

Overview Remarks
Title VI Global Symposium:
Critical Challenges in an Unpredictable World

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Good afternoon. I am Lee Hamilton, President of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this Title VI Global Symposium: Critical Challenges in an unpredictable world.

I would like to thank the American Council on Education Coalition for International Education for sponsoring this event, as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York for its support of the symposium.

May I first say a word about the importance of Title VI.

Title VI helps us develop the people we need to succeed as a nation. This country—now more than ever—depends on individuals who understand other languages and cultures, and have the training and opportunity to do their job well—in the public and private sectors.

In the years ahead the responsibility for guiding our country and the world will not belong to you or me, but to the young people who traverse the halls of our outstanding institutions of higher learning. It *is* our responsibility, however, to prepare them for the challenges they will face.

I agree – and I suspect you would, too – with the late Senator from Rhode Island, Claiborne Pell, who said: “The strength of the United States is not the gold at Fort Knox or the weapons of mass destruction that we have, but the sum total of the education and the character of our people.”

Ever since the passage of National Defense Education Act of 1958, Title VI has played a crucial role in preparing generations of young Americans to lead the country’s engagement with the world. Shortly after I came to Congress in 1965, I remember walking off the floor of the house after passing the Higher Education Act—which included reauthorization of Title VI—thinking to myself: that’s one piece of legislation we got right. Title VI was, and remains, a source of pride to me as a former legislator. In a sense, I was present at the creation of Title VI as we know it today.

As Congress put it in 1998: “The security, stability and economic vitality of the United States in a complex global era depend upon American experts in and citizens knowledgeable about world regions, foreign languages, and international affairs, as well as upon a strong research base in these areas.”

National Resource Centers, Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships, International Research and Studies, Language Resource Centers, American Overseas Research Centers, and many other programs support students across the country as they study the languages, cultures, and history of the world. All are funded by Title VI, which provided over 93 million dollars in financial support of such activities in 2007.

In recent years, Title VI has become even more comprehensive, with increased efforts to reach students in grades K-12, to spark an interest in global affairs at an early age.

Title VI was essential in 1958. It is even more essential today. In 2009, the U.S. faces a daunting international agenda. The sheer number and complexity of challenges impress all of us.

Some of the central realities of the 21st century thus far include:

1. America’s pre-eminence as a global power. Yet while our ability to accomplish things around the globe is unparalleled, it is also limited. New global alignments are taking shape, globalization—despite the recent economic crisis—will continue, and turmoil in all corners of the world is possible.
2. The necessity of American leadership. The U.S. must confront the challenges it faces with all the tools of American power—military, political, economic, aid, trade, and intelligence—both hard and soft power. These tools must be skillfully integrated and employed.

These central realities and the challenges that attend them demand, above all, talented and well-educated people, with expertise in foreign languages and societies, to respond to them.

To enlighten us on these matters we are very fortunate to have Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski as the keynote speaker this afternoon. Dr. Brzezinski’s distinguished career—as a scholar, as a public servant, and as a public intellectual—exemplifies the great extent to which America benefits from higher education’s engagement with the world. He is one of the most respected, admired, and sought after analysts of international relations in the world, and with good reason.

When he speaks, you and I listen—because we have learned over the years that his remarks are incisive, insightful, and wise.

He has a sure grasp of the national interest, the values of a liberal society, and American power—its reach and its limits, what we can and cannot achieve. His voice on foreign policy is among the most important in the nation. He understands the interdependence of power and principle.

He does not hype threats, or underestimate costs, or paint unrealistic pictures of international politics. He is an idealist without illusions and a pragmatist with a vision.

Dr. Brzezinski is counselor and a trustee of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where he co-chairs the Advisory Board. He is also the Robert E. Osgood Professor of American Foreign Policy at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.

From 1977 to 1981, Dr. Brzezinski was national security adviser to President Carter. In 1981 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his role in the normalization of U.S.-China relations and for his contributions to the human rights and national security policies of the United States.

He is the author of dozens of books on international relations, including *The Permanent Purge*, *The Grand Chessboard*, *Power and Principle*, and *Second Chance*. He collaborated with David Ignatius and Brent Scowcroft on his most recent book, *America and the World: Conversations on the Future of American Foreign Policy*. He received his PhD in political science from Harvard.

He is married to Emile Benes, with whom he has three children, all distinguished in their chosen professions.

It is a great pleasure and privilege to introduce Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski.