

LAUDATION ON THE OCCASION OF CONFERRING THE DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA DEGREE OF THE ACADEMY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE TO PROFESSOR ZBIGNIEW BRZEZIŃSKI

Your Magnificence, Honorable Members of the Senate, Honorable Professor, Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to give laudation for the Distinguished Guest of our university on the occasion of awarding him with the Doctor Honoris Causa title by our Senate.

“Freedom is the sweetest delight a man can taste on the Earth; it’s given by God only to those nations which due to their stability, courage and endurance of adversities become worthy of it. We can see it true in so many free nations that after long struggle, long suffering, today peaceful and happy enjoy the fruits of their stability and courage.” For the Academy of National Defense, the university inspired by the tradition of Corps of Cadets, recalling this quote from General Tadeusz Kościuszko, a hero of Poland and the United States of America, is of special significance.

It is our desire to confer the honorary Doctor Honoris Causa title to another Pole and the United States citizen, Professor Zbigniew Brzeziński. The questions of freedom and independence of Poland, and of safe democratic world order take special, central place in his research work and political passions. Therefore we wish to pay tribute to the Professor’s work, his thought and action, and add our tribute to other ones that are so clearly marked in biography of the first Doctor Honoris Causa of the Polish Academy of National Defense.

Research and political achievements of Professor Brzeziński, that great advocate of Poland in the USA, are fully commended by the reviewers, Prof. Andrzej Ajnenkiel, a historian, Prof. Roman Kuźniar, a political scientist, and Major General Prof. Michał Krauze, a strategist.

It was emphasized in their reviews that for a dozen of years Prof. Brzeziński has been one of the most eminent personalities of international life. He is one of a few experts on international affairs whose works, analyses, opinions, ideas and proposals shape thinking on international reality and foreign policy practice in many countries all over the world.

Prof. Zbigniew Brzeziński’s research attitude has not been limited to analyzing and diagnosing current political phenomena or problems of international reality. It has also been an in-depth reflection on the logic of history, on sometimes hidden mechanisms of great politics, on the future of international order, and long-term imperatives of the world politics stakeholders. On these imperatives which they must meet to maintain stability and peace, and stimulate changes. And thanks to which more and more countries and people can enter the area of freedom and prosperity.

From our angle, the special area of Prof. Brzeziński’s activity is his involvement in Polish affairs and Polish transformation which he has believed in and worked for.

We keep in our memory the end of 20th century and occasional opinions on that era which our lives were passing in. Life of every person who lived in the last century was different, and it could not be otherwise. Everyone’s fate and experiences are always individual, although collective political experiences influence them. When the World War II broke out, the Professor was far away from his home country, and the world order created after the end of the war assigned him, so to say, another homeland. That was the fate of many Poles who offered their talents and efforts to their “other” homelands, but they, and Professor Brzeziński in particular, remained strongly attached emotionally and intellectually to their home country. They believed that postwar political order would change and Poland would find a proper place in new global democratic system.

20th century was complex, full of most conflicting, contrasting phenomena. On the one hand, it was the century of the utmost barbarity and crime, meanness and lies. But on the other hand, it was the time of enormous progress in many fields of technology, communications, medicine, of great achievements in sciences and arts inspiring all mankind. As it was aptly noted: “20th century extends human fates over the enormous precipice whose high edges are the top achievements and nobleness

but in the bottom of which the river of shame and blood flows.” Since it was the century of totalitarianisms - the phenomenon which became the subject of Professor Brzeziński’s profound pioneering work.

The last decade of 20th century was a special period for Poland. The joy of regaining independence and sovereignty, hope for secure development strengthened by NATO membership and consistent pursuit of joining EU were sometimes accompanied by fears and insecurity. And nothing to surprise. In part they were a bequest from the near past but they were, so to say overlapped by new fears which might have resulted from the awareness that we had to rise to the civilizational challenges as well as resist new and thus not fully recognized threats.

It is impossible not to mention the information society challenges - that “technotronic era” which Prof. Brzeziński focused his attention on many years ago. And the very first months of the new century and third millennium brought new threats, such as terrorism, which we are opposing already as a NATO member and an ally of the USA.

“There was never a good War, or a bad Peace,” said Benjamin Franklin. However peace is not only the gift of the Fate, and military operations are still one of the ways of ensuring it. As Professor Brzeziński noticed in one of his interviews, wars are too expensive for technologically advanced countries. Only poor countries can afford them.

We were born to be free. Also, we were born to the duty of contributing to the joint defense. As long as a trace of greed or hatred remains in hearts of people, there is the need to defend people and existing democratic institutions.

For the needs of reflection on our future, it is worth quoting Professor Brzeziński who said in his address at the conference at Castel Gandolfo in 1998 that „(...) it is still too early to assume with any level of certainty that the victory of democracy we witness in our times will turn out permanent. We must realize that democratic consensus which has triumphed over utopian certainty that was the face of the 20th century may now give place to agnostic relativism which will lead to huge conceptual chaos, social demoralization, political fragmentation, and intellectual disorientation. Global political anarchy - which today is the only alternative to global stabilizing force of America - could then find a corresponding complement in global intellectual anarchy.”

In his review, Professor Kuźniar concludes that: “It would be difficult to indicate a foreign personality other than Zbigniew Brzeziński that would more than him deserve the title conferred to him by Polish Academy of National Defense. Awarding Zbigniew Brzeziński with that title means also AND obligation in the future...”

Thus, there is no obstacle to conferring the highest dignity of doctor honoris causa to you, Honorable Professor, under the resolution of the Senate of Academy of National Defense, with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereto.

Honorable Professor, please accept this title. We hope it to be happy, successful, and enriched by fate. We have the pleasure to present you Honorable Professor with the Doctor Honoris Causa diploma.