition they can be achieved. If Europe played a larger role in the region, then we could revisit this problem, so I am not against intervention in principle. I am in favour of a concept for the West, of what we are trying to do, [to] do it together if at all possible, and intervene if necessary; but I don't want foreign policy conducted on the basis of tomorrow's headlines, and written by editorial writers.

Mr. Kraško: Mr. Minister, I hope it's not a secret, but when you talk privately among ministers of foreign affairs in the European Union, do you usually think that Americans should be engaged more in the world affairs, or less?

Minister Sikorski: Before I answer that, I'd like to address the previous question, and I would make the following distinction. There are wars that are imposed on us, and that we have to fight those, and then there are the wars of choice. And, also as a former defence minister, I agree with Dr. Kissinger, that when we send troops into war, we have to give them the tools, and the doctrine, and the political circumstances in which they can do the job. It's unfair for politicians to ask soldiers to do things they were not trained for, such as, for example, creating states. The soldier's job is to prevail on the battlefield.

And, I'm uncomfortable with wars in which we fight with a country, and with a nation, just in order to get rid of its leader, as was the case in Iraq, or in Libya, in fact. And we are not contemplating it, but in fact it would be the case with Syria if we did. And that's why I think, the new U.S. method, of striking directly, by drones, or by long-range missiles, and terminating with extreme prejudice, as the expression goes, the people who are a threat to us, is actually a very cost-effective way of doing it, but we need to develop a legal doctrine. But when it's permissible, I have a feeling we'll

be doing more of that sort of thing in the future. And as regards whether we should have more or less of the United States, it's not easy. When you are the top dog, you are always blamed. Whether you do too much or whether you do too little, and it's just one of the burdens of leadership that the United States, I'm afraid, has to live with.

Mr. Kraško: Dr. Kissinger, I want to get back to your answer, you said that it's wrong when politicians make up the decisions, think about the headlines in tomorrow's newspaper, but I think this is the most important question for us, for citizens of our countries today: is it possible to make different policy? Thirty, forty years ago, maybe it was possible without twenty-four hour news networks, but do you know politicians now that think really about the future in terms of generations, not about headlines in today's newspapers or about news programs at night? I mean, politicians with a clear vision for decades, not [just the] next day.

Dr. Kissinger: When I look at, politicians that I have known over a rather extended period, I cannot, to this, to this view, it's often said in America, and in Europe, that for America and Europe to cooperate, we need a strong Europe. And I agree with this. But if you look at the European leaders at the end of the second World War—[Konrad] Adenauer, [Robert] Schuman, [Alcide] De Gasperi—they reflected very weak countries, but they had a vision of the future. And they had grown up in a Europe that still had confidence in themselves. So they could as leaders, strangely enough, act with more vision than you would deduce from their strengths.

So, and in America at the time, we had the strange phenomenon of Truman, who with no, with very little education, but unbelievable instincts, brought America along, and helped by actions and measures and so forth. But what do we have in the political world today almost everywhere? The problem of getting elected is so complicated, and the problem of staying in office is, has so many aspects to it, that many of the leaders are absorbed in managing the day-to-day issues. And so, one could say there is less time available for reflective long-range thinking, and maybe less confidence. Then it's a challenge of our period. But it's a question of the nature of democracy.

It's not inherent in the objective situation. The key problem is whether one can subordinate the urgent to the important, and whether one society is willing to make sacrifices for the future. Now, Poland has so great a willingness because its pressures on it are more immediate. I know it's because of its history, in particular, but that's what we really have to work on in America. But even when you make the great criticisms of America that I've just made, you have to compare it, that over a period of fifty years, without America, very little progress would have been achieved. And while people can say we could have done more, we folks have done quite a lot. And, we have to keep that in mind when we are unhappy with this or that decision.

Mr. Kraško: Mr. Minister you know that the people are complaining quite a lot that we don't have leaders like De Gasperi, Schuman, Winston Churchill, or Margaret

Thatcher, but maybe only in difficult times, only in tragic times, you have leaders like that, what's your point of view?

Minister Sikorski: I think it depends also on the manner in which we select them. If you select leaders in the multilateral manner, then, which is to say by consensus of nation-states, then you usually appoint those people who have never stepped on anybody's toes. If you elect people by popular vote, then of course they tend to be more populist in their rhetoric, but you also get a chance to get characters who have more leadership qualities.

Mr. Kraško: I want to start a completely different subject that's important for us in Poland: shale gas. Do you think that it's going to change, completely, the energetic situation in the region, and our position in Europe and in world affairs, if we are going to use shale gas, of course, in the next couple of years.

Minister Sikorski: It's already doing so even if it doesn't happen in Europe, and I believe it should, particularly in Poland. The U.S., from a projected importer of energy is becoming an exporter of energy. This is already influencing global markets, not just for gas, but also for oil, because through heating there is an interconnection between the prices. And that of course, will have profound effects. [And also on] energy, strategic-wise.

Mr. Kraško: Dr. Kissinger, I think a lot of my countrymen were surprised at so many American companies who are involved in shale gas operations in my country. Do you think it's really going to change the rules of the game in Europe? If Poland will become quite an important player, in this market?

Dr. Kissinger: You're talking about ...

Mr. Kraško: Shale gas, in Poland.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, I look at the shale oil problem, first of all from a local perspective. And let me give you a little, example. When I first had responsible positions at the end of the sixties, the price of oil was about a dollar and a half, a barrel. And the United States had surplus production, that is, that enabled us—we had a system of regulating our production, which enabled us to regulate the world oil price, because if the price went up to a certain level, we produced more. We had about twenty percent of our production shut in [offline]. This ended in '71. And nobody understood what it meant. We went to full production, and we had an internal paper written in which it was said that by 1977, or something like that, the price of oil would be five dollars. By 1973, it went to seventeen dollars. Which was, a lot of money at that time.

So, I've seen that curve develop, after that, the market was not made by the consumers, and the consumers had to be always worried about events that would drive up the price of oil. And the producers, through OPEC, could pressure the consumers. And that situation has always existed in the whole Europe, since affected only by dramatic events. But now, the discovery of shale oil is changing the

strategic situation. Not because of any policy we have, but because the fact that, as the foreign minister correctly pointed out, in a relatively short period of time. Say three to five years, the United States will be and can be—the United States may not plan to do it—but we can be an exporter of energy. Or, we can use it to modernise some of our industries, or both. And, if you put together North America, Canada, the United States, and Mexico, we will be self-sufficient in energy altogether. So that is a strategic change in the world situation. It may not become so apparent. We cannot be blackmailed that much, or at all, from previous producers, and the result of this, it will take a little bit to recognize since it did in the '70s, but it gives America a greater freedom of action on Middle East questions. And it will change the dependence of countries on the United States.

Now, if you add to it, oil reserves in countries like Poland, and Ukraine, this will then affect the distribution of energy in the region. It will take a bit to think through what new [problems] it will undoubtedly produce in the political patterns in the Middle East. And we need to think that though, and we ought to talk about it within the West. I'm describing the objective situation, I'm not saying we should do this or that, next to the situation that is emerging. And that creates a greater flexibility and a greater scope with respect to any problems we recognise.

Minister Sikorski: Let me just add, I was in Baghdad, on Sunday. Iraq has just surpassed its biggest ever output of oil. And once it's done so, it's quite easy to increase it further. And they think they will double it within the next three to five years. Which will put Iraq more or less on par with Saudi Arabia. And oil prices going down from a peak of a hundred-thirty [dollars per barrel], to I think ninety-one as of yesterday. So it's possible after a decade of expensive oil, we are getting into a decade of cheaper oil. The oil price seems to go in a cycle of about a decade. And of course it's not guaranteed because it can be affected by political events, for example, by a war in the Middle East. So, the jury is [still out].

Mr. Kraško: That's very optimistic. For many years, Americans were complaining that [one has] to borrow money from the Chinese to buy oil from the Saudis. So, it's not going to be like that forever. But I want to stop at China. We don't talk so much about China in Europe, but definitely in the U.S.

I just read the last issue of *Foreign Affairs*, and it's really hard to find a page [that doesn't mention] China. There are different visions: that in twenty years, China is going to spend more for their military than the U.S.; for thirty years, the Chinese GDP is going to be higher than the Americans'. What's your opinion on the future of China, and the role China is going to play in the world affairs scene in ten, and twenty years?

Dr. Kissinger: Well, people talk of the rise of China as if it is a new phenomenon. But if you look at 1,800 of the last 2,000 years, China was the most powerful country in the [world]. It's not a new country. It isn't emerging, it is a country that is returning to its historic status. In the Chinese mind, they look at the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, as a period of humiliation. But as an exception to

the rule, the Chinese description of itself, in its books, has been the Middle Kingdom. They thought of themselves as the centre of the universe, but not in the nationalist way European sovereign states did, but in the sense of representing a culture that was ... that had a unique aspect.

So as a result, the notion, the Western notion, of the sovereign equality of states, never existed in China. There were no words for it, in the Chinese world, until a very short time ago. The countries of the world were organised in the Chinese mind, as tributaries to the Middle Kingdom. They didn't have to pay to enter, they didn't have to be net contributors because they got gifts back. But the importance was such, by their relationship to the culture, of the century of humiliation, of the Middle Kingdom, so they had it right through the 19th century. China didn't have a foreign ministry until the last decade of the 19th century.

So, first, when we say China should operate by rules that we have established, and it should take a minority position in a choice that is perfectly reasonable for us, it makes no sense, it doesn't fit into the way the Chinese think of international affairs. So, the pros of Soviet influence in the Cold War depended on military power, and therefore to resist it, military alliance and so forth. The pros of the Chinese impact on the world, it will have an element of military power, but it will be primarily based on political, economic, and cultural performance. And so, it is a different issue now, when you say the GDP of China will increase, that's true. But you also have to consider the per capita, that this has to be distributed throughout a population four times larger than the United States. So, even at the point when GDP is the same, it will be per capita much less. And then, one has to think that Western people keep thinking of China as a projection in a straight line. Here is a country, and I am saying nothing that I haven't said in China, and that the Chinese don't say about themselves. The cost of China can be compared to Europe [but the] interior of China can be compared to Africa. To develop a country through [all] stages of development is unique and nobody has ever done that.

And in the next ten years, the Chinese are moving 4-500 million people from the countryside into the cities. So what happens to people under those conditions. Nobody can absolutely predict. So, you have new generations of Chinese emerging. All I'm saying is that this idea that the West is sort of sliding down and the Chinese are going in a straight line is not what the world will look like. I do believe it's important for the West and China to be "inhostile", to see how this process can evolve in a way that is in benefit to the greatest number of people. Because it's a unique thing. It's never before happened. And if you add to it the issues that are arising, like nuclear proliferation, and energy, and environment, all of which are affected by what I have said, and what you have said, so that's my view of the trend of China.

Mr. Kraško: Mr. Minister, maybe it's only my impression, but I do believe that the Americans talk and think about China much more than the Europeans, maybe it's our mistake?

Minister Sikorski: Some European countries are extremely successful in exporting to China, we have just had the first visit of the Chinese premier in Poland in twenty-five years, first in free Poland. And, he confirmed the trend of meeting here in Warsaw, with the entire region. President Obama did that two years ago, and Prime Minister Wen Jiaobao did it recently, so I believe that our region can also be very attractive to China with regards to investments and trade, but, yes, Europe needs a more coherent strategy with China. But of course, there is a temptation for member states to cut individual deals with China, this is in fact the curse of Europe's foreign policy, that we agree something, and then, it's not, the discipline cracks up. I think with a country the size of China ... put it like this, by comparison with China, we all in Europe are small countries, except that some of us know it, and some of us are yet to learn it.

Mr. Kraśko: Thank you so much. Ladies and gentlemen, if you have any questions for our guests, I hope they will be happy to answer.

Question: Mr. Kissinger, I have a question concerning a big elephant in the room, Russia. You spoke about the future of Europe, you also said there is a consciousness of tragedy in this part of the continent. If you were—I want to challenge you—if you were in Minister Sikorski's shoes, what would be the policy towards Russia?

Dr. Kissinger: I had trouble uh...

Minister Sikorski: If you were in my job, what would...

Question: What would you do with Russia?

Dr. Kissinger: I have trouble enough thinking about American foreign policy, without giving detailed advice. [Of what] I have seen of Polish foreign policy, [its] fundamental objectives are clear. You try to assure your independence by being part of a larger grouping. You want that grouping to be as effective as possible. And, at the same time, [I] recognise [that for] many of the Polish people ... that if this can be achieved by reconciliation with Russia, you would be prepared to undertake it. That is my perception of what to do. You're doing it in a very difficult neighbourhood, with many things changing. That's more or less [the policy], I agree with this, and I have tried to support it. I recognise that sometimes the United States goes further towards Russia than some Poles feel comfortable with, but that is an impression, sometimes we are wrong. But sometimes when we are right, we are trying to balance the need for a peaceful order, with a need to make clear that there are limits, and that's not always an easy judgment, but that is the direction in which I think overall we and the Polish governments that I have known have tried to move. But sometimes one side or the other comes to a different judgment.

Mr. Kraśko: [calling on] Bartosz Wisniewski, with the Polish Institute of Internal affairs.

Question: Dr. Kissinger, if Barack Obama is re-elected this November, what do you think should be the single-most foreign policy objective during his second term? If

however, [Americans] went for a Republican president, what should be the focal point of his foreign policy. Finally, if you believe that the priority, the strategic priority that the U.S. is facing is irrespective of who is in charge, what differences in approach would you expect depending on who is the president. Thank you.

Dr. Kissinger: The acoustics here are...

Question: What should be number one on the agenda of the next U.S. president, or if Barack Obama is going to win again, in foreign policy. What's the most important task for the next U.S. president?

Dr. Kissinger: That, of course, depends, who wins the election. And, the Republican candidate has stated some different objectives from the Democratic candidate, but as a fundamental principle, I have personally now worked with ten American presidents in some capacity, of both parties, so, there are obviously differences, but objective reality imposes limits that you cannot just overcome, by your own. Well, I would think that for the United States, the immediate problem would be domestic. We will be in a very strange situation in November and December. In the following way: We will pass no domestic legislation of consequence this year before the election. But between November 7th and December 31st, by law, we have to pass a tax bill, and we have to extend the debt limit. That's unavoidable. This has to be done by a Congress, maybe twenty to thirty percent of whose members have already been voted out of office. So, it's a very tricky situation. It will force some decision because it's unavoidable. But nobody can tell you today what that decision will be. Then, after the election we have to deal with the question of entitlements, of the debt and so forth. So, these are American problems that will preoccupy us.

At the same time, I believe that any American president will now have to look at a world, as I have tried to describe it here, of an America with great power, but not unlimited power, of a shift of some of the emphasis towards Asia, but the continued importance of an evolving Europe ... and assess the implications of the Arab Spring. I agree with the foreign minister. We cannot go and change the revolution by changing one representative in each case, without knowing the underlying outcome. So any new or existing president will have to deal with these problems. But, the good thing about America is that with all the problems I have described, it's an optimistic people. They think they can deal with it, and you may disagree, but it develops at some point tremendous energy behind doing some things.

So, when I describe something to you, I describe a problem to you, I describe a problem that I think we can solve, and those of us who have been in government—I've been with Republican administrations, but we work together with democrats, as long as it pursues a common objective. So, don't let the fact that I have described difficulties lead to confusion. I look at them as potential opportunities.

Mr. Kraško: Mr. Minister, you know American politics very well. Maybe that's the problem, that we in Europe or in the world think that Americans should do something internationally, but they do have enough problems on U.S. soil, and they

will be involved in domestic affairs, for the next, maybe couple of years if nothing tragic is going to happen.

Minister Sikorski: Well foreign policy always has domestic constraints. It's constraints of public opinion, as so we heard during the Vietnam era, but also resources constraints. What Paul Kennedy described in the 1980's as a possible imperial overstretch has happened, but with a twist, namely, we have both in Europe and in the United States a social overstretch. The [states have] grown too big, and [have] incurred too many debts, and we have to fix them before we can again matter in foreign policy. Because, for example, as Europe, we are less effective, we've lost our soft power because of three years already of talk of the crisis of Europe, and I think the United States has a similar problem. There's gridlock in Congress, and the U.S. needs to restore its vitality and the confidence of the world so that it can finance its international presence.

Question: Good morning. Johanna Becker, European Parliament. I have a question of, the European Union is at a crucial moment in its history, both in political and economic terms. Many experts say that apart from economic instruments and answers to the crisis, we need political ones, we need new leadership, and we need this strategic approach you've mentioned so many times today. And in this context, I would like to ask you about the cooperation of Poland, Germany, and France, specifically within the Weimar Triangle. Do you think that this cooperation, these countries, have the potential to create this strategic approach, to create the strategic momentum for the European Union, this new vision, and concepts that you mentioned are needed. Thank you.

Dr. Kissinger: You know, once in America I gave a dinner for the French foreign minister in a hall like this, with these acoustics, and he sat at one table and he sat at another, and we made toasts to each other, and there was a columnist the next day who wrote, "it was a very interesting dinner, the French foreign minister declared war on the United States, and Secretary Kissinger thanked him for his brilliant exposition". And, can you tell me what this lady was saying?

Mr. Kraśko: There is a triangle we do believe has a future, Germany, France, and Poland, the Weimar Triangle, and we thought for a couple of years it may be one of the engines of European policy, but that's the question. Is there a future for cooperation like that between France, Germany, and Poland, or maybe it's just for internal affairs, or do you think cooperation like this, France, Germany, Poland, that each can have some political power?

Dr. Kissinger: I think when Europe cooperates, it will of course, have more political power than if it doesn't. And of these three countries, France and Poland have a historic link. Germany and Poland also have a historic link, but not always in the field of cooperation. So, but I would say that in the young German generation that—I know for me now, everybody below 60 looks like a flaming youth, so, in that generation, in the post-war German generation—I find a genuine desire for cooperation with Poland. And with perhaps more emotional attachment, to

cooperation with Poland, than with almost any other country. So yes, it is possible and foundations for it exist. One would still have to agree what the content of it is but I would be very positive. I don't say this to the exclusion of Europe, that choice has to be made by my friend here, whether it should be France, Germany, and Poland, or a larger grouping, or France, Germany, and Poland within a larger grouping.

Mr. Kraśko: Mr. Minister, what's your vision of the future of the Weimar Triangle?

Minister Sikorski: Well...

Mr. Kraśko: If there is a future.

Minister Sikorski: It works, it meets at the prime-ministerial, presidential, and actually ministerial and expert levels, and of course there is a preponderance of resources. Poland, a little bit like China, had a bad 19th century, but is returning to its rightful place, is restoring its economic and political position, and Poland has, I think, two attractive features that make it an interesting partner in Europe. Particularly for France and Germany. Number one, we are an example of a successful economic transformation. And of course, we didn't expect that the lessons of the Polish transformation would be applicable to much richer countries in the eurozone, but they are. And number two, Poland tries to represent the interests of the region, and therefore, it's useful to have Poland on board because you make sure that way that the interests of the new members of the EU are therefore taken into account.

Mr. Kraśko: Dr. Kissinger, one last question, correct me if I'm wrong, but as far as I know, when you were living in Europe, in Germany, you were a football fan, or maybe even a football player. Do you still follow soccer, if I may state, or just American football, because we are all eager to talk about Euro at this time.

Dr. Kissinger: I like American football, and I follow it, and baseball, but I'm very passionate about soccer. What we call soccer. And I have followed the Euro Cup on television, I went to see one game, in Kiev, and to my sorrow I have to leave tomorrow, and can't see [more matches]. I like soccer very much. I've been to many World Cups, and to many Euro Cups. I wrote an article once about how the national character was reflected in the style of the national football team, and about how you could tell something about the national character by the way football was played. This is no longer exactly right because they've developed such a universal style of football. But many years ago, you could make, and I saw, in the *Financial Times*, before the last quarterfinal, they described games [between] England and Italy, [as] a fight between the "brutes and the schemers"—these are not my words. I'm quoting the *Financial Times*. But if this is my last point, let me thank you all for coming here, for letting me come here.

What I find exciting when I speak to Polish audience, is, it's no cynicism. There is a belief that something has to be done, that the problem is difficult, and you're in a very exposed position, but you don't ask others to do it all for you. You feel you have

to participate, just as the Poles who in the 19th century fought in every liberation struggle for the principle. And, I've observed and read and met with your foreign minister, and I've seen the spirit in which this [participation] is done, but it's what I think in this audience. You're not here to prove that nothing can be done; you're here to prove that something will be done. And that you can do what you need to do. And for that I am grateful to you. Thank you, Mr. Minister, thank you.

Mr. Kraško: Thank you so much.