



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe

Brugge



Natolin

THE
ZBIGNIEW BRZEZIŃSKI
MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES

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COLLEGE OF EUROPE IN NATOLIN

INAUGURATION OF

'THE ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES'

BY

THE HON. MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT, FORMER US SECRETARY OF STATE

WELCOME ADDRESS

BY

MS EWA OŚNIECKA-TAMECKA, VICE-RECTOR
COLLEGE OF EUROPE IN NATOLIN

Madam Secretary

Excellencies

Honoured Guests

Professors

Dear Students

It is a great pleasure to launch today our new Natolin *Zbigniew Brzeziński Memorial Lecture Series*. And it is a particularly great honour to have the inaugural lecture delivered by a very special guest: the Honourable Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State – *and* the first woman to hold this post in her country; a great stateswoman, defender of democracy, and an ardent proponent of trans-Atlantic cooperation. And a public figure who was admired by Zbigniew Brzeziński. Needless to say, he would have been

delighted to learn that it is Secretary Albright who is inaugurating the lecture series in his memory. What is more, *Madam Secretary*, you join us today as we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the accession to NATO of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland - a momentous event that you personally did so much to bring about.

We are grateful to you for your efforts and commitment that so significantly contributed to that historic enlargement of the alliance.

Thank you, *Madam Secretary*, for your presence here today!

And let me take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Jerzy Koźmiński for his continued support in making this Memorial Series possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As some of us remember first-hand, in August 1980, Poland witnessed a wave of workers' protests that began in the Gdańsk shipyard and then spread across the country. It was then, that the free and independent trade Union, named "Solidarność" - or "Solidarity" - was born. This was the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet system of domination in Central and Eastern Europe. *But very few could see it at that time.*

On the 24th of August 1980, immediately after his return from his summer holidays, Zbigniew Brzeziński went to see US President Carter in his office. He wanted to say clearly what was really going on at that moment in Gdańsk, in Poland, behind the Iron Curtain. Brzeziński explained to the President that the protests were not only about economic demands. Instead, he explained that the protests consisted of

three elements. The first was indeed economic and could best be summed up by the word ‘bread.’ But the second element was political, best described by the word “freedom.” And the third element was national - embraced by the words “independence” and “Katyń.”

At that crucial time, Professor Zbigniew Brzeziński, a proud American, a Pole by birth, the closest advisor to the President of the United States, was able to tell the deep truths about this part of the world. He was able to explain why the Gdańsk strikes had the potential to trigger the collapse of the Soviet Union. History proved him right.

Dear Guests,

Part of the power and strength of figures such as Zbigniew Brzeziński and Madeleine Albright in American politics lies in the fact that they did not forget their countries

of origin in Europe, they understood them and they were ready to speak out in the free world on behalf of those whose voices were, at that time, silenced. They gave voice to the voiceless and dignity to those millions locked behind the Iron Curtain and crushed by the Soviet System. They were able to tell the truth on their behalf, to diagnose the situation correctly and to pave the way for further action.

Madam Secretary

Ladies and Gentlemen

Dear Students

Professor Zbigniew Brzeziński was born here, in Warsaw, on the 28 of March 1928. His father Tadeusz Brzeziński was a Polish diplomat who served in France, Germany, and Soviet Ukraine. Shortly before the Second World War, he took his family to Canada where he served as the Consul-General in Montreal. When the Soviets took control of Poland after the

war, Tadeusz Brzeziński decided to leave the foreign service and stay in Canada. It was in Montreal where Zbigniew Brzeziński studied Political Science and Economics at McGill University. A brilliant student, he then moved to Harvard, where he completed his Ph.D. studies and became a faculty member.

From Harvard he moved to Columbia University in New York, and it was there that, I believe, *you* first met him, *Madam Secretary*, and studied as his graduate student.

Dear Guests,

In the mid-1950s, Professor Brzeziński was the co-author (with Carl Friedrich) of *the* definition of totalitarianism. Along with other prominent intellectual émigrés from Central and Eastern Europe, Zbigniew Brzeziński's goal was to make the world see totalitarianism as a threat, as a threat to peace and

a threat to countries, but also as a threat to the individual dignity of every human being. This message was to reach the American elites.

Through his life, Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski remained a committed academic, and celebrated and prolific writer on International Relations. His expertise was truly global and went far beyond European affairs, for instance US-China relation and the Middle East. That is why almost all American Presidents from 1960 onwards called on his knowledge and expertise. Zbigniew Brzezinski started with the Kennedy campaign, then worked for President Johnson, then became the National Security Advisor of President Carter, moving on to advising Presidents Reagan, Bush and Clinton, and most recently President Obama. His loyalty to the United States, as well as his intellectual coherence and the set of his values

meant that he did not restrict himself to one political camp. *When service to freedom was at stake*, political differences were not an obstacle for him. His aspirations went hand-in-hand with a unique talent, great intellectual strength, and admirable hard work.

Dear students, when we search for inspiration on which path to pursue in our lives, the figure of Brzeziński becomes a model to follow.

This is why here at the College of Europe in Natolin we have decided to establish this lecture series in memory of Zbigniew Brzeziński. Because we want to send a signal from Natolin that the common values of the Western world are not a worn-out cliché. Brzeziński, who in 1990, like few others, voiced support for German reunification, and who supported the deepening of European integration and NATO

enlargement, was one of the staunchest proponents of Western values, as well as trans-Atlantic unity. A unity, whose guardian on this side of the Atlantic is the united Europe.

Dear Guests,

Please allow me to sum up briefly. There are three key reasons why we are meeting here at Natolin today, three reasons why we are launching the annual *Zbigniew Brzeziński Memorial Lecture Series*, and doing so at a special time: almost exactly 30 years after the fall of communism.

First, Brzeziński was a unique intellectual, who was not afraid of responsibility, who did not stand aside, and who got involved in politics for the sake of the common good.

The second reason is that, like him, we care deeply about Western values and European unity, as well as the trans-Atlantic community.

The third reason, *maybe the most important*, is gratitude. There is so little gratitude in the world. We want to express it towards a man who did so much for our freedom, for the freedom of each and every one of us.

I also want to express our sincere gratitude to you, *Madam Secretary*, for accepting our invitation and for delivering the inaugural lecture. Because having with us someone who contributed so much to world politics and, someone so closely linked to Zbigniew Brzezinski for decades, calls for gratitude.

Madam Secretary, it is now with immense pleasure that I give you the floor, to deliver the first *Zbigniew Brzezinski Memorial Lecture*.