

## Event Transcript

### Ukraine's Future: The Challenges and Impact of Governance in Ukraine

#### Keynote Speaker

Zbigniew Brzezinski, former US National Security Advisor

Counselor and Trustee, Center for Strategic & International Studies

Chair: C. Fred Bergsten, Peterson Institute for International Economics

Conference cohosted by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution, and the Atlantic Council

July 7, 2011

This transcript is unedited.

Fred Bergsten: Let me ask everyone to resume seating and we will have the grand finale with Zbig Brzezinski. I think we've had a very rich and very lively morning, tremendous amount of information, wonderful panelists and I think a very rich discussion of what's going on both in Ukraine and vis a vis Ukraine's relations with the rest of the world.

The organizers could think of no better way to capstone this event than to have a conversation with Zbig Brzezinski. Zbig's a friend and sometimes colleague for many years. I think it's fair to say that his knowledge, experience and expertise on this part of the world is legendary and very few people, if any, could rival him for knowledge about it, insights on it and continuing judgments as to what goes on, not just in Ukraine, but in that entire part of the world.

Zbig was just in Kiev just a few weeks ago, leading the US delegation actually, at the Chernobyl conference. He met with the president while he was there, other top officials, so he's right up to speed on this topic, bringing back the latest direct information from his most recent visit.

So Zbig it's great to have you. We thank you for coming. I'll ask you to make a few leadoff remarks, give us your sense of where things stand in Ukraine and US policy toward Ukraine and its position in the world as a whole. Then we'll go to some questions, open up to the group and stay until about 2:30 to wrap up the conference with the grand finale. Thanks for joining us.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Well thank you Fred and good afternoon everyone. I wasn't here during the morning session so I want to be very careful not to repeat what was being said and the only way I can do that, since I know it was a very good

and informative discussion, to be rather general and sweeping in my comments. And I'll talk very briefly, maybe as you suggested, for up to ten minutes with some more general points.

Let me also say that I'm delighted to be in this institute, which is so established and so respected in the city. And also see so many people here at the session dealing with Ukraine. I think that is a statement in its own right and it's a significant statement, because it indicates that in this city there's a great deal of genuine, positive interest in Ukraine and it reflects obviously Ukrainians own standing in the world.

Just as I pointed the [Inaudible 0:05:44] let me make a very, very obvious observation. We're now in the 20th year of Ukrainian independence. That means that in effect a whole political generation has grown up in a country, which is independent and which they feel its own. And that I think is a new reality and, of course, the longer it lasts the more enduring it's going to be.

During those 20 years, by and large, Ukraine's democratic record has been pretty good. Some short comings. We may talk about them, but by and large, pretty good. The country elected four presidents. Every one of them in a free election and to me, a free election is defined by the notion that one doesn't necessarily know in advance who's going to be the winner. Because we know of some other elections elsewhere where the winner is predicable sometimes years ahead of the election, which is rather unusual. That's a very good record.

But I still think, however, in spite of the 20 years and the one generation and the democratic record that there is still a touch of ambiguity or uncertainty about Ukraine and its future, its future status. Not a decisive ambiguity, certainly not a predetermined ambiguity, but a touch of ambiguity because a great deal still depends on two considerations. One is; how will Russia evolve? And what kind of policy will Russia pursue? And one can envisage different alternatives in Russia's near time future and different attitudes in that context towards Ukraine.

And, of course, a great deal depends also on how Ukraine conducts itself, both on the international scene and on the domestic scene. My sense is that on the international scene there is cause for optimism in spite of some rather pessimistic expectations regarding the consequences of Yanukovich's election.

The record since his election has not been bad at all. He has been very pointed in his statements that Ukraine's unvarying priority is the European Union. Yanukovich has actually publically even speculated about the year 2022 as the year of possible admission for Ukraine in the European

Union. That may be a touch optimistic, but still the very fact that this is up front, I think indicates an attitude, which on the whole is encouraging.

What is somewhat less encouraging is the domestic political scene and particular in the area of democratic freedoms, constitutionality, legality, and so forth. One has a feeling that there is the risk of political repression. I think it would be highly premature to suggest that repression is the reality, but there are some events evolving, of which we all know, which could have cumulatively the affect of creating a politically repressive atmosphere.

And that, of course, if it were coupled with a Russian policy, which would be more assertive, more focused on erasing what still many in the Russian elite cannot believe is an enduring reality, then the effects cumulatively could be more serious.

None the less I think, so far as foreign policy is concerned, one has the sense that the Ukrainians have made it rather clear, in spite of some of the initial concessions they made to their bigger neighbor, that they are determined to preserve the statehood and that they see their future increasingly in the European context. And have been willing to continue with efforts to consolidate the openings to the West, to enlarge them and to move them forward.

And this is already generating some reactions actually in Russia, which in a way are a testimonial to that reality. Not only is the invariable priority of Ukraine movement to the European Union, but it is also a matter of actually pursuing activities, which in some respects reflect that.

I was just reading a few days ago an article in Cumbersome, which some of you may have read which deals with both the Russian reaction and the Ukraine counter-reaction. The Ukraine's decision to participate in the Sea Breeze 2011 exercise, which brings into the Black Sea for joint maneuvers with the Ukraine and Navy, USS Monterey, which is a missile. And I forget whether it's a frigate or a cruiser, but anyway it's an important American weapon system.

And this brought the reaction from the Russian foreign ministry to the following effect, "Appearance of elements of the United States strategic infrastructure near the Russian boarder and recognizance in the Black Sea are threats to Russian security." The Ukrainian foreign ministry then responded that it perceives no potential threats to any country in the region on account of this Navel exercise.

Moscow then responded by saying that, according to a Russian official who was interviewed by Cumbersome that, "When he was in the

opposition to Viktor Yushchenko, Yanukovich did everything to thwart NATO exercises in Ukraine. Now that he is president he authorizes them again and in the most provocative manner possible.” That actually was a quote contributed by Konstantin Kosachyov, chairman of the Duma’s Committee on International Affairs.

Well that actually was not the end of it. Cumbersome then goes on to report that it has obtained a classified document that Yanukovich is actually boosting cooperation with NATO, energetically and more so than Yushchenko.

The document claims that in the framework of the NATO Ukraine commission in 2011 Ukraine is actually stepping up its cooperation with NATO to levels considerably higher than previously under Yushchenko.

A Russian public official then said the document that we’re talking about is a clear indication on proof that Ukraine is anything but independent in the formulation of its foreign policy. It does not mesh with its declared intention to remain out of military political blocks and to abandon the plans to integrate into NATO.

I could go on and on, but this little flap I think is symptomatic of a reality which is much more complex than many of us feared, which is still uncertain in its final outcome and much of that depends on internal developments, both in Russia and the Ukraine.

But it is also my own view that as time passes and if the next five or so years lead to further consolidation of Ukraine and statehood, a seat change will occur in the Russian psyche of the type that historically occurred only after a number of decades after the Bolshevik revolution, but quite a few decades until about 1950’s – 1960 regarding the Russian attitude that was born, namely that this is generally a separate country, generally a separate nation with whom it is desirable to have good relations and which none the less is not going to forsake its independence for the sake of unilaterally defined character of these good relations. And that brings me to my final comment and I’ll stop right there.

It seems to me that if that condition prevails something else very desirable is likely to take place. Namely, that in fact and paradoxically the initial concentration on better relations with Russia, the avoidance of head on conflicts with Russia, may have the paradoxical effect, not only of consolidating Ukraine independence, but of facilitating its more stable and more cooperative relationship with the West.

In turn, facilitating a similar movement by Russia, because in fact Ukraine that is on good relations with Russia but moving forward towards the West

is a Ukraine which is going to have a suction effect together with the European union of Russia's own definition of its long term future.

So this is in brief how I sense the historical dynamics. And this is also one of the reasons why I attach my own personal sympathy's aside. Enormous importance to how Ukraine evolves. I used to say that if Ukraine is suborned by Russia, which I now think is less likely, Russia again becomes an empire. But now I think even further, that if Ukraine is not suborned, Russia is much more likely to become European.

Fred Bergsten:

Terrific lead off comments. I'm sure you'll get a lot of questions on the NATO aspect, the Russia aspect, but before we open for that let me pick up on a few of the comments you made at the opening of your remarks, which go more directly to the things that we were talking about in the conference this morning, the potential conflict between Ukraine's foreign policy objectives and what's going on within the county.

It was suggested during part of our discussion this morning that Ukraine may be headed toward, if it's not already at, a fundamental contradiction in policies. On the one hand a commitment, as you said, to join Europe, whether as a full member, or in a median stage and maybe very short term, a comprehensive trade agreement of the type they're talking about now.

But on the one hand, as you said, the commitment is to join Europe, on the other hand it was argued by some folks this morning that what's going on within Ukraine, some of which you mentioned quickly, is headed in the other direction and is increasingly at odds with the values of Europe and indeed the West as a whole.

And that those two seemingly different courses of European policy, of Ukrainian policy, may add up to a fundamental contradiction that would wind up undercutting their basic foreign policy theme. What do you think about that?

Do you think it's that severe yet that it looks like a fundamental contradiction? And more broadly, you hinted at that already, but more broadly what's your prediction? Will Ukraine evolve in the direction of the West, the values as well as the economic ties? Or, as there are some [Inaudible 0:18:21] might it revert to a kind of post-soviet Kleptocracy, Autocracy, etcetera, of the type that I think everybody here would be most unhappy to see?

Zbigniew Brzezinski: I think that depends a great deal also on the reaction of the West, which means of the United States and of the European Union. I was struck that when Yanukovych went to visit the European parliament, he was taken

over the coals by quite a few of the European parliamentarians over this issue of domestic freedoms, or potentially repression trials; the Timoshenko trial has become a kind of symbolic definition of the problem but it certainly isn't limited just to her at this stage.

We know that a former interior minister is being held in jail. We know for example that [Inaudible 0:19:17] a museum dedicated to the repression in the soviet era has been visited by the Ukraine and security service, the SBU, and 16 employees of the museum were severely interrogated regarding their activities, on the charge that they're divulging state secrets.

So a museum dealing with soviet repression of Ukraine and nationalism has its officials interrogated about their responsibility for divulging state secrets. That is kind of ominous, but the word ominous is the word that I use deliberately, it is ominous, but it is not generalized yet, it is not a pervasive phenomenon.

But it is symptomatic of a threat. And this is why I did say initially that while on the one hand there is this positive thrust, which I think is sensible and on the whole balanced, and in keeping with Ukraine and National interests in the realm of foreign policy, there is this other side domestically.

Which if then is in some fashion is accompanied by, or reinforced by, some developments in Russia in the foreseeable future, could make the next five years very sticky and I don't think we're yet at a stage in which we can categorically assert that Ukraine as a National Statehood is a reality that is enduring and inevitable.

It is strong. I think there's a whole new generation of Ukrainians who strongly believe in it. I think every passing year consolidates that. I think even within what was simplistically defined as the pro-Russian orientation in the elite, there is a mood once that Pro-Russian elite got into power that this is ours and we're not going to be letting someone else dictate it to us or share it with us. This is ours.

A little bit;—if I had to compare the mood, as I sense it from my knowledge of that part of the world within this elite, I think it's a little bit like Garrick in Poland in the later phases of the soviet block. Garrick was, of course, subordinated in some sense to Moscow, but he was certainly was not keen on becoming the 18<sup>th</sup> republic, he certainly was quite clear in wanting to preserve the degree of independence he felt he was entitled to and to enlarge it and to consolidate it. And he was quite determined to make domestic decisions on his own, because that was the instinct, not only of him, but of his elite.

I think this sort of Yanukovich orientation is evolving in the same direction. And clumsiness by the Russians on this issue actually helps that transformation, but also vigilance on the part of the West. And I think the West has to be very clear in emphasizing the issue that you raised, that I very briefly also raised when I was in Kiev, namely that the domestic political scene defines Ukraine to us almost as much as Ukraine's external posture and the two are interrelated.

And I think this point of view is very strong in Europe. I think it is also held very strongly by Ukraine's immediate neighbors to the East who are the friendliest with Ukraine, particularly the Poles, because they share the conviction that democracy within is the safest and most promising way of consolidating genuine independence.

So I think this is a view that we all share and which is not an anti-Ukrainian view, which is not an anti-Russian view, because I do want to emphasize that much of what happens, Ukraine pertains to Russia and that Ukraine can be in the forefront of the fundamental change in the East-West relationship.

Fred Bergsten: Zbig, just to carry that to one more step. There were also a lot of comments this morning about the relatively passive stance that the US has taken toward Ukraine in the recent past. If you were a national security advisor now, as were in the past, what would you be doing about it? What would be your suggested steps for US policy changes now to try to promote the positive course that you're espousing and I think we would all like to see.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: I think I rather not answer that question.

Fred Bergsten: I've never known you to cop out.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: I think there's a practical reason for the answer.

Fred Bergsten: Okay with that I'll open the floor to questions and comments. I'll ask you to either go to the mic or use one of the traveling mics, identify yourself and fire away. Gentleman in the front.

Audience 1: My name is [Inaudible 24:57] Crimean Tatar Research and Information Center. Professor, several months ago you met with our Crimean Tatar

leader [Inaudible 0:25:09] and I'm sure he briefed you on the status of the Crimean Tatars in Crimea.

I ask this question to deputy foreign minister this morning, but I would like to ask you also. Given the Russian influence in Crimea, do you believe, do you think that Ukraine has enough leverage, enough control of Crimea to resolve the Crimean Tatar problem. Does Ukraine have the prodigal will to resolve the Crimean Tatar problem?

Zbigniew Brzezinski: I think the honest answer is I don't know. I think that is the honest answer. I think there is a predisposition among many Ukrainians to try to resolve this problem, but whether they have sufficient political will, which would include having to antagonize the Russian speaking population in Crimea, but also quite a few of the Ukrainians in Crimea, that this may be in the initial phase too much some of them to undertake.

Nonetheless, I do have a sense that there is a growing consensus in Ukraine that the era of injustice, and that's not only be forgotten, but to present possible corrective measures within practical limits have to be undertaken.

And this is a process has taken place in central Europe over the last 20 years. And in every case, it's terribly difficult, because correcting the past often means also imposing some consequences for people who are not directly responsible for what happened in the past, but were the indirect beneficiaries of what happened in the past. And that vastly complicates the resolution of such issues.

Fred Bergsten: Yes.

Atul Singh: Good afternoon Atul Singh, founder and editor in chief of Fair Observer and New General Law Global Issues. We launched last week. My question is this. You said, correct me if I'm wrong, that, "Internal factors in Ukraine and Russia will interplay with each other." Was that comment that you did make or am I misconstruing you?

Zbigniew Brzezinski: You are essentially correct.

Atul Singh: Okay. So I understand internal factors in Russia having an impact on Ukraine, because of size, because of other factors. Russia can interfere in Ukraine in a deliberate and tangible way. How do you see internal factors

in Ukraine playing out in Russia? If you could expand on that that would be very kind.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Well I can expand on it by sighting what I once said that historically, Ukraine, the Ancient Rus, is Russia's older brother. In Russian historiography, the Russians like to say that the Russian's are the older brother of the Ukrainians, but when one speaks historically, that's not the case. But also when one speaks politically, it's not the case, because the performance of independent Ukraine politically over the last 20 years has been more mature than Russian performance.

In that sense, Ukraine's are also the older brothers of the [inaudible 0:28:28] democracy in Russia. They are providing an example that in the post-soviet context, in which there hasn't been, for a very long time if ever, an institutionalized democratic tradition, it is possible to nurture democracy and to consistently practice it. And that's something of which the Ukrainians ought to be very proud. And if they are proud of it, they are to be especially alert to the negative consequences of political repression. And political repression can be direct or it can be indirect.

It can be excused by other allegations, but if the effect is political repression psychologically and politically, it is political repression. And I think on that issue, it is in Ukraine's own interest to be unambiguous in drawing the line and in rejecting the settling of political scores by repression or intimidation.

Atul Singh: Thank you.

Fred Bergsten: Yes.

Audience 2: My name is [inaudible 0:29:26], I work for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. It's sounds to me Dr. Brzezinski that you want Ukraine to save Russia, from itself, or from its evil deeds and intentions. I would like you to ask you to elaborate on that a little bit. How can we help them?

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Well I just did I think in part in the last answer, but I don't argue that Ukraine is going to save Russia. I do make the argument that Ukraine can help Russia save itself. It's a subtle difference, but sometimes subtlety is the essence of a point.

Audience 3: [Inaudible 0:30:10] Words of America. During this conference and in your speech, you were talking mostly about the internal developments in Ukraine, but what is about external developments in the world around Ukraine.

For example such trends as US is withdrawing from Afghanistan and Iraq and is becoming less dependent on Russia for passage of troops, maybe some other trends which is going on globally. In other words, is it a good time for development of year's Ukrainian relationship, is it a good timing, is it a good, you know, situation externally?

Zbigniew Brzezinski: I would say on the whole it is, because the trends you talk about, all reflect the climb in the homogeneity of blocks, of coalitions or entities and some of that, the climb is even negative. For example, I personally regret the fact that Europe is becoming less homogeneous politically than it could be, or should be by now, but nonetheless in that context, by and large, it creates more opening for individual countries, which have a sense of national pride, which have a sense of their potential regional role.

Let's face it. Ukraine is an important European country. After Russia, it is the largest country territorially in Europe. And it is a country of 45 million people or so. So it is a country that has every potential reason and motive to assert as much of its autonomy and independence - and I used the word autonomy because every country to some extent has to take into account other countries interests. And in doing so, contributes in a way to a more healthy environment.

I think the fact that right now there is also an improvement in the American Russian relationship. Isn't that [inaudible 0:32:14] and the fact that the Poles are seeking reconciliation with the Russians and the Russians are seeking reconciliation with the Poles, even though it's going rather difficult, you know, with difficulty but it is moving forward, it's again a good symptom. And I think the fact that a Ukrainian Polish reconciliation it is much more reality that Russian Polish reconciliation, that's two of the largest Ukraine options.

I would think that if I were Ukraine and I would be very interested in developing much closer relations with Turkey, which is playing an increasingly important regional role. And it make sense for the Ukrainians, who geographically have had all sorts of connections across the black sea, to have a closer relationship with Turkey. So intelligent creative diplomacy can be, I think, very usefully applied in this setting as you described it.

Fred Bergsten: On the improved relation between Ukraine and Poland, I'm wearing my Euro 2012 pin, which underlies everybody's hopes that we will have a successful Euro Cup next year ,hosted by the two countries together, a symbol of the cooperation.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: I could be wearing my button near here, the Ukrainian decoration that I received which I'm prepared to triangulate. I got it as an American official, but given my name, probably most Ukrainians suspect the most of it in part fully.

Fred Bergsten: They might, next question.

Donald McCain: Donald McCain, George Washington University. Dr. Brzezinski, how does Belarus figure in the Ukrainian stakes of foreign policy considering the stringed relationship between Belarus and Moscow recently?

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Well it's a messy picture quite clearly, because of the messy political situation in Belarus. It's a bizarre situation in many respects, because in the one hand, it's not maybe so much Belarus as President Lukashenko was asserting his autonomy by repressing his country. And I don't think a long term constructive solution.

But from the Ukraine point of view, I would guess it's an issue that the Ukrainians must be watching carefully, but probably with prudent self-restraint in so far as any direct involvement is concerned. They are really not in a position to either affect what happens in Belarus, nor significantly to affect what happens between Belarus and Russia.

So in that sense, there is more of a responsibility resting on the European Union, and particularly on that cluster of countries closer to the East, which includes not only countries immediately on the borders such as Poland, Lithuania, the Baltics more generally, but for example, Sweden, which just taking a very active interest in the Belarusian problem. And I think that is probably a sensible division of labor.

Fred Bergsten: Zbig, as Belarus has come up, and I don't know if you've got into this aspect of it, but there were some discussion this morning of the new customs union that Russia has been forging with Belarus in Kazakhstan and whether Ukraine...the common view this morning was Ukraine was not thinking of becoming a member, but finding some association with

that grouping and how that would relate to their focus on joining the European Union common market, maybe the EU itself over time.

Any observations on whether you think that would create a major tension or again add to the appearance of possible inconsistency that would derail the main objective?

Zbigniew Brzezinski: I'm not enough of an expert to give you, Fred, a kind of clear cut answer. So let me say this. I think the EU have to watch that very carefully and to be quite strict in its application of its own perception of the reality involved.

In other words, I think it would unwise for the EU to sort of try to split the difference accommodate, if in fact it thinks that some of these special arrangements are being contemplated in fact do injustice, do violate the basic premises of closer Ukraine EU relationship.

I think if they feel that way, they also draw the line way ahead in the game because otherwise, it becomes a sliding platform and one can go too far and in the end lose the ballgame, that is to say really forfeit the opportunity of becoming associated with the EU.

Fred Bergsten: James?

James Shaw: James Shaw. I don't have a question. I really want to support and reemphasize the fundamental point you made about the equation between Ukraine and Russia. If Ukrainians, who are seen in the Russian mind as a branch of the Russian people, are able to adopt the standards and values of the European Union and succeed at European integration, then this sends of message not only to the Russian elite but to ordinary Russians, which is revolutionary, because it demolishes the view that there is some distinctive East-Slavic way of development and that we cannot do this. And it's exposes the fact that the problem is one instead of policy political systems and institutions.

So I think this is an extremely valuable point, but I trust you would agree it still has to happen. And whatever might happen, I think a lot us were quite right to emphasize this morning why it isn't happening yet. Thank you.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Well thank you. I obviously agree with that you said. I would merely reiterate the point I made earlier. I think the next five years are going to be

quite critical. And I think the trend is more positive than one would have expected.

I think the intonation of the Ukrainians to pursue their own nationhood in a manner of their choice and through an association with Europe has some vitality, but there are some contradictions between external policy and domestic policy in Ukraine, which could become ominous if the latter became the dominant. And also there are some uncertainty as to what kind of a Russia we are going to have in the near future.

I think in the long run, I'm personally convinced that Russia doesn't have a choice. In the long run, Russia does not have a choice, but there are lots of important Russians who are in a much better position to influence with Russia does deny who have a different view.

And I think they may be tempted in the near future to still pursue a game which is partially nostalgia, which is partially great power chauvinism, which is partially false pride, which is partially an underestimation of the dangers that Russia faces domestically and internationally. And therefore pursue a policy that could be negative in its essence. And that could, combined with a repressive balance in Ukraine, have rather ominous consequences for Ukraine.

Fred Bergsten:

Let me ask two related questions Zbig, that also came up prominently in the discussion this morning. There was a lot of commentary, of course, about corruption in Ukraine, but one school of thought argued that corruption was really more a symptom of a concentration of power within the country than a problem per se.

And the question there is do you see a trend toward increased concentration of power within the country? And if so, how much does that add to the possible ominous outcome?

Related to that, there was an argument from some folks this morning that the concentration of power that seems to be occurring is due to the fundamental cause in the Ukrainian political and even constitutional system. A lack of checks and balances within the system of government that has evolved over these 20 years so that there are...there's an absence of the kind of competing power centers that would be normal in a society headed toward democracy, and therefore require some ready fundamental changes in the system of government that we are seeing in Ukraine before it could really get on track.

You are an eminent and extremely close student of the evolution of other post-communist societies, including on variables of that type. Share with

us your assessment of where Ukraine stands on those variables, what maybe it could learn from the evolution of other post-communist transformations and kind of what course might it chart to try to take the next step in the evolution toward a democratic system.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Well that's a very complex issue and I'm not sure I have in sort of grand theory or remedy to offer. I do have one point to make however. Ukrainian corruption is not Ukrainian corruption, it's post-soviet corruption. I think that's a very important point and I don't there's anything so to speak culturally typical about Ukrainian corruption. As I don't think there's any corruptions culturally Russian.

It's the cumulative effect of a system that over time bred corruption when it system shifted from fanaticism to self-interest. And fanaticism was the first phase of the Bolshevik Revolution and then after a while, it became self-interest and that corruption in turn also inherited some of the corruption [inaudible 0:42:59].

We are dealing with a society of 45 million people which, for the last hundreds of hundreds of years, was part of a larger entity, in which certain patterns of conduct were institutionalized and became pervasive.

What I think is more specific to our time is that in this setting, not of Ukrainian corruption, but of post-soviet corruption, in Ukraine, part of the elite that can be viewed as particularly susceptible to the corruption and it is usually identified, you know, [inaudible 0:43:38] as attitude. Well, we have the right to steal in Kiev and not those guys in Moscow who had that right for centuries.

But that doesn't make it Ukrainian corruption. It merely makes it like a gang warfare you know, this is my sphere and this is your sphere. And the guys at Moscow say, "Well we don't want you to be in a separate sphere, we like you to be back." And the guys over there said "No, this is ours." And then nationalism begins to enter it.

And as nationalism begins to enter into it, you begin to play the international game. As you begin to play the international game, international standards begin to flow in. And in a lesser degree, in a much lesser degree, that's been the experience of central Europe also.

There are corruption, yes, was probably more of their own, but there was also the product of what? 40 to 50 years of soviet control. And then since it was shorter and briefer and there was more nationalism it was somewhat easier to get rid of, but not yet entirely.

Look at Czech Republic, which had a great democratic tradition ever since 1919. It is probably much more corrupt today than Poland. The Poles are much more nationalistic though. So maybe some of their anticorruption attitude is precisely to show their difference, less corrupt.

Well I am of course joking partially, but there may be something too that's kind of a sense of we're going to show. We are going to be the success story of this part of the region. Well, if Poland can be the success story in Central Europe, Ukraine can be the success story in the former Soviet Union.

Fred Bergsten: Yes.

Rich: Rich [inaudible 0:45:25], Former US Ambassador of Azerbaijan, and now George Mason University. Dr. Brzezinski you mentioned Turkey Ukrainian connections geographically, but as I thought about it, they share a couple of other things in common as well.

One being transient hubs for energy both from Russia and certainly in the case of Turkey from the east beyond region into Europe. Secondly, the both share the status of being two major European countries outside of the EU who have varying degrees of prospects, some of which we talked this morning about in Ukraine's case, of joining the EU.

But maybe you could talk a little bit about Turkey's role in this whole complex of issues that we are looking at because of the shifts that have obviously going on in terms of Turkey's own development but now developments elsewhere in the Greater Middle East. Sorry Fred, I'm high jacking the meeting, taking us off in the different direction, but since you raised it Dr. Brzezinski, I'd appreciate your views.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Well you have every reason to raise it, because you have done so much to make sure that Azerbaijan and so forth successful and you make a very important point. I think Turkey is an interesting example of how an intelligent foreign policy, which involves a great deal of accommodation with the Russians, and all sorts of deals which sometimes are troubling to us. For example, it complicates the [inaudible 0:46:47] aspects even though buying large, the Turks more [inaudible 0:46:54] than from some alternatives.

It illustrates the point that it is possible to have an intelligent policy towards Russia without forsaking cool headed national interest in terms of the longer run, because the Turks at the same time are helping, in effect

without being boisterous about it, to consolidate the independence of Azerbaijan and of Georgia.

And thereby making it possible for Europe to have alternative access to the Caspian and beyond and probably before too long too many energy will be flowing via Azerbaijan and Georgia and Turkey to Europe. And in the sense Ukraine has a similar interest and there is no doubt at some point from the Ukraine point of view, some sort of enhanced energy of relationship with those countries is in Ukraine's interest. Diversification is always a good idea for any country that wishes to have the greatest degree of choice for itself and therefore independence.

So I think here is another dimension of the potential Ukraine and Turkish relationship that is beneficial in fact to both. I also don't think it's entirely an accident, although that reflected a very specific policy choice, which would not be appropriate anymore, but which was nonetheless an important signal that Ukraine was deeply engaged in helping Georgia resist Russia.

And that in a way was a signal of the kind of an instinctive reaction which reflects the realization that Ukrainian interests have to be seen in a broad perspective and not purely in a bilateral framework, that is to say of their relationship with Russia. That is already I think being changed precisely by the importance attached to a parallel and increasingly important relationship with the EU and therefore with some of the individual countries of the EU.

Fred Bergsten: Zbig, since the Turkey analogy has come up, put yourself in Brussels for a moment and think of yourself and the national security advisor or the foreign administrator of the EU. Would you be more forthcoming in offering to Ukraine eventual membership as part of the attraction to resolve any dilemmas they have in the Western direction and hold out that very major price which seemingly Ukraine would like, but so far at least has not really been offered?

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Well it hasn't been offered, but it hasn't been denied either. And I think the position of the EU, and correct me if I am misstating it, is that the relationship has to be developed and it's a dynamic relationship. So presumably, it is something that is moving towards something and ultimately especially since the Ukrainians are emphasizing that, that is their vector, it means membership in the EU.

But to answer your question more specifically, I would say absolutely. I mean I would favor saying to the Ukrainians...and in fact, it's kind of

implicit, but maybe explicit would be preferable, anytime you want to be members, we want you to be a member, but, but, you have to meet all the conditions, all of the chapters.

I don't think they are ought to be any sort of special leeway for individual counties. The standards for you are lower than for that country and they are higher for that country than for that country. Now, that applies to Ukraine. It certainly applies to Turkey. Although here I think the problem is that the Europeans are dragging their feet on the chapters, not the Turks.

With the Ukrainians, some of the reservations that have been expressed, particularly by the French and the Germans, who have discovered all of a sudden a very intense passion for the traditions of Christianity and so forth as a grounds for excluding perhaps the Turks, would not be applicable to the Ukrainians, because they too are Christians.

Fred Bergsten: Yes.

Audience 5: Just a final question since we are moving geographically and with the rise of people's republic as a global force in international relations, the reason visit of [inaudible 0:51:41] and the coverage of his visit to Beijing signal I think reanimation of that relationship. How do you see that relationship playing out, what do you see China's interest in the geopolitical interests in Ukraine, visa vie it's broader relationship with Russia and how do you see it evolving in the coming decade or some.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: You know at this stage, I don't think China has a geopolitical interest in Ukraine. China has a geopolitical interest in Kazakhstan, but I think it has an economic interest in Ukraine. And of course, over time, that can become a political and geopolitical interest.

But at this stage, I think China is rather deliberately enhancing it's access to Central Asia, exploiting the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which the Russians initiated thinking that it would limit the independence of Central Asia and are belatedly discovering that has open the doors to Central Asia to China And I think they rue the day when the made that initiative. And the Chinese are playing that extremely well both economically and geopolitically.

With Ukraine, I think they are simply taking advantage of the fact that Ukraine needs markets, China wants market. I wouldn't be surprised if the Chinese are very interested in helping the Ukraine instead to develop their

agriculture. And not out of charity, but other self-interest. And I think that it might be a very meaningful meshing of respective economic interest.

And that in turn of course has all sorts of political consequences which will then grow. And in that respect for example I think Ukraine probably is more interesting to China than Poland. And even though, of course, the EU is infinitely more important as a whole, but Poland is only one of six more important countries in the EU.

So I think the Russian moved toward Ukraine is a sensible one, I think the Ukrainians are sensible in taking advantage of it. My guess is that at this stage, the Russians are not worried about it politically, whereas my sense is that was some justification, they are becoming worried about what is happening in Central Asia.

Fred Bergsten:

Zbig, maybe final question. We've talked about Europe's attitude towards Ukraine, China a little bit, Russia a lot, US a little. A topic that came up again in our discussions this morning, how much can external influence, pressure, encouragement, affect the outcome of the internal debates in Ukraine. Every country is somewhat susceptible to outside influences, but it differs a lot from country to country, from time to time.

Given this possible tension we talked about, the internal evolution and potentially ominous direction versus laudable external goals. What's your sense as to how much the outside situation and treaties may at the end of the day affect what happens within Ukraine itself.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Well that depends to some extent on the level of priority, the sort of dominant political class in Ukraine assigns to the enhancement and preservation of independent statehood. And it's hard to judge, but I think on balance, by virtue of being that elite, they have to assign some relatively high importance to it.

And in that sense, the position of the United States and of the EU is obviously quite important, even though maybe not as immediately impacting as, of course, of Russia, but of course it has limits. But there is something else which is just peculiar here which I think is worth mentioning.

In some respects, there is a parallel here between Ukraine and Israel. That is to say Israel has a certain inherent strategic orientation. But if the American Jewish community were to disassociate itself in some significant fashion with a prevailing Israeli government right now, for

example, a very conservative one, a right wing one. They would have a significant impact on Israel's own policy.

I suspect that the Ukrainian Diaspora in Canada and in the United States is not insignificant in that respect. It's not maybe as decisive as the Jewish community would be vis a vis Israel, but it's not insignificant, because for one thing, the whole notion of Ukrainian independent statehood was nurtured for decades outside of Ukraine in the Diaspora. And that is where the spirit was preserved and that would in turn nurtured particularly the Ukrainians in Western Ukraine than increasing in Central Ukraine and so forth. And that is an additional factor which plays a role here.

So I think since that Diaspora is located in the Western Hemisphere, in the United States, in the Atlantic community, it enhances to some degree the American role. I don't want to overplay this. It's not quite on the same level as I say the importance of the Jewish community to the internal outlook of Israel, but it is of some importance, more so than in case of many other countries.

And I think all of that in my judgment progressively reinforces the durability of what has existed for 20 years, 20 years is a long time in the psychology of a lot of people, because 20 years shapes basically the outlook of anyone in Ukraine who was at least 10 to 15 years old when the country became independent. So that's an increasing significant number.

And then of course, all the other factors we talked about come into play, but all of them cumulatively in my judgment, I can allow some kind of responsible controlled optimism regarding the prospects with clarity about our own attitude towards this positive and negative and no hesitation in being explicit about it in talking to those that we value in the Ukraine, given the fact that you think that Ukraine that is generally self-defined and independent, can help Europe be a much healthier place in that larger dimension to which I made reference in my earlier comments.

Fred Bergsten:

Zbigniew, thank you enormously for such a superb conclusion to our conference. In wrapping it up, I want to again very deeply thank all of the participants in the panels this morning. Some of you came from a long way for it, we deeply appreciate that.

I particularly want to thank our co-hosts and organizers. Steve Pfeiffer from Brookings, Damon Wilson from the Atlantic Council, my colleague Andrew Oslin, who put it together for us at the Peterson Institute. We hope this achieved the objective of the exercise adding to awareness of what's going on in Ukraine, trying to demonstrate US interest in the issue and trying to think of some constructive way so go about it.

So thanks to all, I'm sure we'll be continuing to address this in the future, but I greatly appreciate your being with us today, meeting adjourned, good luck to all. Thank you.

