

Zbigniew Brzezinski :

Strobe, Ms. Sabanci, Mr. Ambassador, ladies and gentlemen here in Washington and simultaneously in Istanbul. I must say I am of a generation in which to be able to say this is something very, to me, impressive. We really live in a new world which is uniquely interconnected, interactive, and hopefully, hopefully perhaps, increasingly cooperative. So it's a new era. And in fact, it's important to emphasize that because what is distinctive in my judgment about the 21st century is that it will be either a very successful century on the global scale or it will be the worst century in human history. And I think when one thinks about that one begins to have a somewhat different approach to the problems that we face. My book is entitled *Strategic Vision*, and the word "vision" I chose deliberately. I have in mind the proposition that any great undertaking has to be first stimulated by a shared vision. Some sense of what is possible, some sense of what can be anticipated, some sense of what can be conveyed meaningfully to others so that they can embrace it. But it is not a blueprint. It's a little bit like an architect projecting on the screen, for example, the vision of the building he's planning to shape. But that is the vision. It gives you a sense of what it will look like, what will it imply, what it will convey, what kind of emotions it will evoke. The blueprint, the detailed blueprint then follows eventually but one has to start with a vision.

I say this very deliberately because, for example, three weeks from now NATO will be meeting in Chicago. It will be reaffirming its importance and it is important and it is still needed. But I fear that unless that meeting also articulates some sort of a vision for the future, it will be essentially a formality, a reaffirmation of what is but not acknowledging that something more is needed if what is is to endure. So this is what has guided me in my approach to the issue of global politics because the book is about global politics ultimately. And the book argues that global politics has been shaped for the last 600 years, essentially by a small extremity in the very west of the Eurasian continent. That small extremity in the very West of the Eurasian continent involves several West European countries which initially driven by greed, I repeat, driven by greed, engaged in transoceanic explorations which produced the era of Colonialism and Imperialism. They reached across the Western Hemisphere, both north and south. They reached across the Pacific to India, even to China. Think of the special colonial arrangements on the shores of China. It even intimidated Japan. But in the process these explorations driven by greed became also the sources of conflict. Among the sponsors, the different dynasties and states, and the conflicts involved not only collisions across the oceans but increasingly fed back to Europe. And thus the era of imperialism and colonialism worldwide then generated increasingly also conflicts on the European continent for control over Europe because that became essential to the effective exercise of imperial and colonial ambitions. And so we have the last 200 years of European history dominated by wars for the control over Europe. Napoleonic wars, First World War, Second World War, and then it's global extension and postscript, the Cold War, global hegemony was the issue between the United States and the Soviet Union. It all originated and was confined to the Western extremity of Eurasia and then in the course of the 20th century embraced also the United States. But today, the world view political is becoming dramatically different. All of Eurasia today is the principal arena for global politics. In addition to the United States, it is the area in which the major powers of the world interact. It is also the continent, the super continent on which regional conflicts have global significance. Regional conflicts in their present shape and scope, such as in the Middle Eastern region. But regional conflicts which have the potential for greatly expanding and making these regional conflicts increasingly destabilizing for all of Eurasia. And you have also on this continent the results of the dramatic ongoing shift in the center of gravity of global power from the West to the East with rising Asian powers now being part of the global competition. And the relations among them are far from stable. It is not impossible to exclude the possibility that Asia in the 21st century could replicate the tragic history of Europe of the 20th

century. Border conflicts, national ambitions, security fears, ethnic animosities, religious fanaticism. Questions of resources, such as water rights, maritime access; they're all yet unfinished business. But they're now part of global politics given the consequences of the collision among major powers in the central continent of the World. So Eurasia is central to global peace, to peace understood traditionally, that is to say, to the avoidance of what transpired in the course of the 20th century. And Eurasia is also absolutely essential as a point of departure if there is going to be effective global cooperation. For some accommodation, some degree of balance on the Eurasian continent is essential. Given the rise of new Asian powers, two of them with populations well over a billion of people, several of them with atomic weapons with increasing ranges. Just think of what transpired last week in the competition between China and India. India tested nuclear capability delivery systems announcing upon the successful conclusion of the rocket test, that it has a range capable of reaching New Delhi. And then a few days later a client of China, rather than China itself, indirectly responded by testing a similar weapon and then announcing that it has a range capable of reaching New Delhi. And we know, of course, of a lot of other recent sources of tension in Eurasia, which emphasize the proposition that conflicts in Eurasia can have negative global implications. That leads me to argue that essential in that context are policies in which the United States should play a major role to stabilize the interrelationships of the new globally significant realities on the Eurasian continent. And in the East I argued that the United States should not get involved in any Far Eastern or Asian conflicts; that no conflict between any Asian population is of sufficient consequence in terms of its potential outcomes for the United States to justify American engagement on the mainland of Asia and military conflicts. In effect, I argue that the United States should replicate the policy of Great Britain, vis-à-vis Europe in the 19th and early 20th century. Balancer, influencer, but not direct participant in mainland conflicts. The United States should use its positive influence to try also to promote, if possible, reconciliation between Japan and China and the United States has direct and important relationships with each. And the United States should strive to mediate an impossible conflict between China and India, perhaps participate as a balancer but not as directly involved. And above all else, the United States should strive to develop a relationship of a stable partnership with China if it is possible, thereby setting a precedent historically that a preeminent power facing a rising power does not end up with the two of them in conflict, but that it is possible perhaps to create some sort of a stable relationship in which preeminent powers need not struggle, particularly need not struggle because we now live in an age in which an outcome that spells destruction for the other is no longer possible. That we're now living in an age in which a collision between the two top powers will inevitably be mutually destructive. And that is also a new reality. But I now turn to the West because the West now involves the Western extremity of Eurasia plus the United States. The United States secures the security of Europe and is engaged in the relationship of closed alliance with Europe. And including very much so with Turkey which has been a stalwart member of NATO. Probably more stalwart than any other member of NATO. And in that setting it is in the interest of the United States that Europe be vital and actively engage in world affairs and be capable of balancing the East so that on the basis of a balance in Eurasia we can then jointly address the global problems that will not be addressed if Eurasia is fragmented and dominated by wholesale conflicts. And I argue in that context that a revitalized West is, in fact, of enormous importance to the future of the world. Not only because of the need for an equilibrium on the European, Eurasian continent, but also because the West has still a vital message for the world, regarding how political systems should be organized. Regarding what ought to be the relationship between the individual and society and the state regarding the centrality of law and of constitutions and of self-deliberation by a public composed of free citizens. These principles do have potential universal relevance, though they have to be achieved with respect for different stages of historical development and for the legacies of different

cultures. Nonetheless, it is a message of highly important potential relevance to the rest of the world. And hence the West has to define itself very much not only in terms of joint security interests but of joint convictions and joint commitments to certain fundamental notions regarding the role of freedom and dignity and personal self-fulfillment in the shape of modern societies. That is a relevant message. It is not the point of departure for a crusade but it is a message that can only be sustained in a setting of self-confidence and security and vitality. And to have that secured vitality, particularly the Europeans, specifically the European component of the West, which embraces, of course, much more than that, especially in America. Has to be vital and energetic. And it needs to be revised. And I argue in my book that in that context, the deliberate effort to embrace more closely Turkey and Russia in a necessary precondition for vital West and the necessary precondition for the West that can be part of a larger Eurasian equilibrium. I'm talking more specifically therefore of Turkey. My argument is that both for strategic as well as political reasons Turkey should be, and in my perspective is, in fact, objectively speaking, a part of the West. Turkey 90 years ago embraced a social experiment of enormous importance and of great ambition. A really remarkable experiment, one of the first in global history. Indeed, one of the two first ones. But more successful than the other one. What Atatürk undertook in the early 1920s has been with stops and gasps and delays and then resurgence again implemented in an increasingly impressive and successful fashion. Increasingly impressive and successful. It is not finished. There are still many shortcomings. One can point critical fingers at this or that aspect of the Turkish reality. But the trajectory is clear and has been sustained and at a very low human cost. Think of the other one, almost simultaneous Leninism, Lenin. The effort to transform Russia into a modern industrial society but based on the comprehensive ideology that was rigid and doctrinaire and implemented with extraordinary brutality and with enormous human cost. It is impossible even for us to fully visualize that cost but one example to me is particularly meaningful. In 1937 alone, and there are full archival documentations for this in Soviet archives, in 1937 alone, by telegraphic instructions to different parts of Russia from Moscow, the NKVD, the secret police at the time, was instructed to eliminate enemies of the people by numerical quotas assigned for different parts of Russia, for different cities, for different oblasts as they were called at the time. And they were instructed to report on their achievement by certain dates. And all of this is available in the documentation. And it is interesting to note how some reported fulfilling the plan in total and some even indicated in the reports that they are ready to overfulfill the plans out of socialist commitment and determination. And the number of people executed in one year in the Soviet Russia in the process of its transformation was 775,000. Just think of that. City by city assigned quotas. Executions carried out. Decisions made usually by so-called troika, three officials of the NKVD determining who was to be executed among those who were arrested as counter-revolutionaries. That human cost still burdens Russia. That human cost still leaves a legacy of embitterment and confusion as to what that whole experiment has meant. Turkey stands in dramatic contrast to that. And therefore, I would argue that on the level of philosophical political identity, Turkey is part of the West, in spite of the religious difference which is not, however, totally hermetic; that is to say parts of Europe are also Islamic in the Balkans and those parts of Europe are now increasingly part of the European Union. So there are precedents for religious diversity in terms of membership in Europe. And Turkey is of importance to European security given its strategic location, given its strength and vitality, and given its demonstrated commitment to the shared strategic interests of NATO. So Turkey by definition is, I think, inherently positioned to be a significant player in NATO. I would view Turkey personally today as one of the four most important members of the NATO alliance, certainly right there with Britain, France, and Germany. And it should be viewed increasingly in the United States as such. Turkey is a model for the future development of Iran which has many social economic similarities to Turkey; many of the same social indices indicate the potential also for change there at some

point in the foreseeable future. Turkey is critical to the stability of the Middle East. It is the most important largest democracy in the Middle East. And in that sense it is part of the complex of relationships that make the West. And the West, which engages Turkey, has immediate outreach to Central Asia. It has an alternative source of energy for Europe, and it encourages Russia to move in the same direction. And Russia can follow in the wake of Turkey's evolution. I'll not speak of Russia at length, but let me note merely that I'm optimistic in the long run, somewhat pessimistic in the short run, but I do think that there is growing evidence also in Russia of the dynamic development of a western identity that is, in fact, becoming a civic society, particularly in terms of the middle class. And that's anticipated eventually Russia, especially when its readers begin to look at the map, not with nostalgia in order to create some Eurasian union that Putin speaks about which would be a recreation of the Soviet Union, but looks at the map in terms of the future and ponders the implications of a vast but empty eastern territory of Russia adjoining the overpopulated, dynamically expanding China. I should think that would give Russians also some incentive to consider the benefits to the closer identification with the West. So to complete these initial remarks let me simply say that I am both an optimist as well as advocate of an increasingly cooperative relationship between Turkey and the West that becomes meaningful in the security and political dimensions, eventually through membership in the EU, although there are real obstacles to that in the short run, but certainly also it is possible to envision great many intermediary arrangements which would begin to create a reality similar to that of membership actually in the EU. And the EU itself will probably be evolving from a union which is not a union into eventually some sort of a federation which has a unitary component in it, a looser outer element, and a great many other forms of association with countries that oscillate towards the EU and the Euro-Atlantic community. So my fundamental point is simply this, if we are going to have a century of cooperation that successfully copes with the new global problems, we need a new equilibrium on the Eurasian continent, which is the central arena on which the future of mankind will be decided, a Turkish and Russian participation in the West will be a positive contribution to making a good outcome more likely. Thank you.

