

The New Dimensions of Human Rights

Zbigniew Brzezinski



Fourteenth Morgenthau Memorial Lecture
on Ethics & Foreign Policy

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Introduction

Every year the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs hosts this Morgenthau Memorial Lecture to honor the memory of Hans Morgenthau, a Council trustee for over twenty years who, before his death in 1980, was an essential figure in the study of ethical problems in international affairs.

Our purpose is to sponsor a public lecture by a distinguished speaker on a topic relating to ethics and contemporary foreign policy. This lecture gives us the opportunity to present in a public forum the best and most important thinking on the moral dimensions of foreign policy. In initiating and supporting events like this, the Carnegie Council seeks to keep alive the discussion of this important dimension of our national and international life and to provide a permanent home for it.

As I pondered how I would introduce this year's speaker, Zbigniew Brzezinski, I did what I usually do when looking for guidance and inspiration: I paced about my office and scanned the bookshelves. I found what I needed rather quickly this time, and I found it in the very essence of Dr. Brzezinski's books, in particular, in the title of his memoir of his years as President Carter's National Security Advisor, *Power and Principle*. Here are a title and a book very much in the tradition of Hans Morgenthau.

The Morgenthau legacy is one that understands the complex relationship between power and principle. It is a legacy that, for all of its realism, maintains that our understanding of international affairs cannot and should not be limited to Thucydides' reference to the Athenian generals who argued that "the strong do what they can and the weak do what they must."

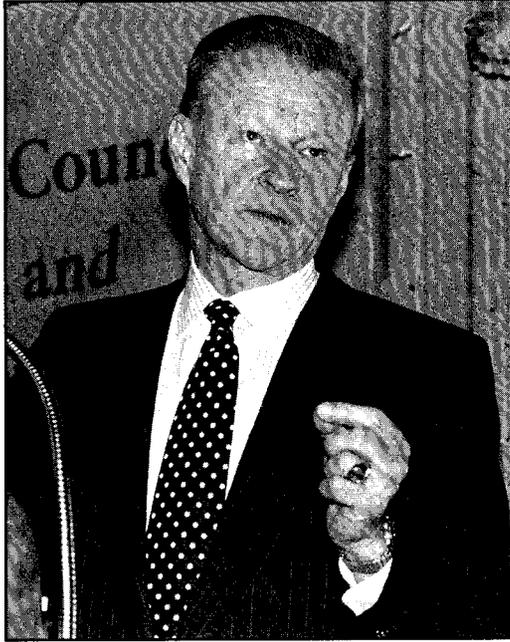
Professor Morgenthau understood, as Dr. Brzezinski explains,

that power must be understood in connection to principle: “Power can have no moral purpose divorced from principle and, conversely, principles have no chance for survival and little chance for constructive meaning without the support of power.” It is this essential insight that links our speaker today with the legacy of Hans Morgenthau.

Dr. Brzezinski’s topic today, “The New Dimensions of Human Rights,” is especially relevant for those of us interested in ethics and international affairs. Where better to test the connection between power and principle than in this forum, and who better to enlighten us than Dr. Brzezinski? It was, after all, during the Carter presidency that human rights came into its own as an idea with great weight and much currency in both American foreign policy and in world politics generally. And, of course, Dr. Brzezinski has written and spoken about this issue with great insight ever since.

Zbigniew Brzezinski has served this country with distinction and he has made truly significant contributions to the intellectual life of our nation and the world.

Joel H. Rosenthal
President
Carnegie Council on
Ethics and International Affairs



Zbigniew Brzezinski

The New Dimensions of Human Rights

by Zbigniew Brzezinski

It is a great honor to deliver a lecture named after a preeminent scholar of international affairs, a scholar whose famed emphasis on the primacy of realism in international affairs led him to place major emphasis on the role of ethics in international affairs. I wish to repeat that point: *It was his emphasis on realism that led him to stress the importance of ethics.*

In my own discussion tonight of “The New Dimensions of Human Rights,” I would like to begin with a brief personal recollection. One of the first issues that I confronted, in February 1977, as the newly installed National Security Advisor to the President of the United States, was whether the President should personally respond to a private letter from the Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov, which he had received just at the time of his inauguration. Now, today, with many years in retrospect, it would seem to be a non-issue: Of course, I’m sure all of you would say, he should respond to a man who symbolized the quest for human rights, the man who stood for decency, the man who, even more important, was willing to pay an enormous personal price for his commitment to freedom. How could the President of the United States fail to respond?

And yet, in February of 1977, it didn’t seem so simple. There were a number of people outside and inside the administration who feared that the new U.S. President, personally dedicated to peace and to détente with the Soviet Union, and very anxious to move

forward on the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, might provoke the anger of Soviet leaders by responding directly and personally to a private Soviet citizen who obviously was acting in defiance of the government's wishes. Hence, so went the argument, idealism should capitulate to realism. The President did respond, however; he provoked Brezhnev's ire; and he was criticized by some American commentators for having responded.

This very simple story highlights the first of the three new dimensions of human rights that I propose to discuss: namely, *protection of the individual from the arbitrary power of the state*. Emerging in the 1970s, it expressed itself in, among other things, formal legislation. Many of you may recall the Jackson-Vanick Amendment, which was deliberately designed to focus on the issue of human rights and to tie American foreign policy directly to it.

American efforts on behalf of such rights inevitably conflicted with other foreign policy objectives, giving rise to a persisting dilemma: how to balance the cause of human rights with the search for broader international stability, which necessarily includes some accommodation with an antagonistic state. This issue was not easy to resolve then and it still confronts us today. Principle and expediency obviously collide, though one can always find some formula for rationalizing the supremacy of one over the other.

Nonetheless, as a broad proposition I submit that, over time, the notion of human rights as defined above has become a legitimate concern of the international community, and perhaps more so for the United States than for most other states. The acceptance of the importance of this issue was obviously connected with some very important social changes inherent in the history of our own age: Urbanization and the spread of literacy produced the phenomenon of mass political awakening, especially among the increasingly numerous young people of the world, who are very susceptible to mass mobilization through mass communications. It is simply a fact of life today that the populace can no longer be treated as passive objects by their political rulers. That fact itself

dictates the increased salience of human rights, as defined in terms of the protection of the individual from the arbitrary power of the state.

We also have to note in this connection that the struggle against totalitarianism, which lasted for much of the twentieth century, elevated individual human rights to a central moral concern and into a major political weapon. I readily concede that there was an element of tactical expediency in our own focus on human rights. The issue provided a powerful ideological weapon in the struggle against the Soviet Union and its communist doctrine.

Bearing in mind the already noted phenomenon of mass political awakening, in my own speeches as National Security Advisor I would often, and very deliberately, use the phrase “human rights has become the genuine *historical inevitability* of our times.” This phrase was meant to provide a rebuttal to the communist doctrine of the historical inevitability of class revolution. We posited instead that historical inevitability dictated the triumph of individual human rights that was inherent in the political transformation that mankind was experiencing, particularly in the phenomenon of mass political awakening with which we wanted to identify the forces of democracy and freedom.

This was our response to the challenge posed by the notion that so dominated our century: that a coercive utopia derived from dogmatic hubris, that a perfect society, a form of heaven on earth, could be constructed by political compulsion.

We all know what this phenomenon entailed. In one of its variances, the coercive utopia was to be accomplished by the elimination of enemies defined in terms of race. In the other, more enduring phenomenon of totalitarianism, coercive utopia was to be constructed by the elimination of enemies defined on the basis of class. But in both cases, the objective was to build a coercive utopia. In both cases, an extraordinary political hubris was reinforced by the doctrine of historical inevitability.

The appearance of the Solidarity movement in Poland, its rep-

lication elsewhere, and the eventual collapse of the Soviet totalitarian model validated the basic premise of our focus on human rights: that a system of total political compulsion, aiming not only at social reconstruction but even at the ideological molding of the human being, was not only morally wrong but historically doomed to fail.

Nonetheless, the old practical dilemmas continue to confront us. Should good relations with China, for example, or perhaps even its future role in the world, be a hostage to our concern for individual human rights? Should a partnership with today's Russia be fostered at the same time the Chechens continue to be deprived of their basic human rights? How do we balance these concerns?

These dilemmas are directly related to the second dimension of human rights, which has now become even more salient with the fall of communism. Initially, the issue of human rights in foreign policy involved largely the exposure and correction of abuse of individuals by the political power of the state. Now we focus increasingly on *the institutionalization of democracy as a system*—the second new dimension of human rights. This gives rise increasingly to the operational question of how central to our foreign policy should be the active promotion of democratic systems?

This important shift in emphasis from the individual to systems more broadly reflects the burst of historical optimism produced by the fall of communism. I need merely remind you, for example, of the writings symptomatic of this historical optimism: Samuel Huntington on the "Third Wave," where he speaks about the spread of democracy around the world; or Francis Fukuyama's controversial article on the "End of History." In both cases, democracy is now seen both as a right and as historically pervasive.

Beyond the obvious argument that democracy respects human rights—and thus institutionalizes respect for the individual—the case for the active promotion of democracy rests also on the proposition that democracies tend to be less warlike. Thus, the

reinforcement of democracy as a system is seen as a direct contribution to global peace.

Nonetheless, here too the old dilemmas persist. Should the institutionalization of democracy be the central goal of our relations with Russia and China? To what extent is the proliferation of democracy America's central goal in the world? To some extent, this is what we profess and practice. For example, Congress mandates and finances the National Endowment for Democracy, an institution committed to the active propagation and support of democratic systems around the world.

But some might argue—and do argue—that the central objective of American policy in the world ought to be the promotion of stability, and that under certain conditions, even the denial of national freedom and self-determination is justified by the overriding interest in stability. This argument, for example, has come up in the course of the Russian suppression of Chechnya.

Lately, some of these objections to the “enlargement of democracy”—the term used by the Clinton administration to define the goals of U.S. foreign policy—have been fed by some waning in optimism regarding the democratic momentum worldwide. There is now some uncertainty as to whether in fact democracy is a genuinely valid universal prescription—that perhaps it is a reflection of the West's own dogmatic parochialism.

I have in mind when I say this the recent emergence of various Asian critiques of our emphasis on democracy and human rights. I have in mind the arguments made by Lee Kwan U and Matahir to the effect that the West, in its propagation of the enlargement of democracy, is parochial, self-indulgent, and even hypocritical, and that collective social values based on harmony, authority, and social cohesion transcend in value the Western emphasis on a democratic structure that rests on the primacy of the individual and elevates the individual into the central focus of political and social responsibility.

At a time of considerable philosophical ambiguity, the above

counterargument could become a significant challenge to our propagation of democracy, even if one does not fully subscribe to the more apocalyptic visions of the coming clash of civilizations, most notably between the West and Asia.

Although far from being resolved, the foregoing dilemmas of human rights pale in complexity in the face of the now-emerging third new dimension of human rights. If it can be said that the first two dimensions, the protection of individual liberty and the spread of democracy, pertained to the centrality of human individuality in the world of politics and to the social institutionalization of the idea of freedom—namely, democracy—the emerging third dimension pertains to *the rapidly growing potential for the actual alteration of human individuality and for the inequitable social exploitation of that potential*. This is the third new dimension of human rights, and it goes far beyond the complicated interface between politics and ethics where the first two reside. Now the emerging interface is among politics, ethics, and science.

Today, some 150 years after the onset of the industrial revolution, a new scientific revolution is well underway. Explosive discoveries compress centuries into decades, decades into years, and the pace is accelerating. The scientific revolution is generating consequences that will be far more challenging than those unleashed by the industrial revolution, and it could pose challenges that we are not yet capable of fully comprehending.

On the political plane, today's scientific revolution is creating the temptation and the capacity for going beyond this century's earlier temptation, stimulated by the industrial revolution, to engage in total social engineering—a temptation so abused by the totalitarian phenomenon. Through today's scientific revolution the temptation to engineer society is giving way to a temptation to engineer the human person.

Inherent in this temptation is a great promise and a great danger. The promise is that of a longer, healthier, and perhaps even more fulfilling life in which both mentally and physically human beings

will be less vulnerable to the ravages of disease and the painful afflictions of old age. Humanity already owes an enormous debt to science for the advances that have made such a promise possible.

But we have to be alert to a hidden, mystifying, philosophically challenging danger inherent in this otherwise benign promise: that of the eventual dehumanization and destruction of the authentic uniqueness of each person, of the stripping away of the transcendental mystery inherent in human consciousness, and of the eventual transformation of the human being into something that can be described as a mechanistic entity, subject to cloning, transplants, contrived improvements in external appearance, induced changes in psyche and personality, and even to deliberate enhancements of intelligence. This power to alter, to improve, and even eventually to artificially produce the human being, carries with it the risk of the loss of reverence for the sanctity of an individually unique identity.

In the West we have already lost faith in what has been called by some “the anthropocentric universe,” the idea that the earth is at the center of the universe. Fading with this Judeo-Christian idea is also the conviction that there exists a shared natural moral law of universal validity. Modern Western society increasingly subscribes to only one absolute: that there are no absolutes, that everything is relative.

And now science poses an even more momentous challenge: that the human being can be reduced, maybe even reproduced, into a semi-artificial and thus a potentially dehumanized product. That prospect involves a giant leap beyond the totalitarian design to create coercive utopias and even beyond the acquisition just several decades ago of the capacity to destroy mankind through nuclear fission. We may now be reaching the capacity to deprive ourselves of our individually and mysteriously unique and authentic humanness.

All of this points to an urgent question that goes beyond the

old issue of what exactly is the critical difference between human and animal life, an issue that has perplexed humankind for many centuries. Now the question increasingly becomes: What is the critical difference between human and artificial intelligence? How do we define that difference? How do we defend that difference? And, perhaps for some who are scientific materialists, is the difference worth defending?

These are the issues that are likely to become, and in some respects already are becoming, the central cutting-edge foci of politics in the most advanced societies. In addition to ideological conflicts over the feasibility of a secular utopia, as was the case with the very recent past, or debates over human rights between the advanced democracies and nondemocratic states, ethical conflicts over the definition of the human being will increasingly dominate our political life. This phenomenon is already breeding a strong reaction that we see in its extreme form in religious extremism.

In that broad connection, perhaps the most difficult dilemma facing advanced societies will be how to define the boundary between private decisions and public regulations regarding the exploitation of the new powers acquired because of the ongoing scientific revolution. What, indeed, is uniquely private and what is public in consequence and import? It will be very difficult to reach consensus on these matters in a democratic society. Indeed, already a variety of views are beginning to clash very sharply, and the severity of such clashes is likely to be intensified by the fact that our own society is increasingly agnostic, not just religiously but ethically as well. There is no longer any pervasive, dominant, unifying sense of ethics in our own society. Increasingly we tend to define as unethical only that which has first been proven to be illegal. A very good example of this on a pedestrian, trivial level is the Tonya Harding case. You might remember her as the skater whom the American Olympic Committee would not throw off the Olympic team—membership on which is not a civic right but a

privilege and an honor to be earned—on the grounds that she had not been convicted of a crime. This is a classic example of the reduction of an ethical judgment to a legal judgment—or rather the dependence of the former on the latter. This condition, I think, is inimical to any consensus on the larger issues that are likely to confront us.

Worse than that, one may even have to ask whether a society that in some respects appears to be self-indulgent, morally relativistic, and rather hedonistic—a society in which television is replacing the family, the school, and the church as the source of values—can in fact intelligently and effectively address these issues. Can our society, which is increasingly a trivialized society preoccupied with self-entertainment and bereft of a collectively shared spiritual intuition of earlier generations, reach a consensus on these issues?

The absence of ethical consensus and the weakness of ethical convictions is compounded by our limited grasp on the public level of the actual implications of the scientific breakthroughs that are now underway and are increasingly galloping forward in genetics, biology, neurology, chemistry, and in medicine more generally. Do we understand what is actually involved here? The fact is, our society at large simply lacks knowledge of what is in store for all of us just around the corner and regarding which we will have to make fundamental decisions.

In that context we are going to face some excruciating political choices. Is it better for an ethically divided, or at least agnostic, and scientifically rather ignorant society—namely, our own—to abdicate making choices in these domains regarding what kind of scientific tampering with a human being is permissible, in which case scientific alteration of the human being in the name of its enhancement will become rampant? Or is it better for all of us to make partially informed public choices, which also means partially uninformed public choices, thereby risking a breakdown on social consensus, and perhaps also the making of ethically or scientifically

erroneous decisions? Which is better?

In the most extreme form, this poses the choice between abdication of responsibility in the first instance and arbitrary regimentation in the second. We should bear in mind that in abdicating responsibility and letting science move on its own momentum, we may lose the option to make future choices. In the second instance—that of an arbitrary and, probably, partially uneducated decision—we may simply make the wrong choice because public debate is likely to be acrimonious and demagogic, and public decisions may even be fundamentally wrong.

Ethical conflicts, precisely because they are so contingent and because they will be occurring in a setting of unrefined ethical awareness and limited scientific understanding, are thus likely to become very divisive. We already see the beginnings of this in the ongoing debate in our own society about abortion. We see it in the debate over euthanasia. And only a step away is the debate over whether the individual personal right to reproduce should be socially controlled—as it is becoming already in different ways in Singapore and China—and, if so, on the basis of what criteria—political, philosophical, ethical, or scientific?

All of the foregoing quite evidently implies the need both for enhanced ethical consciousness in our own society and for the wider dissemination of scientific knowledge that bears on the personal and social dimensions of our changing life. The decline in religion should not mean the fading of ethical norms that help to define what a community is, over and beyond the matter of legality. Our modern society risks ultimate dissolution if even a minimal ethical consensus ceases to exist.

It follows, therefore, that we need to foster, especially in our education but also in our mass media, a higher concern for the deliberate definition of shared ethical norms, for a deeper and more informed and, perhaps, instinctive, social discernment of the difference between what is “right” and what is “wrong.” We must have the courage to reiterate and reassert the centrality of ethics in

social life—through education particularly and in some special and unique cases perhaps through legislation—thereby enhancing the ethical content both of private and public decisions.

Aggravating the above philosophic-political dilemmas are their international geopolitical implications. In just one century we have traversed from the coercive utopia of the totalitarians, through the permissive cornucopia of our current consumption-oriented and morally relativistic democracies, to the gates of the scientifically self-perfecting genomia. We must face the fact that this progression and development of the centrality of science is costly in simple financial terms. Its benefits can be enormous, but they can also be very discriminatory. If we can prolong life, improve its personal quality, enhance our own intelligence, increase our physical stature, gratify our social notions of personal beauty, and reduce the ravages of disease, will the benefits of these new and very costly capabilities—even assuming we handle responsibly the pertinent ethical dilemmas—be available to all of humanity?

Clearly the answer has to be no. The “benefits” of science in the first instance will flow much more to the rich in the advanced societies and much less to the poor, much more to the advanced societies in general and much less to the two-thirds of mankind living in the less developed and poorer countries. As a trivial example, let me ask the following simple question: Do you know any poor person who has had cosmetic surgery?

Discrimination and selectivity will enhance the already existing inequalities in the human condition and will breed new and extraordinarily intense resentments. The differences that already exist between the rich and poor could widen into a shocking and morally unacceptable gap between an elite of self-upgrading superbeings and a resentful majority of mankind.

That most extreme prospect must simply be avoided. A world dominated by a few countries inhabited by a minority of superbeings would not only be fundamentally immoral but also explosive. It would be a world dominated by Marxist class divisions, blended

with Hitlerite notions of genetic superiority. The once-defeated, recently defeated utopian notions, in an appalling act of historical vengeance, could even be resurrected. In any case, it would be a fundamentally unstable world, bound to precipitate a violent global reaction, of which the current manifestations of fundamentalism and extremism are but a preview.

That my expression of concern is not unduly alarmist is suggested by the letter to *Science* magazine from S. E. Luria, the Nobel laureate in biology from MIT, who warns against the gathering momentum in eugenic intervention by asking: "Will the Nazi program to eradicate Jewish or otherwise 'inferior' genes by mass murder be transformed into a kinder, gentler program to 'perfect' human individuals by 'correcting' their genomes in conformity, perhaps, to an ideal, 'white, Judeo-Christian, economically successful' genotype?"

Avoiding that prospect will require difficult, and at best only partially informed, political choices regarding the dissemination internationally of the presumed benefits of using the enhanced powers of science to improve and alter the human being. This is bound to be an even more complicated issue, magnifying our approaching domestic dilemmas. The ongoing controversy over population growth and population control is but an early indicator of the growing salience of the interaction of scientific, ethical, and political issues.

My reflections point to a fundamental conclusion: Our contemporary politics is on the threshold of a new age. At one stage in the past, politics was driven by religious fervor as mankind tried to define its place in the universe. More recently it has been driven by ideological dogmas as mankind has tried to shape a heaven on earth for itself. Increasingly, politics is likely to be dominated by ethical dilemmas stimulated by science's potential for reshaping the very nature of the human being itself, thereby also placing on our agenda the ultimate question as to what, indeed, is the human being.

In that context, the benefits of science must not be trivialized by self-gratification either at home or abroad. Accelerating scientific knowledge has to be matched by a deepening ethical consensus and by more scientifically informed and carefully considered political decisions. The interface between ethics and science will hence be the new frontier of politics—the third new dimension of human rights—and that places on the shoulders of democratic leaders, and ultimately on all of us concerned with human rights, the obligation to be at least part-time scientists and philosophers. It may be too much to ask, but ask we must.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q You indicated that the foundation of world problems is a conception of human nature and that the solution is a philosophical one. Do you have any suggestions about what conception we might work toward developing and how we are going to educate people with the philosophical understanding to implement it?

A While I would rather keep to myself my own notions of what I consider the human being to be, I do believe we should attach a very high value to the uniqueness, to the spiritual mystery, of human consciousness. This is something that should not be unraveled and reduced to a mechanistic process in which not only that mystery ends but which permits, in effect, a mechanical reproduction of human beings who would essentially be processors rather than mysteriously living entities with a sense of values that determine their conduct and their relationships with others. There is something sacredly mysterious about that concept of a human being.

If the world ends, I don't think it will be because of some sort of strange explosion. It will end if we somehow unravel, demystify, and mechanize that strange condition that is what we are and that

defines us in the totally unique individual sense, in spite of the fact that there are billions of us.

Q Regarding the second new dimension of human rights, the furtherance of democracy, it seems a very weak thing for us to base our hopes and aspirations on. A stark example is what happened in Yugoslavia, where, with the fall of communism, the country splintered into democratic states ruled by freely elected tyrants. The result has been one of the most tragic episodes in history. Even with ethnic cleansing, rape, pillage, and other horrendous acts occurring there, they are democratic states. So I don't think democracy is the panacea for the troubles that are besetting mankind.

A It may be true that some of the states elected nondemocratic despots, but the alternative to that might be nonelected nondemocratic despots, which is not necessarily better. Not all despots are enlightened and not all despots pursue policies that are responsible.

The problem in Yugoslavia is not due to the fact that it became a series of democracies. The problem in Yugoslavia is that it was a multinational state that pretended to be a national state, but with a nonexistent nationality defining it. The only people that were Yugoslavs in Yugoslavia were the people living in Belgrade and working for the Yugoslav government. Everybody else was either a Slovene, a Croat, a Serb, or a Bosnian, each with a sense of his own distinctive history and separate identity. Yugoslavia was maintained artificially by force for too long, which means a lot of the sentiments were suppressed. The West only served to delay its transformation, thereby unintentionally contributing to an explosion that became increasingly irrational and violent—not driven by democratic passions but by ethnic passions.

Democracy is *not* a panacea. Instead, it is possible that in many parts of the world, and for quite some time to come, we will see periods of prolonged transition whereby some form of

authoritarianism will prevail in order either to control ethnic passions or to create national stability, and we're going to find ourselves supporting them. For example, some of the new Central Asian countries in the former Soviet Union cannot instantaneously become democracies. Saudi Arabia certainly is not a democracy, and we support Saudi Arabia. South Korea was not a democracy for a long time while we were supporting it, but it has evolved into a democracy.

So our task is to facilitate, to the extent that it is practicable and not inconsistent with other important geostrategic objectives, the evolution of democratic systems. No, democracy is not a panacea. But some of the problems besetting these countries, particularly in Yugoslavia, are not rooted in democracy; they are rooted in ethnicity and nationalism.

Q Dr. Brzezinski, as you described the dehumanization and mechanization of mankind today, I was reminded of an earlier time when I read Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. The horror it invoked then was revived again as you spoke. One antidote, you suggest, might be the development of ethical awareness through the media and through education. We Americans seem to be indifferent as we practice our hedonism, to such an extent that many of us don't even know what the implications of this new tax cut are, what the Contract with America is, or to what extent Newt Gingrich will be a savior.

Who do you see initiating this educational process and this ethical awareness that will in some way revive a sense of responsibility in order that we might be able to extricate ourselves from our complacency?

A The answer, very briefly, is you—that is to say, you individually and you collectively. This is the only way we can respond to that problem in our society. There is no other way. I don't look for a savior to come who will lead us to the Promised Land. I think *we*

have to be concerned about these issues. And it is very important that we all understand what they are. We are becoming in extremely rapid fashion the most trivialized society in the world. We may be the richest, the most democratic, the most innovative, and the most successful nation in the world, but we are rapidly also becoming one of the more stupid.

There is much more wisdom among residents of a small village in a Third World country than there is among Americans obsessed with the “boob tube.” The average American woman watches television 28 hours a week. Just think of that. And what does she see? The average American child watches between 14 and 18 hours of television a week, which I’m sure is much more than what he or she spends reading or studying.

Look at the morning shows that go on for hour after hour after hour with titillating perversity from the mass media pornographers, who have programs with their names on them as a way of personalizing their strange social role. This is what most Americans are fed.

Other societies are rapidly emulating us, so it is not a peculiarly American phenomenon. It’s a modern phenomenon. And it’s a very serious phenomenon. Little time is spent addressing or thinking about anything but virtual reality, of which all of that is a part. Increasingly our society is living in virtual reality. These discussions, these talk shows, the so-called serials, or events like the O. J. Simpson trial, which preoccupy the public, are an escape from reality. Escape from reality is virtual reality, and that’s where we’re heading. At the same time, the scientific revolution is plunging us into a new age, but without any guidelines, because we are no longer thinking about what are the important distinctions we will need to make in order to impose some degree of control over these processes.

This is in part why I titled my most recent book *Out of Control*. My concern was that this is not only a philosophical issue, but very

much a geostrategic issue as well. If we don't have the basic criteria of choice, we will not be able to guide the world, even politically.

About the Speaker

Zbigniew Brzezinski is Counselor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies; and Professor of American Foreign Policy at the Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC. From 1977 to 1981, he was National Security Advisor to the President of the United States. In 1981 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his role in the normalization of U.S.–Chinese relations and for his contributions to the human rights and national security policies of the United States. In presidential campaigns Dr. Brzezinski served as chairman of the Humphrey Foreign Policy Task Force in 1968; as principal foreign policy advisor to Jimmy Carter in 1976; as co-chairman of the Bush National Security Advisory Task Force in 1988. He has been on the faculty of Harvard and Columbia Universities. He is the author of many articles and books. His most recent book is *Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21st Century*.

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