

The logo for the Bay of Bengal Conversation 2023. It features a blue geometric shape on the left, resembling a stylized 'C' or a network of nodes connected by lines. To the right of this shape, the text 'Bay of Bengal' is in a dark grey serif font. Below it, 'Conversation' is in a blue sans-serif font, and '2023' is in a dark grey sans-serif font. At the bottom, the phrase 'Rising Tides' is written in an orange cursive script.

# Bay of Bengal Conversation 2023 *Rising Tides*

## **Plenary Session: “The View from the Top: Political Leadership in the Modern Age”**

### Speakers

**Boris Tadic**, Former President, Serbia; Member, Club de Madrid

**Moussa Mara**, Former Prime Minister, Mali; Member, Club de Madrid

**Ali Aslan**, International TV Presenter, Moderator and Journalist, Germany (Moderator)

**Ali Aslan**, “I think it should be working indeed, ladies and gentlemen very warm welcome to the very last session of day two thank you so much zillur for this very kind introduction. It is indeed my great pleasure to be back here for the second edition for the second year in a row thank you so much. And heartfelt congratulations on what you have built here from scratch throughout the last couple of years, very impressive indeed. Ladies and gentlemen now the session, I'm not saying we're leaving the best for last but I can tell you that this is a session that is going to hold a lot of promise and I'm a session I'm very much looking forward to. Because everything we have talked up until now comes down to one thing and one thing only good leadership. And this is what we're going to talk about the view from the top political leadership in the modern age is what this session is titled. And indeed as zillur has pointed out we have here with us on stage two individuals two gentlemen who have led their countries throughout difficult times who have proven their leadership and that's why I'm very much looking forward to hearing from them throughout this session former president of serbia of course boris tadic and former prime minister of mali moussa mara thank you so much for joining this session. And boris tadic let me start out by with you. You've already held a keynote today one I've listened to very carefully and one where you have raised a lot of good points political leadership in the 21st century as we see throughout the world is hard to come by at the end of the day. Everybody's looking for good leadership everybody is looking for that one quality that leads their country and their people to the next level. As somebody who's been there as somebody who has led his country as president very simple but probably a very difficult question to answer- what in your opinion makes a good leader?”

**Boris Tadic**, “when I was entering in politics being member of semi-legal organization in 1970s I was dreaming to bring democracy in Yugoslavia in that time. Which wasn't democratic country that was a communist country in that time. And I was participating in semi-illegal organization

with my friends and my father who used to be philosopher and political philosopher said to me politics is a very interesting very dangerous but politics without experience is nothing. And this is first that I would like to share with you. To be politician without experience okay this is very challenging for young people that's nice but it's a very difficult to be real politician and statement without experience. (and there's no rehearsal to being president) yeah that's the problem when I'm remembering one american president when he said that the worst thing with a former president that he knows right now how to be good president (and the irony is probably by the end of your term when you know what it's all about you're leaving office) yes I can say this I would be much better right now than I used to be president. Frankly speaking I was very young I was 44 years old and it's too young for such a difficult position and in a difficult region in difficult country. Yes and my friend **Mousa Mara** is facing with a similar problems but he's much younger than me. But anyway to be politician I mean maybe my background is helping me to define that ali in a good way. My background is psychology and I'm always thinking about politics from the different angles. I'm not politician in the classical form and I'm always thinking about society. I'm not thinking about power but at the same time to be politician you have to qualify yourself by winning on elections to bring yourself to the power and to have responsibility and in accordance with the constitution kind of instruments in your hands to make changes within society to improve your society. Which is in general something which is defining good politician to change society in accordance with the law. But at the same time there is dilemma about democracy and democratic leadership. I said to you at the beginning of my political life I was dreaming to bring democracy in my country but sometimes especially in the modern era with the impact of the social medias and the new technologies it's very difficult to be democratic politician, right now. And maybe you are not in a position to deliver what people expecting from you in the very efficient way like some

other not very democratic politicians some populist for example they are able to deliver more and to make a manipulation with the human beings with the electorate because they're using mass medias in lying them and convincing them in a specific way and they perceived as a more efficient and more better politicians than democratic politicians and this is why I'm sharing only this dilemma with you.”

**Ali Aslan**, “yeah, well, one thing populist certainly have they promise more whether they deliver more. That's a different story but it sounded a bit more like because you say you were coming from a position where you didn't necessarily seek power so in a sense you were an accidental president one can say in a sense that the circumstances pivoted it you to that. We'll talk about that. In just a moment but let me bring in moussa mara here as well somebody as you pointed out very young man so you were once prime minister who knows the time will tell whether things can heave you back into that position. But from the experiences you have made would you subscribe to what boris tadic have said up until now. Nothing prepares you for leading a country and in essence when you leave is actually when you are ready to leave because you know all the ins and outs. Is that also compatible with the experience you've had?”

**Moussa Mara**, “I share what **Boris** said about the ability to deliver what you promised when you are campaigning and the ability to give services to the people. This is a kind of good leadership I share I share that with him. But I have some few differences with him about our experiences before being prime minister I was mayor. I started my political career locally to being mayor and that helped to understand the mindset of the people. And to have a social use for power and social kind to get the power and to deliver service. (so people already perceived you as a leader before you became prime minister) absolutely this is maybe this is the difference with boris but the main thing is if you are elected of to be member of parliament, to be member of government president of

course, you have to try to do your best and especially on this time with social network works new technology people are very quiet to wait for the result, they are not patience. And you have to do your best to try to deliver the service you promise to be elected this is the first thing. And the second as he said we are facing a lot of fake news now and a lot of propaganda from political leaders and from civil society. And as a leader you need to communicate not only to act but to communicate as well. And in your communication you have to convince your audience the public about what you are doing and you have to fight at the same time the fake news and the disinformation. This is something which is somehow complex to do action. And now communication if you want to be understood as a leader as a politician communication is at least as important as action. Unfortunately but you have to consider that this is maybe something I have to add to what boric said and I share exactly what he said.”

**Ali Aslan**, “the communication of course in of itself is not a bad thing at the end of the day you're being elected to explain your positions. But boris if I'm if we're looking at the title again political leadership in the modern day age now, it is very clear that if you want to become a politician in this day and age you have to endure and accept 24\*7 scrutiny. You have to accept criticism sometimes unfortunately also harsh personal attacks. Do you think that also deters a lot of good people a lot of competent people a lot of able people who might want to do good as a politician that country but otherwise are deterred from the very toxic environment that sometimes politicians find themselves in- is that is that compatible with your experience?”

**Boris Tadic**, “yes and nowadays when I'm talking with young people trying to convince them to come to politics I have to be honest and to say this is very toxic work. And you are going to lose your privacy, you are going to be under light every day and under criticism and you have to learn to teach yourself how to suffer. And in that respect I'm just after landing here in Bangladesh I met

one wonderful person here who is helping this organization and he was waiting on me and he was asking me some things about my career in my life. And I said to him and how to mature in a difficult time especially to be politician and I'm always recommending to young politicians to read the poem of Rudyard Kipling- if. Because this poem is teaching people how to survive in a difficult circumstances but politics mean that especially in the modern era I'm talking about social medias take into account counsel culture. That your work is going to be destroyed not only by your enemies your rivals but also by the people that cannot understand politics matter of politics and this is big problem. This is big problem you have to be aware that not many people are understanding politics even professors, academicians cannot understand matter of politics. This is why I'm always very much suspicious when I've heard that on the best universities in the world some people that are coming from philosophy, political science are teaching about politics. Because politics is not that kind of science politics is a science but not political science politics is everything. Politics is so complicated. Politics is like a flying to the space you have to understand politics, biology, climate changes you have to understand security- military-history everything and to combine to make a synergy in your head and to deliver decision this is extremely complicated but this is unbelievably interesting.”

**Ali Aslan**, “it's very interesting very rewarding I can also imagine. But (I'm sure I hope that I was encouraging you to enter into the politics) well yeah that was actually that was a good to become a politician more than anything else. No it is true of course **Moussa Mara** that, as a leader first and foremost it's the highest honor I think anyone could carry. You will be in the history books. You will have had the honor of leading your country, but at the same time as **Boris Tadic** was saying you are expected to have an opinion and make decision on a wide range of topics from a to z. Which understandably no human being in this room on the stage or beyond would be an expert.

And you are very much dependent on good advisors. But let me talk about the pressure of this job, it is often said I'm sure each politician you boris tadic everyone else goes into office thinking you're going to change the office. But often times it the office ends up changing you; isn't that the case?

**Moussa Mara**, “sure, because the reality is always different from what we expect before coming into office. It depends on the environment you find the context- the economic situation-political one and social situation. And you have to adapt yourself to what you find when you come to the office. That's why I join the **Boris** position about how interesting is our job. It is sure it is difficult but it is an honor given by the people to put you on the seats and to lead them, this is honor. And that's why we have not to blame the people, we have not to blame the society for whatever they do against us as a pressure as a context as a march and protesting. We have to tackle the problem of the society and why we are elected and we have not to blame. It is a specific position, it is a positive position it is a change given by the others. That's why on my opinion I think as a politician as a leader elected prime minister president and other top office- top post we are lucky. Whatever happened to us we are lucky. And this luck we have to use it in order to deliver service in order to give to give a chance to others to better their life, as simple as that.”

**Ali Aslan**, “but **Boris Tadic** if we're looking at the situation it seems to me there's a dilemma there's a catch 22 on one hand each and every one of us are looking for aspiring leaders. We want to be inspired we want to be led we want to be motivated but at the same time we meaning the citizens were extremely harsh in the sense the way we judge. Which leads to politicians who may have come into office with a very inspiring note but become very predictable because they're playing it safe. And their political statements are scrutinized and controlled by their communication officers to make sure nobody is offended at any given time. And thus you have uninspiring press conferences which I myself as a journalist then sit very frustratingly and I'm

looking for that one headline which of course is never given. How do we how do we get out of this? How do we get out of this dilemma where and this contradiction where people are looking for courageous bold leaders but the minute they become courageous and bold the outrage turns against them?”

**Boris Tadic**, “oh **Ali**, you are posing the most difficult questions and I have to be the greatest philosopher in the world to make proper answers. I mean (you're no longer in office so you don't have to be diplomatic) I see this is catch 22 really catch 22. And I hope that everyone is aware of what it means catch 22, this is a paradoxical moment in politics. You have to come to the power by using your conviction and your skills otherwise you cannot change society. When you are coming to the office to be president/ prime minister immediately you are facing with a problem because people are talking on you asking from yourself everything. Because they understood especially people from your party they understood if you came to the power you are coming to that position because of themselves not because of society. And they expecting you to deliver without their support without support of your political party you are going to be in extremely difficult situation being totally alone in the wide world. You have to have a kind of protection your party fellows. But if you are not delivering to them positions to be minister to be this and that they are not going to be satisfied. By being very principled you are losing power within your organization maybe you are going to get credit from your society but this is very temporary and this is catch 22. If you want to be successful politician you have to have a balance. If you are balancing you are looking very weak you're not looking very principled and very strong. And people are expecting strong leaders, at the same time people are expecting intelligent leaders, at the same time people are expecting honest leaders, at the same time people are expecting leaders that are not going to man at with them with the economy with the finance with everything else.



This is why to be really good politician is a very specific work very specific job but I'm trying to explain what it means? What it means- this is in practical terms this is why I'm trying I like to teach people to be politicians to explain to them where is a dangerous? After which angle they can expect more difficult situation? How to avoid it? This is also very specific skill. But what I wanted to say I wanted to say a lot of things because this is this topic is inspiring me but we don't have enough time. But it's a kind of problematic situation especially in the modern era ali this is this is something that I'm asking myself. Journalist, I always consider journalist as a partner on in terms of changing society. Without journalists without public medias we cannot be good successful politician that are serving to our society. Because we need a criticism we need a kind of corrections we can get corrections not only from ourselves in a good way but from the journalist. But journalists are also like politicians like policemen. You have a dirty journalist you have a honest journalist, you have a dirty polit policeman you have a honest, you have a dirty politicians you have a honest politicians- we are not the same we are not the same. But all of us are facing with the stereotypes. I mean majority of people thinks that all politicians are same. Do you know in my country we have a typical approach to the ladies- all ladies are same. Ladies are saying all men every man is the same. This is not the truth, this is simply not we are looking to each other but this is not the true. You have a honest journalist- intelligent journalist that are asking difficult questions. I like those kind of journalist. I like a journalist that asking me something that I cannot respond easily. This is why I like your questions.”

**Ali Aslan**, “thank you **Boris** for your honesty. Also it's very clear that it's something that you're still internally are grappling with this dilemma. But **Moussa Mara** I think **Boris Tadic** has touched upon a point no matter which agenda you come into office compromises of course is one of the

key factors and necessities of politics unless you're an authoritarian regime. But in a democracy you have to compromise to get things done. Was that a learning process for you?"

**Moussa Mara**, "the keyword is the balance. The balance between the willingness of people and the interest of the country. And every time as a leader as a politician even as a leader of political party we have to try to get the exact balance between both things. What the people face to me needs/want in my political party in the society and what is good for the collectivity as a mayor and as a government. If you take for example the you are need of change from the youth specifically from the youth every time they need use change transformation revolution. And the rules the functioning of the state the procedures the bureaucracy you have to find the right way between these two things. How to make procedures-organization-state rules ready for change and delivering services this is one thing. The second um our capital cities big cities in our country they are different from the rural zones and the risk for the leader is to focus themselves too much on capital cities on big cities because of protest march social media and other things. Instead of rural zone-zone of production zone of create creation of welfare and we have to balance how to avoid in popularity how to serve people in the cities and at the same time to make sure that we are not compromising the future of the country. The key word is balance."

**Ali Aslan**, "yeah balance indeed and of course you pointed out a dilemma that I think most of us are facing the urban versus the rural because that brings a brings up an important point boris tadic. When you are in power you are surrounded 24/7 by a team that sometimes perhaps tells you what you want to hear may maybe shields you from certain things. How difficult is it to be in power but at the same time stay very much in tune and in touch with the concerns of the average person on the street? Because that is the major blame and accusation that politicians sometimes are facing isn't it that they're aloof they're detached they no longer know what the concerns fears and worries

of the average people are. How do you how do you prevent this wall this invisible wall from coming up between the leader and the and the voters?”

**Boris Tadic**, “okay, without that kind of distance you cannot function but at the same time if your distance is too strong you are not able to function. This is a paradoxical moment I mean I'm not but really typical politician I don't know whether I'm psychologist in politics or politician in psychology but because of that I was suffering very much. Sometimes I didn't I wasn't able to understand how big that distance has to be. Sometimes the people have been approaching easily to me and this is in terms of energy in terms of functioning in terms of appropriate reaction unsustainable. I'm talking with you very openly right now but this is very difficult to explain for example election campaign. Because people are expecting you to be to serve to them but at the same time people are expecting you to be somehow untouchable and to be kind of representative of the gold on the earth. I mean even in democracy I remember when I was I was always in favor of democracy okay I'm democratic. I'm first democratically elected president in my country always in favor of democracy. But I remember when I was coming in a very poor area region of my country and I saw many many people coming to me and I remember the young ladies came with the babies asking me to touch them only to touch them and they understood for me was always unacceptable manipulation with a kids in politics. I always considered adolf hitler as a dictator and a war criminal who has been touching babies you do you remember that kind of photos that was manipulation with the babies and I was reserved but I understood without doing this in this concrete situation that woman is going to be afraid and very much disappointed. Because she's expecting that somehow I'm protecting her baby I'm not doing that by touching her head but she consider me as a kind of protector and I had a dilemma what to do whether to escape from the situation or to do something which is good for this woman very difficult situation. At the same time you have to

explain in the public medias that we are not messenger from the sky we are ordinary people. Politicians are ordinary people where they fear where problems and we are really ordinary people. Unfortunately people are expecting from politicians that they are selecting they are electing to be something special which is not possible. Because they're projecting their own, people are projecting their wishes and the desires in the politicians that are only ordinary people. I'm finishing with it I do not want to monopolize situation trying to explain to you. I was campaigning 2008 and the whole world was looking totally different than world that I was facing with day after elections because lim and brothers crisis started 7 days after my elections in 2008. Whatever we promised to do what was in accordance with our plan our visualization which was in reality in realistic disappeared overnight great timing. And yes I was promising to do this to build a that highways and the railways but after 7even days we didn't have any opportunity to get a money to invest in that. Whether I was lying no I was telling really my convictions and true but many people has been considering me as a liar after what happened. This is why how I'm explaining.”

**Ali Aslan**, “absolutely politics sometimes the reality just hits you in the face. Moussa mara and then you just got to take the ball and run with it but the question I have is what would the when you when you got into office? And of course now in hind sites you know a lot of things that probably the younger **Moussa Mara** going into office would have liked to know what would you have liked to know before you go going into office?”

**Moussa Mara**, “older than 2014 when I became prime minister, I became prime minister at 39 and I remain still the youngest prime minister of my country. And after some years after leaving office I think the better knowledge of state how the state is organized and how tough it is to change things on procedures organization and preparing law going to the parliament managing and discussing with member of parliament. And after the law voted the implementation take a time I

now my knowledge of that is in our context, I don't know exactly if it is the case here in bangladesh, for example in our context the day you decided something and the day it is effectively implemented maybe one year fourteen months between the two dates this is something I didn't know when I came to when I came to office. And (you expected the process to be quicker more smoother) very quicker and very faster and this is something patience so you need a lot of patience as a later and you have to be patient. You have to try to change things but you have to be patient. Because of procedures because of organ organization this is this is one thing. The second thing and boris mentioned, it is the ability of the leader to impact his counselors his political his own political party his leaders about the rightness of the decision taken. Sometimes if your neighbor your relatives feel them themselves not okay with a decision not in their interest they create a lot of difficulties. And to stop it not obviously but silently behind the scene. And your ability to know that to convince them to give them some insurances about the implementation of the law is something which is important to know when you came to office. Because in our countries face to security issues governance issue especially corruption. If you decided to fight against corruption you need to be very strong and very lucky. And when you come at 39 young you are not aware forcibly of that and sometimes create some noises on your leadership.”

**Ali Aslan**, “yeah, making some trouble I think on the front there a lot of special interests of course that want to steer you into one way or another. We're talking of course about political leadership in the modern age **Boris Tadic**. If we're looking at the world map it seems to me that and it is apparent I think to everyone there seems to be an increased trend of authoritarianism plaguing the world. If we're go if we would go through by country by country even countries that before used to be or would be considered very solid democracies are now on the verge of tinkering with authoritarianism. And becoming less tolerant of criticism and so on so forth. Why do you think

that is? Why do you think in the 21st century when if allegedly all of us have more exposure to information more exposure to facts- why do you think we're seeing this worrisome trend?

**Boris Tadic**, “because of human beings. Human beings are very specific I mean. Our brain our way of thinking our emotional intelligence is something which is not fitting very well with the democratic rules and democratic. (are you talking about the leaders or the voters?). I'm talking about whole context, whole context. And I mean for to be if you're talking about politics and human beings which is electorate this is easier to be successful in politics in a getting power if you are triggering emotions to the people. If you're triggering emotions and that structure of that part of the mental structure you are going to be more efficient. If you are triggering new thoughts if you are provoking new way of thinking for example you are not going to be that successful in political campaign and elections. This is why nationalist and the populist are always having advantage in the race in politics. This is like in athletics they have a 10 meter or 20 meter better position in a race against someone who is not populist and who is not manipulating with the that part of that kind of structure within human mental structure. And (because they appeal to the emotions of the voters) exactly I'm talking about emotions if you are nationalist in politics you can easily say they are threatening us, they are against us they were always threatening us they were killing us they are killing us even to today. Look this is controversial even I mean this is something which is paradoxical to say they are killing us today this is exactly what my rivals has been saying during campaign against me and against my party during few decades but this is paradoxical moment. This is out of logic they cannot kill us if you are talking right now in political campaign. That is exactly what they've been saying they are kill and they are going to kill us in the future. This is manipulation which is a triggering massive reaction of the electorate and the that electorate is a very strong and many people are deeply convinced that they have to follow that agenda. Sometimes

this is depend on education this is not depend on education also very educated people I know them very I couldn't imagine that those people the professor from the university were so able to be manipulated by such a politicians. This is new era and why we are living in that era this in my view I think that we talked the last time ali about that this is oscillatory curve we are living. I mean look at the world before second world war full of populists and the and the people that came to the power even by respecting democratic rules. But after that they became horrible dictators and the killers bloody killers for example adolf hitler. They've been using democratic rules to come to the power after that they expelled from the power all rivals and doing that not only within whole society but within the political parties also manipulating with a paramilitary groups. And finally they were triggering come on this is germany with a classic germany philosopher, fantastic arts-musicians I mean one of the best cultural ethnic group ever in the world they were producing such a bloody politicians. I mean when I'm always laughing when my german friends are making lessons to me come on but we didn't do that in the history. (but why now what why now again) because this is oscillatory curve we are right now down I hope that we are going to be up.”

**Ali Aslan, “Moussa Mara** why are we living in the stage of increased authoritarianism?”

**Moussa mara**, “I will give you our own experience in my country and neighboring country in Africa. Now we are living under junta-military junta. They came to the power and to 2020 and the different argument they use where first politician are all dishonest-corrupted, second politician are on the end of western countries, they are threatening our sovereignty our independence, they are killing our society our people and they are stealing our mineral resources this is the second argument. The third argument we only as a military we are able to fight for the real independence of our country we are independent since 1960 but we are not really independent we are on the hand of France we are on the hand of us and we need a real independence and we only we are able to

do so. In the huge majority of our country are backing them for sure it cannot last. Because at the same time the bad behavior corruption stealing public money failing to give services to the people the same con the same reality are going on at the same time. But it last sometimes it depend on the context it depend on the countries it depend on the region it could last sometime but it will not ever last forever. We as a politician I think we have to be patient to stay honest if you are because some politician are really dishonest that is true also. We have to keep honest we have to keep focus on our program our conviction our ideas and try to convince people slowly by slowly. And count on the time it will last but will it will not last ever. I think this is what we have to do but it is a reality.”

**Ali Aslan**, “this is a reality in our country it's a reality that that we're seeing globally unfortunately europe of course the continent that we stem from boris is not immune from that. We have a few minutes left I I'm sure that this fascinating conversation these fascinating insights that we've been getting might have triggered a question or two amongst you especially perhaps amongst the younger generation. If so please step to the mic and introduce yourself quickly with a brief question having this wonderful opportunity of having these two leaders up here. And we have two mics I see one on the right one on the left what why don't you and another one even three ziller has taken care of all isles here. Three microphones per perhaps the young lady perhaps you get started I will come to you gentlemen introduce yourself quickly and states your question thank you.

Question 1, “ my hello to the panel and advance apologize for if my question takes a little time you know (how much time maybe, two minutes to let's make it one, okay) so we used to see like our ancient kings or sultans they were like they didn't want their throne to be taken by other sultans or they really wanted their place to take over by their own preferable children, right. So I don't want to be sound like controversial but do you think it is a quality of a modern leader that they



should keep a thought in their mind that they need to leave their place for a better leader? So they can like be become a better leader or do some more progress of their country or their states. As our description says in this session's description they said it is written in democracy that we deserve leaders that we want, right. So do you think we deserve a leader that is doing all their things and not thinking about the country. Thank you”

**Ali Aslan**, “thank you so much. she raises of course a very important point namely the saying that people get the leaders they deserve at the end of the day and thus are only to be blamed themselves if they if they are not satisfied by the outcome perhaps we can take a note collect a few questions and then come back.”

Question 2, “I'm a former professor of international relations at the university here. Mr president last evening we sat together and I didn't ask you a million dollar question because I simply didn't know that you were the president until at the end. Well mr president I am extremely curious I watch a lot of stuff on hungary being originated from the hans and yet the hungarians pretend they're the purest of the europeans. Now you are a neighboring country serbians hungarians austrians seem to have a similar attitude on the question of you know being firm in the european union regarding migrants. You do take a sort of a conservative stand. Now what I wondered I very often thought that serbs are extremely conscious of their identity as serbs now what really I want to hear your mind, do you really consider the hungarians qualified to see themselves as you know blue blood europeans and do you seem to think that you have a more distinct role to treat them as asiatics you know the asian origin?”

**Ali Aslan**, “that very specific question **Boris Tadic** to be answer by the former president of Serbia whether he thinks the hungarians are the true anyway. Go ahead I'll leave that up to you.”

Question 3, “hello Rezaul from ISAC in bangladesh so I have question to mr president and the mr prime minister as you were in the power you were around two countries so my question is- why the governments most of the governments can't tolerate criticism? Like if I right now if I criticize my government I could be in a jail or something else so most of the government is like that right now. So what's your observation? Thank you.”

**Ali Aslan**, “let's start perhaps in the reverse order because we've touched upon this **Boris Tadic** about trend of authoritarianism countries and leaders that do want do undermine freedom of press undermine freedom of speech they don't want to hear the criticism what advice and answer do you have for this young man?”

**Boris Tadic**, “my position is a little bit specific in that respect because when I was young and being involved in opposition politics I was in the jail. Because of my freedom of speech and my intentions in that time they I was in the jail not that long but I was in the jail and that was my destiny in that time and I was very bit I was I've been very close to being the jail just day before we draw Milosevich in that time. Because they accused me and the minimum sentence was 10 years jail and maximum 20 years jail. And only month after that I became a minister I had the two options to go in the jail or to become minister. I was accused because of political thing not because of kind of criminal act but minimum sentence was 10 years maximum 20 years. I don't have a problem with the criticism I think without criticism being in on the power you cannot be successful. I like critics I like but this is about the way how your parents are teaching you. They were my the biggest I mean they criticized me almost every day when I was on the power (this is your parents yeah my parents) and when they asked my father what about my leadership then he said only this sentence he's not bad he didn't say he's fantastic he said he's not bad. That that that was kind of criticism triggering me to be better. I know that was that was his approach. And about hungarians

and the identity issue is so sensitive issue. One of the most sensitive issue which is a trigger in many conflicts all around the world big powers are ignoring identity issue. I am insisting on identity issue identity issue is very sophisticated this is about emotions it's about ourselves this is our individual and collective identity. My hungarians are feeling a little bit alone in europe because they are speaking language that no one is understanding. They hans their history is they coming from asia something like that. But they are right now roman christians or protestants and they consider themselves pure europeans. And now they have a leadership which is little bit not a little bit which is totally against migrations. Even though hungarian's like all other europeans are migrants but we came many centuries ago. But this is about migrations. Nowadays we are from now against migrations. I mean not we some european leaders especially populists they are from now against migrations even though they grand grand grandparents came as a migrants. This is specific situation but okay we have to understand even that kind of politics.”

**Ali Aslan**, “and **Moussa Mara** perhaps also your reply to the to leaders who are immune or rather intolerant of receiving criticism of being criticized whether it's from the press whether it's from voters. That doesn't seem to be a very sustainable model for any leader is it I?”

**Moussa Mara**, “I disagree a bit with Boris. I think any human being is happy with criticism all of us critics make us angry. The question is our ability to overcome our anger based to the conviction that critics is a part of democracy, is one principle of democracy. And as a leader as a society as a state all of us we have to fight to give the freedom of critics in our countries. Due to this fact if we need democracy authentic democracy genuine democracy we need to open the critics among the society. And to let journalist opposition political opposition leaders, political opposition and civil society to challenge the leaders and to make critics if it is necessary. Otherwise I think anyone is happy with critics this is this is about that it is a question of principle democracy principle. And it

is exactly the same when the young lady talk about political dynasties. And we have a dynasty in a kingdom but in some democratic countries we have a dynasties also. For me and it is not an important question to talk about that specifically what is important is to settle rules inside the parties inside the countries to give chance to the leader who deserve to lead. If the political the leader of the party wants to appoint and to help his son as a leader of the party and then the leader of the country he needs to follow the rules in order to show how is son deserve to be the leader. It is not a question of son and father it is a question of rules. On my opinion and we have all to fight for that. Democracy means some rules some principles and we have to settle that inside our countries among our societies in order to get a real democracy. But at the same time democracy is never perfect nowhere we can have a perfect democracy is a procedure is a way it is running and every time every day we have to improve it and to push up the level in order to get what we want to get.”

**Ali Aslan**, “as being very mindful of the time and being very mindful that this is the last session of the day. I know that most of you have probably have had an overkill of information since the session started at 10:00 AM. This morning. So boris let's perhaps conclude. I see a lot of young people here in the audience and they obviously are growing up with their own ideals with their own wishes own desires own blueprint of what makes a good leader. What lesson would you have? What lesson would you impart? What advice would you have for the new generation of leaders? Because you're saying we we're right now regrettably in a cycle, you saying historically speaking where authoritarianism is on the upswing. You say it's a so hopefully things will revert back. What do you want them to be mindful of?”

**Boris Tadic**, “I would this is a young nation very young nation I don't know what is average age in bangladesh but I'm expecting below the 30 something later 20 something. In that respect socially

thinking this is a pressure of young people to take a power to take more influence this is normal and this is good. But in politics very important as most have said balance. It's be very important if it's going to be kind of buffer zone with the within generations. And to have a free exchange of thoughts this is extremely important otherwise this country can be led in a very specific way not very successful way. And this is why I wanted to share that experience with you the communication between generation is a very important. Monopolizing power by older generation is also very bad and also I am witnessing that in some countries new generations youngsters are coming to the power without real enough experience this is very important. Second I wanted to share with you that about politicians, politicians are very specific people you can find brilliant people and you can find very ordinary people among the politicians. And I would like to share with you one humoristic experience with the politicians, two times. I was few weeks ago I was in united nations event aside of united nations in a harvard club. We've been together I mean 40 former leaders and 10 current leaders and we been talking to each other for few hours and the temperature was colder and colder that was approximately 12° and we were continuing to talk and we talked about climate changes in one moment I was asking to say a few things. I said okay maybe we can solve problem with the climate change chang climate war warming outside but let's try to do something in the room where we existing and I understood I was in the room with the 40 current and the former leaders that weren't able to regulate temperature of the room and that they all of them are intending to run their countries but they weren't we weren't I'm this is self-criticism I reacted after a few hours we weren't able to regulate temperature of the room to I mean this is this is something how I am criticizing ourselves.

**Ali Aslan**, “next time I go to vote I will make that one of the criteria I will look for a leader who can regulate the temperature in the room. But no but your point of course is very well taken in the

context. Moussa Mara also your final words of advice perhaps to the younger generation who will inevitably will take over at some point.”

**Moussa Mara**, “yes the first important thing is being a leader takes time. And my advice to the young today is if you want to run for being the president of your country please start near your village locally. Start to be a local leader for me citizenship is first local citizenship. Try to be a local counselor, local mayor and even not that try to be useful to your collectivity at the ground level. And integrate it takes a time it is a long journey and a difficult journey and never give up. You will face to failure you will face to difficulties. Consider how important you will be for your country for your people if you are in the top and never give up. First local action and second never give up.”

**Ali Aslan**, “and Boris said they say politics is like a drug on once you've taken it you can never get off. It is that? Is that is that correct can you confirm that? As somebody who's been there well ladies and gentlemen the view from the top political leadership in the modern age I think I would speak for all when I say this has been a fascinating conversation in the previous 60 minutes. We were privileged to hear from two former leader who led their countries through difficult times who took the time to be with you today to to impart their wisdom impart their knowledge and throughout the way I think we've all picked up interesting nuggets and interesting point of information as far as political leadership is concerned in the modern age certainly is not going to get easier from now on for whoever is leading it in the modern age in an era where information is 24/7 and often times unfortunately sometimes in silos and echo chambers but here we are. The fight continues for good leadership and the search of course continues for good leadership ladies and gentlemen the former president of Serbia **Boris Tadic** and the former prime minister of Mali **Moussa Mara** this is your applause thank you so much.”