

# THE STATE OF THE WORLD IN 2023

VIEWED BY MAJOR REPORTERS AND EDITORIALISTS OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS  
Thursday, 28 September, 4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m. – Nacre Room



Isabelle Lasserre, Céline Lussato, François-Xavier Priollaud, Ousmane Ndiaye and Ulysse Gosset

## Democracy in decline around the world

This debate on the state of the world in 2023 was launched by François-Xavier Priollaud, who noted that everyone had been stunned by the return of war on European soil, *'something we thought was impossible'*. This has revealed 'much deeper' underlying trends: rivalries between powers, the crisis of democracy, the race to rearm, and more. He asked the speakers about the ability of international organisations to meet these challenges,

### MODERATOR:

**François-Xavier Priollaud**, Vice-President of the Normandy Region

### SPEAKERS:

**Isabelle Lasserre**, diplomatic correspondent for Le Figaro

**Céline Lussato**, foreign policy reporter at L'Obs

**Ousmane Ndiaye**, Africa editor and former Sahel correspondent for TV5 Monde

**Ulysse Gosset**, foreign policy editorialist at BFM TV

and Ulysse Gosset, more specifically, about how the world has changed since the end of the Cold War.

For journalist Ulysse Gosset, the return of war to Europe signals *'the end of illusions'*. The specialist in foreign policy explained that we have lived through a long period of peace that we thought would last. Many experts, he continued, are probably imagining a Third World War. The very fact that they are contemplating it *'says a lot about the state of the world, which is like a boxing ring'*. The journalist talked about a double divide: West-Russia on the one side, West-Asia on the other, *'How will Europe be able to exist between these two blocs? Are we going to have an independent policy or are we going to embark on a new military adventure against our will?'* he asked.

## The very fact of contemplating a third world war says a lot about the state of the world, which is like a boxing ring

Ulysse Gosset

François-Xavier Priollaud then posed another question: should we pit the West against the rest of the world? 'Yes', replied Isabelle Lasserre, diplomatic correspondent for Le Figaro. The war in Ukraine is said to have accelerated this opposition, highlighting the crumbling of democracies. The southern part of the world is now claiming *'a new place'* in opposition to Western order. The journalist explained that the war also shows how Vladimir Putin is fighting against democracy *'because it sets an example, a model, that could end up being extended to the former USSR, which he rejects'*. Regimes (along with China, Turkey and India) that aspire to eternal power are busy, she observed, portraying a decadent image of European democracies.

The debate then turned to the decline of democracy around the world. The example of Turkey was cited by Céline Lussato, a senior reporter at L'Obs. *'This country is a member of NATO, it is referred to as a democracy and yet it is an illusion: no freedom of the press, no control of elections.'* She referred to these countries, *which look like democracies but where dictators take root over the long term, as 'a great danger'*. *'So when we know that Erdogan wants to stay in power, can his foreign policy, with one foot in NATO and one in support of Vladimir Putin, lead to anything else?'*



Ulysse Gosset

François-Xavier Priollaud went on to talk about the numerous coups d'état in Africa since 2020 and the rejection of France in part of the continent. Ousmane Ndiaye, editor-in-chief of TV5 Monde and correspondent in Mali, sees this as the end of a cycle of decolonisation gone wrong. *'The military presence is one of the last avatars of colonisation, and its rejection is the result of the politics of the last decade'*, the journalist argued. He sees the demand for the departure of military forces, which has also been voiced by democratic forces on the

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Céline Lussato



Isabelle Lasserre, Céline Lussato and François-Xavier Priollaud

**We are showing up unarmed in the face of global players who have been arming themselves for thirty years**

Isabelle Lasserre

ground, as a demand for a redefinition of the relationship between Africa and France. François-Xavier Priollaud asked: 'Should we redefine our foreign policy, then?' 'Clearly,' said Ulysse Gosset. However, he maintained that we should do so by listening to what Africans have to say and what they want.

The journalist believes that the rise of populism, observed in Europe, Asia and India, is forcing France to adapt if it wants to retain its influence and power of intervention. 'Because a paradigm shift is taking place on a global scale, and new conflicts could reshuffle the cards', posited François-Xavier Priollaud: a possible war between China and the USA if the latter were to invade Taiwan.

'This is the illustration of the impotence of France and Europe', noted Isabelle Lasserre. 'We are showing up unarmed in the face of global players who have been arming themselves for thirty years.' In her view, it would be in Europe's interest 'to reconstitute itself politically, culturally and militarily, so that it can then assert itself on the international stage and re-establish healthier alliances'. Otherwise, history could well be written without it.



Watch the full debate on YouTube



Ousmane Ndiaye

DEBATE

**XI JINPING,  
HIS DRIVE FOR POWER?**

Friday 29 September 2023, 2p.m. – 3.30p.m., Plenary Hall



Stéphane Corcuff and Emilie Aubry

China and Taiwan, patience and militarisation

In the run-up to Taiwan's presidential elections in 2024, where the main issue is the island's tension with Xi Jinping's China, a 'symbolic opposition between the small democratic territory and the world's largest dictatorship', Emilie Aubry kicked off this discussion with a screening of the latest episode of her programme "Le Dessous des Cartes", fleshed out by a report from Taiwan in June 2023 to ask: will the war take place?

After asserting in an introductory answer that China will be content with the status quo 'as long as the USA remains the guarantor of Taiwan's security', the sinologist endeavoured to explain the origin of a discourse that assigns respon-

sibility for tension to US provocations, reminding us that 'it's perverse to justify Russian and Chinese policies by denouncing American imperialism.' On the issues at stake in the current Taiwanese presidential campaign, Stéphane Corcuff pointed out that there is 'essentially a political debate in Taiwan, with candidates setting themselves apart primarily for electoral reasons, because you can only really govern from the centre, despite the political leanings of the parties.' Since the end of the Kuomintang dictatorship (1949-1990s), which looked towards mainland China, more and more Taiwanese 'see their future in the Taiwanese identity.' However, 'this fault line

**A rational Xi Jinping is applying a strategy of military reinforcement to be ready if the geopolitical situation were to change**

Stéphane Corcuff

MODERATOR:

**Émilie Aubry**, editor-in-chief and presenter of Le Dessous des Cartes, Arte

SPEAKERS:

**Stéphane Corcuff**, academic, internationalist political scientist and sinologist