ALEXANDER KRAMARENKO – RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR

Ambassador Kramarenko opened by saying that now is the right time to discuss Russian policy due to the revolutionary times that we have all been through. The cold war reassured European dominance in the world but it is no longer about dominance and rather about competing civilisations. However, most nations would prefer to stick together now. The problem with the cold war is that it was not intellectually prepared and the policies that followed it have led us to where we are now. Each nation won the cold war as they were able to develop their own ideologies. He quoted that ‘history never ends as long as humanity exists.’

In response to an expanding world and multi-plurality such as Brazil, Japan and China there is a need for more diplomacy. With the continued existence of NATO, European security cannot be restructured. However, he highlighted the problem of globalization which was one of the factors of WW1 but now we understand that there is no need to resolve differences. The similarity with the situation 100 years ago is that government and the elite are losing control, leading to populism which we have seen in France, the USA and Brexit. One of the features of the current situation is that development is the top priority.

The more western elite attitudes remind us of the Soviet Union and the Bolsheviks but they thought it was possible for a world revolution to follow but now nothing could be further than the truth. With regards to international relations, we live in a free world, encourage multilateral diplomacy and are all interdependent. He highlighted that multilateral diplomacy is the first choice.

He identified the triangular diplomacy between USA Russia and China. After the cold war there was no formal settlement with the western world but now there is a profound interdependence. People do believe that the rise and fall of order had a lot to do with Russia but the West also lost their status after 1991. When Russia was born out of the collapse of the cold war, got rid of its old ideologies constraints of the past and focused on building a future.

Talking about sexual orientation, he says that no one is persecuted in Russia and it is a personal matter. He admits that Russia is behind the UK on the recognition of homosexuality but attitudes have been changing in the right direction over the past twenty years. When asked if the western world misunderstand Russia, he agreed that there is never absolute understanding

On Trump, he states that his military policy is good and Russia is optimistic. With regards to the EU, he suggests that the Eurozone is a quasi-German empire but the major issue was the creation of a single currency which can never be sustainable under opposite conditions. The only way forwards is integration or disintegration of the euro. He ended by saying that he would not discuss Anglo Russo relations as they are non-existent.