



Valdai Forum, 2016 - Putin highly concerned about current world situation



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On October 27th, 2016, Russian President, Vladimir Putin gave a speech at the 13. International Annual Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club's forum, in Sochi. For the past 12 years, leading Russian politicians, experts and media representatives have discussed basic questions about world politics with foreign guests. Due to the great uproar about the election in America Vladimir Putin's emergency call to the world almost went unheard. In summary he claimed: nothing had changed for the better since the last conference. A short review of Putin's speeches at the conferences in 2014 and 2015 illustrates this and makes his speech from 2016 even more understandable. Putin's speech at the 11th Meeting in 2014 contained - besides unmistakable criticism of the encirclement policy by the West - a clear offer: Russia's active participation in stabilizing the international order by focused mutual respect and strengthening of the sovereignty of all nations. And this on the basis of International law applied equally for all, in the framework of their cooperation in the UN. 2015, in his speech at the 12th conference in Valdai, Putin adopted a significantly more concerned tone. The reason for this was the expansion of conflicts, from the Ukraine to Syria, the continuing embargo-war against Russia and the massively increasing demonization of Russia in the western media. Putin emphasized the legitimacy of Russia's military intervention in Syria which was in line with the sovereignty of the country as compared to the illegitimate intervention by the USA and the coalition they lead. He warned of a division of Syria as "worst case scenario" and became very clear when he explained that since the development of nuclear weapons there could be no winner in a global conflict. Putin's current speech from October, 2016 differs from recent ones in a remarkable way. Putin asked the following question, I quote: "What is the world to expect when things continue on in this way? What kind of world will we have tomorrow? Do we have answers to the questions, of how stability, security and a sustainable economic growth are ensured?" Putin answered his questions right away himself. The answer contains a trace of uncertainty. On the one hand, because there is no consensus to this question in today's world. It is clear that a lack of strategy and ideas for the future prevail. This results in a climate of uncertainty which has a direct impact on the public disposition. On the other hand, uncertainty too, because many people do not see real possibilities to change something, to influence and to shape policy. Even in the most developed democracies, the majority of citizens have neither real influence on political processes nor on authority. They want stability, free development of their countries, preservation of their cultural identity and, finally, security, but they are losing their trust in the ruling class. In further explanations, Putin spoke about international terrorism and criticized the western governments for making the same mistakes again and again as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya: namely to believe that terrorists could be divided into the moderate ones that can be used for own aims and the radical terrorists. This is being practiced currently in Syria by the West. Putin also rejected the

accusations of interfering in the US campaign, asking if anyone could honestly believe that Russia would be able to influence the election of the American president. In the final part of his speech, Putin spoke about current measures of crisis management. He reaffirmed Russia's known position "that sovereignty is the central idea of the whole system of international relations". Stability on national and international levels can only be developed on this basis. In the Western media, Putin's last speech remained nearly unheard. Some Western media, for example "Die Welt" - a major German newspaper - equated his criticism of the West with a declaration of war. Please, listen to the counter-voice now: watch Putin's 25 minute speech he gave during the closing meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club on the 27th of October, 2016.

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