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Irada Zeynalova: We know perfectly well that the Americans are now preparing a package of doomsday sanctions. They already know all the sensitive points of our economy. Our economy is growing even with the sanctions, but they still have surprises for us. What should we do in this situation? Do we even fear these sanctions?

Dmitry Medvedev: Of course, we are not afraid of sanctions. But we should not take the attitude of “it’s all nonsense” either. You know, this tough guy approach. I sometimes hear it, often from government officials.

Irada Zeynalova: It is dangerous not to take this into account.

Dmitry Medvedev: Yes. So we should not react like this. These sanctions affect our economy. They will not cause major damage, and we still continue to go our own way. But there is no doubt that it does not help us, and sometimes makes development difficult. As for the sanctions themselves, this most recent outburst was yet another schizoid story of how the consolidation of elites takes place in America. I mean getting tough on Russia. This current consolidation of elites in America, especially Democratic elites, is based on confronting President Trump. And confronting President Trump relies on the so-called “Russian story.” It is at the core of all social and political processes now, and it is obviously largely unrelated to our relations with the US, but has to do rather with the internal problems in the United States. Look, they really have a lot of them. It is the largest economy in the world. But its debt is 22 trillion – not roubles but dollars. This is the amount they have to service. This is the root cause of their protectionist policies, confrontation with other economies and all sorts of sanctions. Sanctions against the EU, sanctions against Russia, sanctions against Iran, sanctions against China. This is how they see their future. Therefore, these sanctions should be treated carefully, and we should be ready for them. We regularly discuss how to counter such sanctions, but certainly we should not be afraid, because our economy will surely withstand any pressure, including this.

Irada Zeynalova: So, money is not going to be taken away from the national projects?

Dmitry Medvedev: No way. This money has been set aside. It is not going to be affected by any sanctions. But we just need to keep the economy robust. And all this really requires the attention of the Government and the Central

Bank. We will deal with this.

The full interview will be aired on February 17 on Itogi Nedeli (Weekly Roundup) hosted by Irada Zeynalova.