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In the Service of Freedom and Global Security: The Enduring Legacies of Tadeusz and Zbigniew Brzezinski



Embassy
of the Republic of Poland
in Ottawa



POLISH INSTITUTE
OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
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Hybrid Conference Overview prepared by:
The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada

Hybrid Conference Overview

*In the Service of Freedom and Global Security:
The Enduring Legacies of
Tadeusz and Zbigniew Brzezinski*

October 29, 2024
10:00 - 13:00 ET (Ottawa time)

Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Canada
443 Daly Ave, Ottawa, Canada

Organized by:



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Note: This overview is not an exhaustive summary of the conference. For more information, please contact:
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INTRODUCTION

By Matthew Samulewski

On October 29, 2024, the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Canada co-organized a special hybrid conference entitled *In the Service of Freedom and Global Security: The Enduring Legacies of Tadeusz and Zbigniew Brzezinski* in Ottawa, Canada.

The conference, held at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Ottawa with 100 people in attendance, both in-person and online, provided a significant opportunity to gather international specialists to have important and timely discussions on the history and contemporary current of transatlantic relations, foreign policy, global security and strategy, and Russia's barbaric war against Ukraine, through the lens and legacies of two important figures:

Tadeusz Brzezinski, who was a Polish diplomat and served as the Polish government-in-exile's Consul General in Montreal, Canada, during the Second World War, and who was a founding member of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, who grew up in Montreal and attended McGill University, and was an international relations and foreign policy scholar who served as the national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter.

The conference featured three panels that discussed the experiences, actions, and thought of both men and what lessons can be learned from them in the context of Russia's 10-year aggression against Ukraine, including Russia's full-scale invasion starting in 2022, and the security implications for Canada, the United States, and for Europe.

Thank you to our distinguished panelists who provided their key insights during important and compelling discussions.

The panelists included (in alphabetical order):

Dr. Jon B. Alterman, Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geostrategy, Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Ian Brzezinski, head of the Brzezinski Group, Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council's Europe Center and Brent Scowcroft Center on Strategy and Security.

H.E. Witold Dzielski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Canada.

Prof. Charles Gati, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Institute of The Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies.

Prof. Alexander Lanoszka, Department of Political Science, Balsillie School of International Affairs, University of Waterloo.

Oleksandra Matviichuk, the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Ukrainian human rights lawyer, head of Center for Civil Liberties, Kyiv.

Dominic Roszak, President, Canadian Polish Congress.

Matthew Samulewski, President, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada.

Prof. Patrick Vaughan, Institute of American Studies and Polish Diaspora, Jagiellonian University.

The conference's discussions were especially timely, significant, and meaningful.

Not only was the conference held as we neared 1,000 days of Ukraine's brave resilience against Russia's full-scale aggression and genocidal war, the year 2024 also marks:

- 10 years since Russia's invasion of Crimea, and its subsequent illegal annexation of Crimea, and Eastern Ukraine.
- The 20th anniversary year of Poland's joining the European Union and of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine.
- The 25th anniversary year of Poland joining NATO.
- The 35th anniversary year of the fall of communism and the end of the Soviet empire in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada expresses its deep gratitude to H.E. Witold Dzielski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Canada, and Magdalena Miluska, Culture and Diplomatic Protocol Attaché, Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Canada, for the opportunity to co-organize this special event.



H.E. Witold Dzielski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Canada, provided opening remarks.



Matthew Samulewski, President of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada, provided opening remarks.

Our many thanks to the 100 guests who attended the hybrid conference, both in-person and online. We hope you found the conference both stimulating and motivating.

Thank you to Dr. Agnieszka Skalecka, Vice-President, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada, and Dr. Balkan Devlen, Director of the Transatlantic Program and Senior Fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, for moderating panels. Thank you to Amanda Chalupa, board member of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada, for her assistance with technical support during the hybrid conference.

In the Service of Freedom and Global Security: The Enduring Legacies of Tadeusz and Zbigniew Brzezinski was the third conference in the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada's conference series entitled *Diplomacy in the Service of Independence*.



From left to right: Matthew Samulewski, Magdalena Miluska, Dr. Balkan Devlen, Ambassador Witold Dzielski, Ian Brzezinski, and Amanda Chalupa.

PANEL 1

Tadeusz: From Poland's Second Republic to the End of the Cold War

Moderator:

- Dr. Agnieszka Skąlecka, Vice President, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada. (Online)

Panelists:

- Dominic Roszak, President, Canadian Polish Congress. (Online)
- Matthew Samulewski, President, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada.

Summary:

The opening panel discussion focused on the experiences of Tadeusz Brzezinski and his significance in the service of the cause of Polish independence - as a soldier, as a diplomat, and as a prominent figure in the Polish Canadian community - as a witness of two totalitarian regimes in the 1930s, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and as a leading figure within the history of the Polish community in Canada.



Image featuring in person conference participants, panelist Matthew Samulewski, online moderator Dr. Agnieszka Skąlecka, and online panelist Dominic Roszak.

Topics discussed:

- The significance of the Polish victory in the Polish-Bolshevik War, in which Tadeusz Brzezinski saw action at the decisive Battle of Warsaw in 1920, to Poland and to Europe.
- The activities of Tadeusz Brzezinski as a Polish diplomat posted in Leipzig from 1931-1935 and in Kharkiv in Soviet Ukraine from 1936-1937 and as a witness of two totalitarian regimes, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.
- The work of Tadeusz Brzezinski as Poland's Consul General in Montreal, especially during the Second World War, in support of Poland and Poland's ally, Canada.
- Tadeusz Brzezinski's activities in Canada in the service of Polish independence and resistance to the communist regime; his role in further developing organized Polish Canadian life in Canada; his participation in Canadian civic life, including participating in the great debates of Canada of the era.

Key takeaways include:

- Tadeusz Brzezinski's biography reflects the histories of both Poland and Canada.
- The work of Tadeusz Brzezinski reminds us that diplomacy aims not only at advancing national interests but also at securing human dignity, security, and peace for future generations.
- Tadeusz Brzezinski's thought and writings early on in the great debates of Canada of the era; for example, multiculturalism.
- His drive to organize Canada's Polish community, increasing its influence in Canadian society, and breaking through Canada's English and French establishment of the era.
- A call for more research is required on Tadeusz Brzezinski's time in Soviet Ukraine.

PANEL 2

Zbigniew: The Grand Strategist

Moderator:

- Matthew Samulewski, President, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada.

Panelists:

- Dr. Jon B. Alterman, Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geostrategy, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington. (Online)
- Prof. Charles Gati, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Institute of The Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. (Online)
- Prof. Patrick Vaughan, Institute of American Studies and Polish Diaspora, Jagiellonian University. (Online)

Summary:

The conference's second panel discussion focused on the thought, ideas, and strategies of Zbigniew Brzezinski, whose foreign affairs influence was already considerable before he entered the Carter administration and extended far beyond his tenure as National Security Advisor until his death in 2017, and what lessons we can learn from them today.

To begin this panel, two videos of interviews with Zbigniew Brzezinski were played to provide conference participants the opportunity to hear from the Grand Strategist himself. The two videos are from the "Lessons from a Life in Strategy" Video Series and produced by Dr. Jon B. Alterman and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Topics discussed:

- The first piece of foreign policy advice Zbigniew Brzezinski provided was in 1956. He continued giving advice for the rest of his life. The panelists discussed what he might advise us today in 2024.
- What made Zbigniew Brzezinski a Grand Strategist, or, at the very least, such a dominant figure?
- The panel was asked to describe Brzezinski's approach to the world and to geopolitics, and if there is a Brzezinski Doctrine (and if so, to define it).
- The panel was asked where they see Brzezinski's ideas and strategies still in operation today.
- At the end of the Cold War, the buzz was the End of History. Many have argued that there was a triumphalist mood in the West after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The panel discussed what Zbigniew Brzezinski's thinking was at this time.



Image featuring panelists Dr. Jon B. Alterman, Prof. Charles Gati, and Prof. Patrick Vaughan.

Key takeaways include:

- Zbigniew Brzezinski's unique contribution to American foreign policy is that he understood the Soviet Union, he spoke languages within the Soviet Bloc, knew where the Soviet weaknesses lay, and he understood that the Soviet Union (and later Russia) only respects strength.
- What made Brzezinski such an effective strategist was that he had large goals, a long-term vision, and his understanding that big ideas can change the world.
- If Brzezinski were alive today, he would probably see the world similar to that of the Cold War era. He would advise for the US to maintain an active foreign policy and its critical role in the world since 1945. He would focus on the Russian threat to international security.
- Brzezinski believed that the Cold War was not over at the collapse of the Soviet empire and already in the early 1990s felt that the idea that Russia would become a regular state was premature, that the West would need to deal with Russia in a realistic, but strategic way, and strongly advocated for the expansion of NATO in the 1990s against the current of some opinion at the time.
- Brzezinski in 1997: "Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine suborned and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire."



In person conference participants watching a video featuring Zbigniew Brzezinski.

PANEL 3

The Return of History and the Largest Military Conflict in Europe Since the Second World War

Moderator:

- Dr. Balkan Devlen, Director of the Transatlantic Program and Senior Fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

Panelists:

- Ian Brzezinski, head of the Brzezinski Group, Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council's Europe Center and Brent Scowcroft Center on Strategy and Security
- H.E. Witold Dzielski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Canada.
- Prof. Alexander Lanoszka, Department of Political Science, Balsillie School of International Affairs, University of Waterloo. (Online)
- Oleksandra Matviichuk, the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Ukrainian human rights lawyer, head of Center for Civil Liberties, Kyiv. (Online)



Image featuring panelists Ambassador Witold Dzielski and Ian Brzezinski.

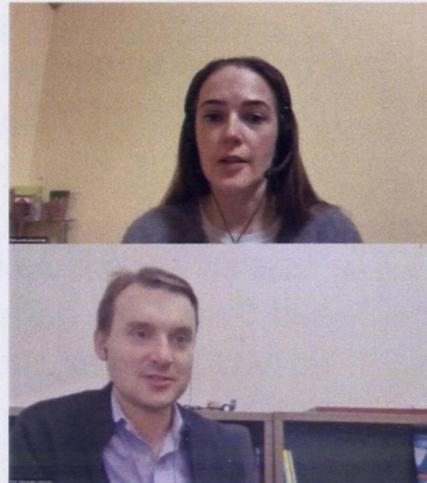


Image featuring online panelists Oleksandra Matviichuk and Prof. Alexander Lanoszka.

Summary:

The conference's final panel discussion focused on Russia's 10-year aggression against Ukraine, including Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion, and the security implications for Canada, the United States, and Europe.

Topics discussed:

- Russian war crimes in Ukraine and the human cost on Ukrainian civilians of Russia's full-scale invasion.
- What actions the West could start doing today to hold Russian war criminals accountable.
- Zbigniew Brzezinski had said that understanding the decisive forces of history in a given historical moment need to be the point of departure for meaningful contributions in the realm of foreign policy. The panel discussed what it thinks are those decisive forces today and where Russia's war on Ukraine, and the West's response to it, fit in.
- The panel discussed what more needs to be done to support Ukraine and help it win the war.
- The panel discussed what Canada and other NATO members can learn from NATO's eastern flank countries.
- Poland's leading role in supporting Ukraine.
- The centrality of political leadership in the West's and NATO's support for Ukraine.

Key takeaways include:

- Since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, more than 80,000 episodes of Russian war crimes have been documented.
- Russian war crimes in Ukraine, Chechnya, Georgia, Moldova and Syria have gone unpunished, and so Russia feels it can do whatever it wants.
- Unpunished evil only grows.

Key takeaways include (continued):

- Action needs to be taken today to prosecute and hold war criminals accountable to bring justice to the victims of Russia's war crimes and their families, and to prevent future wars and save lives.
- \$300 billion in Russian frozen assets in the West that could be transferred to Ukraine to aid in its self-defence and for reconstruction.
- Russia's war on Ukraine is one of three major global contingencies which are linked through the collusion of Russia with other states (Iran, North Korea, China).
- The number one issue for transatlantic security policy is preventing this collusion from escalating into global confrontation and war that could be more destructive than the Second World War. Ukraine's decisive victory, enabled by the West, and on its own terms over Russia is key in this regard.
- The history of Central and Eastern Europe is complicated. WWI started in Sarajevo, WWII started with the German invasion of Poland, and we are supporting Ukraine in order not to have a third world war in the future.
- Poland and other countries in the region have provided extensive support to Ukraine as they have a strong understanding, from their own histories, of Russia's brutal acts in Ukraine.
- The necessity of the preservation of the non-partisan grand strategic thinking as exemplified by Tadeusz and Zbigniew Brzezinski as crucial to guiding us in the future and to preserving our way of life.

Q&A Session

Moderator:

- Dr. Balkan Devlen, Director of the Transatlantic Program and Senior Fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

Summary:

Following the three panels, all panelists both in person and online were invited to participate in a Q&A Session. Conference participants both in person and online had the opportunity to ask questions to the panelists.

Topics discussed include:

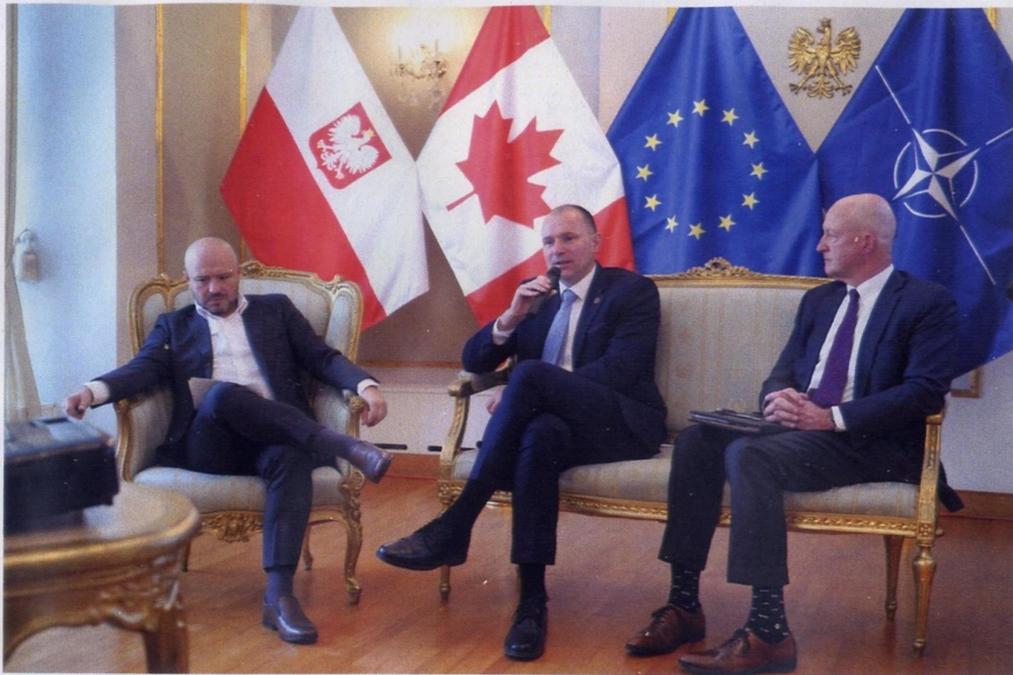
- Vulnerabilities that can be exploited across the coalescing of adversaries, including in terms of domain and geography.
- Political will vs political strategy.
- Mass, systemic deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia and Russian-occupied territory.
- War crimes and genocide.



Q&A Moderator Dr. Balkan Devlen.

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