

**UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT**

**OIL, OLIGARCHS, AND  
OPPORTUNITY: ENERGY FROM  
CENTRAL ASIA TO EUROPE**

*Thursday, June 12, 2008*

**U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

## **WITNESSES**

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U.S. SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:33 p.m. in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman of the committee, presiding.

PRESENT: Senators Biden [presiding], Nelson, Cardin, Lugar, and Hagel.

## **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE**

THE CHAIRMAN: The hearing will come to order, please.

I welcome all our witnesses. After a brief conversation with my colleague Senator Lugar — we have a very distinguished group of — who are going to testify today, none more distinguished than The Honorable Zbigniew Brzezinski, and because of a 3 o'clock vote, and because of a time constraint — necessary constraint that is — our first witness has, we're going to do something a little unusual, and that is that Senator Lugar and I are going to forego our opening statements and invite Mr. Brzezinski to make his statement. We'll get a chance to answer — ask him some questions, and then we will either, by that time, be voting or, if we're not, we will then give our opening statements.

But, we're honored to have you here, Zbig. We're honored that you would come before the committee. And you're — as you can tell by the way we're proceeding, we always look forward to your testimony. And so, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, COUNSELOR AND TRUSTEE,  
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WASHINGTON, D.C.**

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Senator Lugar.

I'm not an expert on the energy problem, as such, but I am willing to discuss that issue in the larger context, both of the longer-range and the shorter-range prospects for the relationship with Russia. And let me, accordingly, do so.

I very much partake of the view that, in the long range, Russia and Euro-Atlantic community will come to share deeper and larger and wider interests. There is a fundamental comity of historical purpose, of culture between Russia and the rest of Europe, and I envisage, at some point in the more distant future, the emergence of something that has been vaguely describe as a larger community, from Vancouver to Vladivostok. In that broad context, closer energy cooperation between the West, the EU, and Russia — namely, Russia provides the energy, the West provides the foreign direct investment — is a shared interest, and it is a balanced interest, and it is an interest that potentially produces positive geopolitical consequences.

The problem is not in the long run, the problem is in the short run, because in the short run that shared long-term interest can become quite complicated, and, indeed, aspects of it will begin to collide against one another. More specifically, I have in mind several policies currently pursued by Russia that, in my view, create complications that adversely affect that otherwise desirable long-range vision.

First of all, we have the problem of Russia's ongoing efforts to limit the West's role in upstream aspects of energy cooperation, even while Russia energetically promotes its right to seek more active downstream role. That asymmetry is a problem.

Secondly, Russia seeks, very actively, to isolate the central Asian region from direct access to the world economy, and particularly to its energy supplies.

Thirdly, we have had repetitive cases of Russian pressure on Ukraine, a pressure derived from political concerns and otherwise unrelated to the energy relationship, as such.

We have, fourthly, seen instances of possible threats to Georgia from Russia, motivated not so much, in reality, by any serious territorial problems, though there are territorial problems between Russia and Georgia, but derived more from the desire to gain a controlling hand over the Baku-Ceyhan line. If the Georgian government were to be destabilized, Western access to Baku, to the Caspian and beyond would be limited.

And last, but not least, we have seen a number of instances of energy supplies being cut to both the countries, for political reasons. These instances have been repetitive, they have occurred in several instances since 2002, and they continue to this day, insofar as actual cutoff of supplies for political reasons is concerned.

Moreover, beyond the specific problems, there is the potential, but quite serious, short-term asymmetry or vulnerability in the existing relationship between the EU and Russia, insofar as energy supplies are concerned. To be sure, the EU needs Russian energy. To be sure, Russia needs the EU's direct investments. But, the problem is that, in any hypothetical cutoff, the consequences for the West would be immediate, the

negative consequences for Russia would be much delayed, the stoppage in the flow of energy would have an immediate political and social impact, and a halt in Western direct investment, even any restrictions imposed on Russian investments in the West, would only make themselves felt much later. And thus, the political consequences would be asymmetrically unfavorable to one party — namely, to the EU — and more advantageous to the party imposing them.

Thus, we need a policy in the West that, in fact, enhances the prospects that short-term cooperation will be more consistent with the otherwise desired long-term interdependence between the West and Russia. And that should be the object of Western policy.

Let me, therefore, in a nutshell, summarize a few points pertaining to what needs to be done.

First of all, the West should more consistently, and at a higher level, seek more direct access to Central Asia. The fact is that Central Asian leaders would welcome that, but they're in a squeeze, they're basically isolated and vulnerable. It is up to the West to push hard to establish more direct links with Central Asia and to promote more direct opportunities for access. This means pushing the Baku line, the so-called "southern access to the East" for the Baltic countries — Turkey, the Black Sea, through Caspian; it means, eventually, even a much more energetic effort to explore the possibilities of a pipeline through Afghanistan from Central Asia to the south. That would maximize access to the Central Asian markets, energy markets, for the world community.

Secondly, we need to back the Baltic states, as well as Sweden, as well as Poland, regarding their reservations concerning the north-stream pipeline being planned from Russia to Germany. The ecological concerns that have been articulated in this context are pertinent, they have political implications. I think there is a reason to be responsive to the concern of the states affected — Sweden, Poland, the Baltic states — and the United States should do so.

In addition, we should encourage Germany to diversify the benefits of any North Stream flow, once it becomes available, to make certain that it is not limited to Germany alone, but that countries east of Germany, which are part of the EU, would benefit from these additional supplies, as well.

I think, in this regard, the negative role played by a former German chancellor who is now an employee of Gazprom is noteworthy, and it does introduce a complication which cannot be entirely ignored.

Thirdly, we should encourage and support the flow of energy from Odessa and east of Odessa, from the Caspian Sea region and Central Asia up to Brody, in Poland, and thence, either north to the refineries in Poland or west to Western Europe. Moreover, the West should more actively press Ukraine to enhance the opportunities for Western investment in the Ukraine energy sector, which has become very much dominated by corrupt practices, and has become rather exclusive.

Fourth, we should encourage continued support of the West for Ukraine and Georgia, given their vulnerability and the risks that would arise to the West if these countries were in any way subordinated or limited in their freedom of action. And I've

already mentioned the significance of Georgia to the continued independence of the Baku-Ceyhan line and Western direct access to Azerbaijan.

Fifth, we should seek greater symmetry between opportunities for Russia's downstream investments in return for Western opportunities upstream in Russia. That is an issue regarding which the Europeans would be responsive, and symmetry in this regard is desirable.

Last but not least, in the longer run we should also not ignore the significance of Iran's potential energy contribution to Western energy independence. We have to be aware of the fact that energy diversification, which we seek as a goal, would become easier if both oil and gas from Iran became available to Western — Western purchasers. That, of course, is related to the ongoing crisis with Iran, but it is a calculation that should also be taken into account in any grand strategy that we choose to define.

In brief, Mr. Chairman, you have before you an issue of enormous complexity regarding which a much more purposeful Western response is needed and much more visible American leadership is needed. I have great respect for the U.S. officials that have been toiling in this area, and have been doing their best to improve the prospects of the West, but I am concerned by the fact that, by and large, this issue has not had the kind of leadership visibility in the United States that is needed for very good geopolitical and historical reasons, and particularly reasons related to the much more promising vision of the longer-range relationship with Russia, which I mentioned briefly at the outset of my remarks.

Thank you.



**[The prepared statement of Dr. Brzezinski follows:]**

**[COMMITTEE INSERT]**

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Let me start off with a question that, at least I think on the surface, seems — something you said that seems inconsistent. You talk — and I fully agree — that the long-term prospects for being able to work with Russia are promising, but short-term cooperation is the issue, and we need a strategy to enhance that cooperation, short-term. And then, the things which you've listed, none of which at least I personally disagree with, from more direct access to Central Asian leaders to pushing the Baku line, et cetera — on the surface, they seem to fly in the face of what the Soviet — what the "Soviets" — Freudian slip — what the Russians would view as cooperation. My impression is, based on Putin's actions — is that — and the action taken, which I think is very, very aggressive, in Georgia, by the Russians now, but also in Azerbaijan — I mean, is to — directly related to, as you pointed out, the one thing we don't want to see happen, a disruption of the possibility of the oil flowing, you know, through Georgia, through Turkey, and into Western markets. So, can you square that circle for me? How do you think — can you tell us, from your perspective, what you think the present Russian government — how they view this notion of greater access to oil that is in Central Asia beyond their direct control?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: I think it's quite evident, from the record, that the Russian approach to this issue is essentially derived from a monopolistic ambition; namely, to maximize the degree of Russia's control over energy resources of the entire former

Soviet Union. And, in that sense, the newly independent states that are major producers of energy are viewed by the Russian leadership as somehow subordinate to the Russian desire that their access to the world economy be channeled exclusively through Russian territory, through Russian facilities. In any sort of business relationship, obviously there is a temptation to maximize one's control to widen the scope of one's monopolistic authority. It's true to any contractual business relationship, almost. But, the party involved in that relationship — namely, the West — has every reason to oppose the effective implementation of such a state of affairs, because its longer-range consequences are potentially dangerous. So, we —

THE CHAIRMAN: Was the —

DR. BRZEZINSKI: — shouldn't be shy in speaking up, in raising these issues, but we should also be more active, at a very high and visible level, in negotiating, particularly with those non-Russian suppliers who, in the long run, want to be accessible to the world, but, in the short run, are squeezed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yup.

DR. BRZEZINSKI: And the top leaders in these countries, by and large, are also top energy executives, and, in fact, probably benefit from it materially, as well. They have to be approached at a very high level with a degree of respect for their sensitivities and vulnerabilities.

THE CHAIRMAN: Chairman Lugar has been preaching from this hymnal for a long time about the potential that exists, in terms of what benefit can flow from the — this access being arrived at. And — but, one of the things that I find a little bit — in the

last 2 months, I have recently attended several conferences with our EU and NATO partners, and what I'm a little surprised at — and I wonder if you could, (a) tell me whether you agree, whether you see the same thing, and (b) if you do, an explanation as to why — is the failure of there being a willingness of a direct, coordinated EU-U.S. response to the very heavyhanded way in which the Russians have used their oil dollars and oil, and access to oil, to apparently affect policy, from the expansion of NATO to maintaining this and increasing the prospect of a monopoly.

I find it — I find it surprising that — from my perspective, that Russia has been as effective in dividing Europe, preventing it — I don't know whether it's direct or indirect — from coming up with coherent, aggressive strategy to — not just with us, but with them, at the highest levels — deal with these central powers, to generate the very access that we're all talking about. Am I making any sense by the question?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Yes, you are. And I think there are several causes for this condition, which you describe very accurately. First of all, the fact is that over the last several years, for reasons that we know all too well, there has been a rift in the Atlantic relationship, and, as a consequence, it has become more difficult, in general, to shape a common Western policy. Hopefully, that will begin to end, one way or another, after the elections, but that reality, I think, has impeded a common transatlantic position on this complex issue.

Beyond that, within Europe itself, the absence of this common Atlantic posture has further enhanced different European emphases on the part of different European players. So, we have, in Germany, a former chancellor, in effect, becoming an employee

of a major Russian conglomerate, which itself is an extension of a Russian state. That's a rather peculiar circumstance. We have an Italian prime minister, currently and recently returned to office, who practically made a sport out of genuflecting in front of Putin. We have a government in Greece that, for a variety of historical reasons — the Cypriot problem, the conflict with Turkey — has been much more sympathetic to some of the Russian initiatives in the energy sector. We have a government in Hungary which has been strangely receptive to Russian behests, and maybe even financial inducements, which has, thus, adopted a stance on the Nabucco pipeline, which has been damaging to it. Very recently, we have had some financial interests in Austria pointing in the same direction.

Now, all of these divergent orientations or strands of conduct were made more possible by the rift in the Atlantic relationship. If that relationship had been closer, it would have been possible to maintain a common perspective on global issues. Some of these tendencies would not have manifested themselves.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. My time is up.

Senator Lugar?

SENATOR LUGAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Brzezinski, you were present at the Riga Summit of NATO at a time that I gave a talk about the need for NATO to consider, really, these cutoffs of energy, or aggression of that sort, as an Article V situation, not in the sense of sending troops, but having supplies, having a plan. Now, I don't know what the reaction was as people visited with you; as they came up to me, they pointed out, "Well, you make a lot of

sense." But, this is something we don't talk about publicly. This is a private business for each one of us, in an existential way, to work out. And subsequently, EU and NATO conferences have been held, but they've had the results that you've described well, country by country.

I took a trip in January to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, to name two of the countries that are in the orbit you described. In both cases, the leadership understands the desirability of having a portfolio of something beyond direct lines to Russia, and that being the distribution. But, in the case of the Kazakhs, they have, also, issues with other oil companies, busy working out the Kashagan problem at the time, which still has been daunting. And in the case of Turkmenistan, our relationship is a very new one, with the new government. At that time, we had no ambassador there, and we really don't have an ambassador there presently.

I mention this because President Putin himself was physically on the phone with the presidents of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. He has been a negotiator, visiting with these places, to underline your strategic point. But also our dilemma — at best, our diplomacy with regard to all of this has been fledgling, and we are thinking about it in conferences like the one we're having with you today, but the activity has been much less than desirable — or, in Ukraine, for example, as our trip got to that point. The point that you've made about the lack of development in Ukraine, of energy resources that are in that country, is manifest, even though the vulnerability is very clear to President Yushchenko. I came away from that trip with the feeling that the United States cared more about the energy problems of many European states than the leadership does.

Now, that's an unfair judgment, obviously. They understand their problems, but, at the same time, are, really, unwilling to take steps toward unification, maybe the rifts with us — that is, the United States — are such, they don't want to talk to us a whole lot about it.

We saw the Czech foreign minister yesterday, here at a coffee the Foreign Relations Committee had — I asked about the Nabucco pipeline. Well, he said, hopefully there'll be something coming through the pipeline. It's been having so many reverses, it's really not clear. But, for the moment, the Czech situation is just as grim as it was a year or two ago.

I raise all of this because I'm wondering — maybe, as you say, the election brings a new President, a new administration, a new relationship, somehow either the EU or NATO, one or the other, begins to take hold of the problem. But, at this particular point, this is a pretty bleak terrain.

Now, one good point is, the Azeris have been reaching out to the new Turkmen government — I think, with some good results. And, likewise, they are trying very hard to get the Kazakhs more interested in their pipeline. Georgia still is alive and able at least to support that part of it. And the Turks could have additional pipelines if our relationship there might improve and we got into more dialogue.

But, what optimism do you have, as you analyzed the problem so well today, that those that we are hoping to help, as the potential victims of this kind of aggression, will take some steps to help themselves and to work with us or to work with others?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, first of all, let me note that I was in Riga when you gave your —

SENATOR LUGAR: Yes.

DR. BRZEZINSKI: — speech, and I thought it was a terrific speech at the time. And I think it is a well known fact that people like yourself, like the Chairman and others, have taken more of an interest in this issue than our executive branch at a very high level. And there has been a woeful lack of a real strategic involvement of our top leaders in this issue, and of their public involvement on this issue.

In addition to it, there have been conflicting signals from the United States. We have occasionally signaled to the effect that a strategic partnership with Russia was already a reality; whereas, at best, it's only in the process of emerging, and that we have not been particularly responsive to some of the concerns of some of the European states that wish to take the lead on this issue, but don't have very visible American backing even in their own internal intra-European discussions.

Worse than that, occasionally there are even some signals from here, from one of your colleagues, a Senator from New York, who recently advocated to deal with Russia on Iran, which would, in effect, leave the former Soviet space to the tender mercies of the Kremlin. That also sends a signal to the Europeans that's perplexing.

So, I think, ultimately, the issue of leadership in the West still depends on what transpires in the United States; how visibly, at what level, and how energetically is the United States engaged in shaping some sort of response. If we do that, then I think the Europeans are much more likely to begin to diminish their internal differences and begin to take a common stand.

There is a constituency within the EU, of roughly half the members of the EU, which is quite alarmed over this issue, but there are a few key countries that are in a position either to obstruct the emergence of a common policy or, in some more extreme cases, to make their own deals.

SENATOR LUGAR: From your own experience in the administration, what — who should take this initiative? The President the Secretary of State, Secretary of Energy, some special person delegated for this? How should we organize ourselves?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, I would think that the public leadership and signals of real interest in the issue ought to come from the President, because these issues involve also the vital interests of our key allies, from the Secretary of State, as well. And then I think it would be highly desirable if there was some individual who had the capacity to set in motion genuine initiatives on an intradepartmental basis, because the issue itself is wider than the jurisdictions of any particular department, including the Department of State.

SENATOR LUGAR: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Senator Nelson?

SENATOR NELSON OF FLORIDA: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

And they've just called the vote, so I'll be mindful of that, and do it quick so that Senator Hagel —

What dramatically illustrates to me the threat to Western interests, which is what I want to ask you, are two maps that's been supplied from the Department. You can't



see this from there, but basically this is the existing gas fields and pipelines delivering natural gas to Europe, and most of those, in red, are controlled by Russia. And then, this is what is expected in 2020, in 12 years, that Russia still has its ability, but then there's the alternative of the South Caucasus pipeline and its extension on into Eastern Europe and into Southern Europe. And if that were not to occur, if Russia kept it like this, then doesn't that mean that they're going to exert political control, not only the gas from which they take it in Central Asia, but the gas and oil that they are sending it to in Europe?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, we know from recent years that when the opportunity arises, and particularly when the other party is much weaker, as, for example, the Baltic states, the reluctance to succumb to the temptation to use power — energy as political influence is very weak. The temptation is overriding. It has happened. So, that is precisely why the West has to be concerned.

I do think that, with some imagination and some initiative, it is possible to enhance diversification to obtain more access to Central Asia, either through the Caspian, more directly to Turkmenistan. And the new president of Turkmenistan seems to be at least interested in that possibility. There is the longer-range Afghan possibility, pipelines to the south. And last, but not least, we shouldn't forget that Iran, which I don't think is going to be forever hostile towards us, is potentially a very major supplier of, not only oil, but especially of gas.

SENATOR NELSON OF FLORIDA: Frequently, what they will say — and, Senator Hagel, I'll stop with this question, because I want to hear your questions —

frequently, they will rebut that, saying, "Well, no, Russia really isn't going to have control, because Russia needs Europe and their energy market." And what's the answer to that, that Russia needs the European markets?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, it's true, actually. But, the problem is the asymmetry of consequences in the event of crisis. If there's a crisis and a cutoff, the recipients of the energy suffer immediately, the beneficiaries of reciprocal FDI suffer much later, which gives the aggressive party 6 months to a year during which to really insist on accommodation to its demands. And that's the problem.

SENATOR NELSON OF FLORIDA: Could Putin's title change from prime minister to tsar?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Putin's title has changed from president to national leader and prime minister — the term "national leader" is quite often used. The national leader of fascist Italy was the prime minister, the head of the state was an impotent king. The head of the state in the Soviet Union under Stalin was a person whose name practically nobody in this room will remember, but the effective leader was a person who didn't have any state position: Stalin.

SENATOR NELSON OF FLORIDA: Well said.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Senator Hagel?

SENATOR HAGEL: Senator Nelson, thank you.

Welcome, Doctor. I wanted to make just a brief overview comment on your testimony, and then ask you a specific question.

I subscribe to your analysis that you have presented; in particular, more direct and complete and wide-lens engagement in this part of the world. If there was ever an area that is clearly in our interest, and, in fact, our interests intersect from upstream to downstream, to use the term you used, the energy term, from Russia through Central Asia and deep into deep into Europe, that intersection of interests for America is very clear. Why we have not, evidently, understood that, or why we have not framed a reference point and implemented policy to address that, I don't know. But, as you note, we will have a new opportunity, come January, with a new President, new administration, new Congress. And I would, like you, Doctor, hope that this will be very high on the agenda, because it does interconnect all of our interests in a very vivid way. And I don't know of a more vivid way than energy for the world.

You just noted again, in your response to Senator Nelson, possibility of Iran playing some potential role here. That obviously would require a different frame of reference than our current policy toward Iran. And I happen to also agree with your thinking, that we've got to think beyond today and frame the world in what's possible, and then do that in a strategic context, not compartmentalize, like I think we have been in every country in the Middle East and on. But, we are where we are. We have another opportunity coming up.

Would you define the Iran comments a little more specifically as to what you see that could possibly happen, potentially, as you had noted in your testimony, as well as your response to Senator Nelson?

Thank you.

DR. BRZEZINSKI: I happen to believe that the present character of the Iranian regime is quite transitional, that the large majority of younger Iranians — they are now the most significant part of the Iranian society — is not sympathetic to their fundamentalist fanaticism, that they want to be, in varying degrees, increasing the part of what might be called the Western way of life. This is a very sophisticated country, which, in many respects, is a potentially stabilizing force in the Middle East, as it was in the past. It is a country which, at one time, had a very good relationship with Israel, a strategic relationship with Israel, based on the principle that, "The neighbor of my neighbor is my friend." And I think that is a natural geopolitical relationship between Iran and Israel. And hence, the longer-range prospects, if we're intelligent about it, and if we don't plunge into some sort of a conflict with Iran which then is likely to absorb us for many more years in the current problem in Iraq, I think the prospect of real geopolitical change in Iran's orientation is pretty good in the long run. But, we have to be intelligent and patient about it.

And if that happens, then all of the energy resources of Iran could be part of the answer to what we're discussing. Part of the answer. Not the entire answer, but part of the answer, because Iran has enormous gas reserves, probably the second largest in the world. It has underutilized oil supply. They have a very retarded energy sector. If they

became part of the international community, so to speak, of the world economy, we would be the beneficiaries, in terms of price; the Europeans will be the beneficiaries also, in terms of diversification.

So, there is this additional element in the background of the current crisis which obviously cannot determine our strategy and tactics towards the challenge, the ongoing crisis, but which should not be ignored as a later aspect, a beneficial aspect, of a constructive resolution of the problem.

SENATOR HAGEL: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Time is up.

And you've been gracious with your time. I — you can choose not to answer this question, quickly or not, you can pretend you've already left, if you want to, but there's an awful lot of talk in this town, underneath — and I think my colleagues would agree — at least they've heard it; we don't know whether it's true — that it may be that there's a very short-term view about Iran between now and the election, and that there may be some provocation, either emanating from us or from Israel. What would be the consequences, in terms of the issue we're talking about here, if, in fact, there were a direct confrontation, physical confrontation, a military confrontation, in some way, even if it's episodic, with Iran now?

DR. BRZEZINSKI: I think the consequences, in the short run, would be extraordinarily destabilizing, insofar as a calm and rational electoral process in this country is concerned. And I think it would create public anxiety and anger, both of

which will be very susceptible to demagoguery. And it would make a rational national choice more difficult.

In the longer run, by becoming involved in some sort of a collision precipitated by the hypothetical events that you have mentioned, the United States would become bogged down in an ongoing conflict, which would then span Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, probably Pakistan, and we would be bogged down for many, many years to come, unable to exercise a constructive global role, with some countries that we have a complicated relationship with clearly benefiting from that, in terms of their influence. Certainly, in terms of the issue we have been discussing, it would obviously be adverse to our interests, of the interests of the West. And I think we would enter a much more chaotic phase in world affairs.

So, I certainly hope that, in the foreseeable future, common sense and rationality will dominate our approach, and that no one seeks to exploit what is a very vulnerable situation for very short-term national benefits.

THE CHAIRMAN: Doctor, we should have you here more often. I appreciate you taking the time.

And we have a — two distinguished panelists to follow. We're going to recess to go vote. We'll be back, at which time — I, in a sense, apologize, on my part, for an opening statement I'm going to make, and Senator Lugar will make an opening statement — it sounds strange; we've already opened, but make a statement — and then invite our panelists to respond — to make comments and then we'll do questions.

Again, Dr. Brzezinski, it's always a pleasure to have you here. I always learn something when you are here.

And we are now recessed to vote. We'll be back in about 10 minutes.

DR. BRZEZINSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.