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## How predictable is Donald Trump in US-Russian relations?

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The upcoming presidential election in the United States will obviously affect global politics and the relationship between Moscow and Washington. Pravda.Ru sat down with General Director of the Russian Board of the International Affairs, candidate of historical sciences, Andrei Kortunov, to speak about the pros and cons of the two main presidential candidates.

### The difference between the candidates for US president

*"In one of your recent articles, you wrote that the US-Russian relations have evolved from critical to critically stable. Has anything changed now?"*

"If we continue to draw an analogy with diseases, one may say that the US-Russian relations have entered the chronic stage, and nothing crucial is going to happen in the future. The patient remains in a critical condition. Unfortunately, none of the key issues that led to the current situation has been solved yet.

"There is no understanding of how to treat this disease, because, firstly, there is a lack of trust between Moscow and Washington. Secondly, there is no common vision of the world's major problems. Russia and the USA share different views on where the world is moving, what the rules of the game in world politics should be, what justice is and so on.

"An election campaign for the Russian-American relations is always a difficult time, as it was the same in the past for US-Soviet relations. Critics of the ruling party say that the policy of the White House in relation with the Kremlin is too soft. According to them, one needs to build the relations "from a position of force." This is nothing but rhetoric, of course, but it does not create a positive background for improving the ties."

*"How can the Russian-American relations change after the November presidential election in the US? What is your professional forecast?"*

"There is a difference between the candidates, even though the US foreign policy is generally of bipartisan nature. The advantage of Donald Trump for Russia is the fact that he is a non-systemic candidate - he is not a member of Washington's elite. He can, roughly speaking, reset the balance of our relationship, turn the page and start a new chapter.

"I do not think that the American foreign policy will change dramatically, but Trump can do something from the standpoint of American standards. Here this is where Russia and the whole world can come across a danger. Donald Trump, as far as we can judge, is an authoritarian man capable of unexpected actions. He is like a loose cannon, and you never know in which direction it may shoot.

"Speaking of Hillary Clinton, she is a much more predictable candidate. We can say already now what kind of a dream she will have. They will be experienced people with established views. Yet, this predictability does not include significant positive developments in the US-Russian relationship.

"Most likely, Clinton will continue Obama's course, but in a tougher, more confident and more consistent way. Even if she has some new people in her team, one does not have to expect any drastic changes."

### **Arab world is in search of new development model**

*"You wrote that "the extent and the depth of the Syrian crisis requires fundamentally new social technologies and innovative formats of public-private partnerships." What does it mean?"*

"The model of the Arab world after WWII was based on secular political authoritarianism, Arab nationalism and a large public sector. It was also based on high oil prices, economic assistance from the USSR and the USA, the patriarchal social structure and other factors.

"Nowadays, this model is not working anymore. Today, the Arab world is looking for a new model of social and economic development. If it is not found, economic and social problems will always generate political tensions. Obviously, when there are too many passive and unemployed

young people in a country, conditions for political radicalism and religious fundamentalism are most favorable. The new model could also include the format of public-private partnerships, in which the state could deliver a part of its social functions to the private sector and civil society while maintaining certain control mechanisms.

"In Syria, joint efforts of the state, the private sector and the civil society must be linked to significant amounts of foreign aid. After all, the whole country has been destroyed, the damage is evaluated at tens of billions of dollars, millions of people have to be returned, everything needs to be built from scratch. All this must be associated with innovative approaches. Will serious investors go to Iraq and Syria? One has to look for new mechanisms and models of development."

### **Ground operation in Syria possible?**

*"Turkish and Saudi officials have previously announced their readiness to invade Syria. To which extent is the ground operation in Syria possible?"*

"I think that such statements pursue primarily political objectives. Yet, of course, this is a very dangerous game, including for the countries that make these statements. Syria is not Bahrain or Yemen. The war in Syria is fraught with direct confrontation with Iran and Russia. I think the Saudis are not ready for a large-scale ground operation - either politically or technically. As for Turkey, Erdogan is not crazy either. He does not want to get involved into the war in Syria. It appears that Turkey is not planning large-scale operations in the Syrian territory."