

ON RUSSIA, GENDER ROLES, AND SANCTIONS: A CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR MARK BRZEZINSKI '87 AND NATALIA BRZEZINSKI

Mark Brzezinski graduated from Dartmouth College with a Bachelor of Arts in government, earned a J.D. from the University of Virginia Law School, and holds a D.Phil. in political science from Oxford University. He also earned a Fulbright Scholarship to study the Constitutional Tribunal of the Republic of Poland. From 1999-2001, Brzezinski served in the Clinton administration as a director of Russian/Eurasian affairs and director of Southeast European affairs of the National Security Council at the White House. Brzezinski was a foreign policy advisor to the presidential campaign of Barack Obama, and was later appointed Ambassador to Sweden by Obama. World Outlook sat down with Ambassador Brzezinski and Natalia Brzezinski on February 16th, 2015.

[AMB] – Ambassador Speaking

[MRS] – Mrs. Brzezinski Speaking

You were the director of Russian/Eurasian affairs and also director of Southeast European affairs of the National Security Council towards the end of the Clinton Administration. Do you think, with the hindsight today, that the enlargement of NATO pursued after the fall of the Soviet Union was a sound policy?

[AMB] Well, of course it wasn't just the expansion of NATO, but the expansion of EU at the same time that brought previously post-communist societies that were fledgling democracies into what is now seen as Europe in terms of the overlay of the boundaries of NATO and the overlay of the boundary of the EU that pretty much captures what is Europe today. And expanding the trans-Atlantic community in terms of security, in terms of the economy, has produced a huge number of benefits across the Atlantic for Americans and I think that's one of the reasons why President Obama is pursuing so vigorously the US-Europe free trade agreement, the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Needless to say, a free trade agreement across the Atlantic wouldn't just harmonize regulatory regimes, but it would also harmonize technologies, values, and provide more of an organic link across the Atlantic between what is Europe and America than even what we have today and that's a net benefit for our children because we want a bloc that is more prosperous than what we have today. So absolutely. The expansion of Europe was the right thing to do. We have countries in central Europe that are net security providers at a time when Russia has shown aggression towards Ukraine. It is good that those countries feel the reassurance of NATO for their security, and it's good not just for their security, but it's good for our own as well.

Are you worried about potential provocations of Russia in the Baltic States?

[AMB] No, I'm not, because I think, quite frankly, the actions taken by the Russians on quote behalf of Russian minorities in Ukraine was somewhat of a specious reason for going into Crimea. And as specious as that was, it would be specious for anything else to happen. Quite frankly, all of us, Russia included, would benefit from a zone of peace and prosperity between Europe and Russia and not what we have now, which is a sense of trauma and a sense of betrayal.

Do you think it's possible in the near future to mend that tie?

[AMB] When I think of the future of American Russian relations in the long term, I'm completely optimistic. I see young Russians wanting Russia to be linked with the international community, and not what we have today which is an isolated and alienated Russia, thanks to Russia's aggression in Ukraine and the sanctions that were imposed as a result. Quite the contrary, it would be good for Russia if its neighbors feared it less.

Do you think that's possible with Putin still there?

[AMB] I think it's possible because it's in everyone's self interest, including the Russian leadership's, to have a good normal prosperous collaborate relationship with the West. That certainly is what the president has been pursuing with the Russian government.

You noted in your article "Still Trying to 'Have it All' in Sweden," "It's not the resources or government policies that advance women; it's developing your own life path and having the confidence to trust yourself and believe in your decisions." How does culture play into that confidence and trust in yourself? What are some cultural, not governmental or legal, barriers that you see in both Europe and the United States that hold women back?

[MRS] It feeds very much into my own thought evolution after living in Sweden, because look at any ranking, Sweden is the most gender equal society in the world. You have paternity, maternity leave, free day care. You have a feminist foreign policy today being promulgated by the foreign minister. However, only 2% of women are CEOs, if you have all of that, these are the things that American women are fighting for right now, but then what's the missing link? Confidence.

More and more people are pointing to less tangible things like uncon-

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scious bias, are we raising our girls the right way, are we raising them to use their voice to stand up for themselves, to say, "Hey, this is what I've accomplished and I'm proud of that and I deserve this promotion or this salary." Are we teaching them how to communicate? And I think that's what I've really come to three years later as realizing as the most important thing. Sweden has 84% of women working full time, the highest per capita. But women in the work force doesn't mean women are leading it. And I think its much more about leadership and confidence and trusting your own path than I did three years back.

So how do we move from a society where women are working to a society where women are leading that work?

[MRS] I think it starts at a very young age. We have a five-year-old daughter and we work on it. She will come home sometimes and say, "I can't be a superhero, that's only for boys." That sounds like a silly example but it starts there and I think America actually does that really well. There's a great new study that just came out from Cornell that I think is very catalytic on this topic that states that although Europe has an extremely successful social infrastructure around women. Women in America tend to work less full time, but they do they tend to be more successful when it comes to rankings in the company. And living abroad has made me really proud to be an American because we do really teach our boys and girls to go for it. "Confidence, go for it, the American dream" – I remember hearing these things as a young child growing up in Chicago, they seemed silly but its incredibly important to think that you can reach that dream and that is a gift that I've had. There's no country in the world like this one when it comes to supporting that dream.

What are some of the things that we can do to continue to cultivate that? And how do we define success and measure it when we talk about empowering women?

[MRS] Two things, and I'm very proud that we've been able to be abroad to communicate the values of this president because no one has been better at that than President Obama. He has said that women's issues are not just about women anymore; they're about men, families, economic prosperity, innovation. The White House Council on Women and Girls has actually backed that up. There are countless facts from the World Bank and the White House that show that more women at the top of companies creates better returns for shareholders, more transparency. I think the facts are there and I'm so happy that the conversations have actually turned in that direction because unless you have facts or metrics nobody will believe you and women add value

and that's incredibly important.

We really are on the forefront. One interesting dynamic that we've introduced is an initiative called Edge, which is basically an audit on companies on gender diversity. Deloitte [a professional services firm] has engaged in it. Edge is an American innovation coming out of several universities and it takes a company, where you are, what does it take to get to the target you want, and most companies do have targets today which is very important, and why aren't you there. But again, it's very new.

There are some countries in which gender roles are just ingrained in their culture, in Africa and Asia. So what do you think the role of the global north is considering changing someone's culture is very sensitive but those gender roles might be part of the structural problems of those societies?

[MRS] This is why I'm so happy we're talking about metrics, numbers, and economies, because whether it's Japan, Nigeria, people are realizing that we need women to contribute to society. I always quote this, one of the most interesting formulations I've heard is that two years ago Forbes magazine declared that the new feminism is entrepreneurship. Women look at the world differently and in today's constantly changing, globalizing environment, different is good. We need to have different types of leadership, different types of companies. And you mentioned many different cultures, but the interesting is, do you know the countries where women are starting businesses at faster rates than men? Thailand, Guatemala, Brazil, Nigeria. Africa's actually one of the most innovative places in the world.

One of the most fantastic experiences I've had is when we hosted a few events on entrepreneurship that have been really global and I've met women from Somalia, Nigeria, and the Congo, that are the savviest entrepreneurs I've ever met anywhere, and so I think culture is incredibly important and nobody wants to change that, but I think people are waking up to the fact that if we don't make conditions better for women, our economies will suffer. I mean, Secretary Clinton had said that if we removed barriers for women, GDP would grow 5-6% faster. Money talks, and I think this is a way to cross all barriers.

[AMB] To follow up on that, I would say that from the standpoint of US Embassy Stockholm, one of the most powerful tools that America has in its foreign policy is our authentic values and one of the values that we invoke a

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lot is the fact that America embraces equality. We have our struggles, no question about it, but we're a country that embraces equality and that is something that is a very attractive value the world over. And that has so many advantages over both in terms of achieving that value unto itself and also collaterally getting others to join us in other foreign policy initiatives. So in terms of cultural change, I will only say that I am proud as an American that we have an ideology that includes the embrace of equality and that ideology is tremendously attractive around the world. So that should speak to itself about something fundamental about this, not just American or Swedish.

Last fall, there was an incident involving an underwater incursion into Swedish waters. In addition, Russian military exercises have increased markedly with bombers flying into the English Channel all the while European defense budgets have fallen. How do we balance this increased activity from Russia with lesser resources both from our NATO allies and the US?

[AMB] Well with regards to the submarine incursion we have no perspective to the nationality of that incursion, but clearly we are trying to partner with our friends the Swedes to advance joint consultation, joint exercises, joint planning to see what we can do to advance each other's capabilities and also convey deterrence to Russia because we don't like these incursions in Northern Europe. And so it is entirely appropriate for us and the Swedes, a NATO partner, not member, for us to be doing these efforts to advance joint capabilities and we will continue to do that.

Do you think European parliaments feel a security threat from Russia, or is it a temporary thing that'll pass?

[AMB] Well I think there is anxiety and uncertainty in Europe right now about what Russia is doing in Ukraine and what Russia will do next, and that's not just felt by parliaments. That's felt by Europeans and its unfortunate that we find ourselves in this situation because we have enough problems now and this could be a moment where the Americans and the Europeans come together about something around an opportunity not just a challenge. And that opportunity could be a closer trade bloc, but unfortunately we are faced with this existential challenge of Russia's annexation of European territory, first time since the end of WWII and that has made people worried.

So do you see in the future our NATO allies raising their defense budgets to the 2% NATO limit?

[AMB] Well I certainly hope that that's the case because in certain ways

there has to be a fair division of labor around here and of course we will do all we can to protect our friends and allies in Europe. It is also the case that it can't just be the Americans paying for the security, there have to be Europeans paying for security at a reasonable level as well and that 2% level is entirely reasonable.

And do you think there are possibly more economic sanctions that can go onto Russia if it continues its aggression? What else can we do?

[AMB] Well, I do see a growing layer of sanctions on Russia if the hostilities and the occupation of Crimea and the efforts towards destabilizing Ukraine continue.

Most often sanctions affect the citizens more than the government, and hopefully the government would see this and make changes. Do you see that in Russia?

[AMB] Well, I think the sanctions have been very carefully targeted towards those who are blacklisted and those companies that are closest to the Kremlin to avoid specifically that and I think that they're beginning to have their effect. But again, nobody desires this situation. I was director for Russia and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council and we made a lot of efforts to bring Russia into the WTO, to support Russia's international integration, so this is totally the opposite of what we've been working towards and that's unfortunate because I do think Russian people would benefit tremendously from being completely integrated in the international community in every way especially economically and its absolutely what the Russian people should have. So this is antipodal to everything we've done but its where we find ourselves thanks to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Is there anything we could've done in the past 10-15 years that could've perhaps mitigated the situation or brought Russia closer into the European sphere?

[AMB] Well I think that a real effort was made to inspire the best impulses of Putin by bringing Russia into the international orbit in a lot of ways and providing Russia assistance, technical assistance, and/or help with harmonization with various laws and agreements and there are lots of examples as well. That I think was entirely correct as a judgment, as an effort to engage the people of Russia so I don't question that at all. It's unfortunate that Putin and the Kremlin have undercut that track because it really was an effort done in very good faith.

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Do you think they were ever genuine in faith, in terms of moving towards the European sphere? Do you think they were ever really interested in joining Europe?

[AMB] Well, you're talking about now 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and we've had different leaders in that time. We've had Chernomyrdin as prime minister, we had Yeltsin as president, and there were real efforts made to really harmonize and engage from academia to business to NGOs and technology and of course nuclear deterrence and counterterrorism. But also to do joint R&D [research and development] in wide variety of areas so a huge amount of resources were spent on that to achieve good results. So it's unfortunate we find ourselves where we are but I actually don't feel that those resources were spent and lost in the sense that when you invest in a society as great as Russia you realize that it doesn't just boil down to a few people...I mean Russia has some of the most creative and scientifically gifted people that you can imagine. That's the future of Russia, so investing in them despite this particular moment is entirely the right thing to do and that's going to pay us back in the future.

You mentioned nuclear deterrence, and I wanted to ask you some questions about the NPT and how the Russia and US relations are playing into it and if you think some sort of civil nuclear partnership would help better relations.

[AMB] Well, I think both countries have a shared strategic interest in nuclear security and in making sure that technology doesn't get into the wrong hands and to make sure that material doesn't cross borders to other places that it shouldn't go. So working closely on that for the sake and the protection of our peoples makes eminent sense.

Where are we at with the NPT presently? The P5 is supposed to disarm. I heard that because Russia wasn't going ahead with the disarmament, we aren't either?

[AMB] You know that part is beyond my daily wick in the sense that as US Ambassador to Sweden I've been specifically instructed to stay out of things like that.

So speaking more on US Swedish relations, how are those developed in the past few years and what are some interesting things we've been cooperating with the Swedes with?

[AMB] Well, Swedish-American relations have never been as strong as they are now. We are collaborating more and delivering more for our respective peoples than ever before and that goes across the board. It goes from security and jointly trying to understand the threat of ISIL, advancing joint capabilities

pertaining to Ukraine, working together on civil-political continuity on Afghanistan where obviously we both have had troops, and where we both still have troops but we're militarily disengaging and so we're seeking civil and political continuity in Afghanistan and working with the Swedes who've invested a lot to understand what's happening in Afghanistan is entirely appropriate. We're working together on counterterrorism initiatives.

We're working very closely secondly on trade and business issues. Sweden is the 12th largest investor in the US and for a country of only 9 million people that's a remarkable statistic. That's like the size of the state of Virginia and they are the 12th largest investor globally in the US. And they also have the experience of having been in economic crisis themselves in the early 1990s and having pulled themselves out of it without international intervention in the 1990s and they did that primarily by building an economy based heavily around trade and exports. That's not lost on Europe. So the Swedes provide a very useful model when it comes to thinking about next steps in trade between America and Europe because in Sweden prosperity is widely shared. That's important because as we go through the negotiations of the US-EU free trade agreement there are those who will say America is an unified economy system, a unified financial system, but Europe is a disparate set of countries and the benefits of a trade agreement will benefit some more than others. The country that shows that exports and trade can produce a very widely shared prosperity is Sweden and so they're very much engaged on the trade and exports talk.

Third, the future of the Arctic, a strategic space we're all about to understand. We're about to begin the chairmanship of the Arctic council. The Swedes chaired the Arctic council between 2011 and 2013 and we really respect their chairmanship of the Arctic council. It produced really measurable results, namely the first time every an agreement on search and rescue, an agreement on oil spill preparedness and oil spill cleanup, addressing the applications of observer countries. Countries like China, India, Korea have sought to become observers of the Arctic council for some time. During this the Swedish clarified this application. In fact, they are now observers, each of the countries I mentioned among others. Those are important results between countries about a strategic space in which no one is preponderant. No one rules the Arctic, thankfully. It is a place that requires international cooperation and constructed international collaboration.

Fourth, overseas development assistance. The number one partner in the world for USAID, our development agency, today is Sweden because of

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joint commitments in terms of resources. Also, in terms of joint strategies; we've worked hard to advance that because development assistance is definitely a priority for President Obama and it's something that's very much a priority for the Swedes as well. And there's a lot of different iterations of that that it has taken but I'm very proud of the sheer numbers that we've produced that really take the load off the American people. The Swedes have committed to catalyze \$1 billion for Power Africa, President Obama's big initiative for energy in Africa. The Swedes have committed \$1.2 billion for development assistance for Afghanistan and they've committed \$75 million for Ebola response.

Those are numbers that take the load off American citizens and I'm proud of that. And then we've advanced the people. I've really tried to highlight symbolic dates like the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who chose not to be indifferent during the Holocaust and saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews scheduled for destruction in the Holocaust. Celebrating that legacy and that narrative of human dignity is something that we've really amplified and it's produced good results because when I think about my daughter, I don't want her to be indifferent when she's an adult. The importance of not being indifferent is a big legacy item for the story of Raoul Wallenberg. And I've tried to do things that really kind of symbolize being present in Swedish society. I bicycled across Sweden this summer from water's edge in the west coast to water's edge on the east coast. 600 miles by bicycle. There's no other way I could've embraced Sweden more than by walking across Sweden literally. And I went through the heartland of Sweden, through all these small towns and listened and learned from the people of Sweden on business and trade and it was a great opportunity.

What are some policies that Sweden does really well that the US should adopt?

[MRS] Just to echo what Mark has underscored, the reason why we wake up every morning and think what can we do and go to sleep every night feeling the passion in our hearts is because Sweden is such a perfect match both for our personal values and passion and also the vision of President Obama. Shared values are something we talk about a lot and I cannot think of two countries that are more connected in the way they want their future to be. What kind of world they want to give their young? Gender equality. Global awareness. Giving back to the world. A super strong sense of social responsibility, corporate responsibility, sustainability. It's all connected. Mark and I loved this article that was in *The Economist* so much we framed it. We do things like this; we're very symbolic.

The cover had a big Viking on it with huge horns and it said, “What can the world learn from the Nordic model?” And the part about Sweden was about a lot of the things that I’m working on a lot there like entrepreneurship, gender equality, and innovation and it really put out the question: What does a country look like that is energy neutral? They have communities that run from their own waste? Where most women work. Where the elderly are taken care of. Where the children are taken care of. That has health care. All things that our president is passionate about, all things we really care about, and basically to say that this is a country where we’ve learned a lot, we’ve learned a lot as people, we’ve learned a lot as parents, I’ve learned a lot as a woman, and I think our country can and is learning through these amazing partnerships that Mark has spearheaded like USAID. Simply put, because of this relationship Mark was able to help facilitate the legacy of President Barack Obama. A US President has never come to Sweden for a bilateral visit, ever. This was unbelievable. And the reasons why he came? Shared values, shared responsibilities, sustainability, innovation, gender equality, tolerance, the Wallenberg legacy. This makes the relationship more than diplomatic—it’s more about people and its extremely inspiring.

[AMB] You know there’s a Swedish word that means balance: *lagom*. And people often invoke it when talking about Sweden or about work life balance. But the way that it’s manifested in Sweden is balance in a wide variety of ways including human kind and nature. There’s a great balance between economic balance and growth, and preservation and conservation and that is matched by an important statistic. In the last 20 years, Sweden has grown its economy by 40%, while reducing in the last 20 years carbon output by 20%. That is what we, the Americans, seek to do, and the Obama Administration is seeking to do and is on track with doing, but the Swedes have already done that. And that is I think a very important example that you can be economically competitive and successful and prosperous while being sustainable. And that’s when you ask me what I want to import to America, its that total holistic approach to sustainability. When I say holistic, I mean it’s not just good to do so let’s have some corporate and social responsibility and do it, but in fact its darn good business it’s a great thing to innovate because the more you innovate in sustainability the better off you will be and there’s a direct link between economic reward and innovation in the sustainability sphere. That’s a great

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thing and that sustainability commitment and fat of life there is something I would want to contribute to our society.

What made that level of sustainability possible in Sweden? Was it government incentives? Or lots of tech innovation?

[AMB] Well, there are choices that the Swedes made and we face choices that are pertinent to our economy and our society. And so yes, they did do that. I mean there's a number of different things, but I would never want to import their choices to us but it is a fact that we have a real national security threat coming our way in terms of climate change and what is it that we can do about it? America is very much on the hook because we can be so influential around the world but also we're the number one carbon emitter so we're on the hook as a lower level of carbon output itself.

One of the really big issues in the United States right now is income inequality. Our Gini coefficient is .45. When we talk about societies that are both wealthy and also equal, the Nordic countries come up again. So what are some of the things that they do super well over there that America can learn from?

[MRS] I think that again it's very hard to compare. This is a country that's been relatively homogeneous for most of its history, it's never been occupied by a foreign power, Stockholm that is. They are now struggling now with the challenge of integration and diversity. But I will say that something that I find that aids this cause there is this collective purpose and a very high trust in government. If you look at OECD, there are the highest levels of trust in government, in my neighbor, etc. And I think that allows them to accomplish a lot. I'll give you an analogy that Mark and I always use there's a law called "every man's right to land". What does that mean? Someone could camp right in my backyard and that's allowed. But I mean that's crazy for us, I always elicit laughter from Americans. But it's not my yard. It's our yard, our land, our country. You can camp there but you better not leave a mess. As an analogy, don't ruin our environment and they really believe in that. And as the parent of a young child something we see is that they're so connected to the land. There's a saying in Sweden there's no bad weather only bad clothes. Which means I remember putting our daughter in Swedish day care, she's fluent in Swedish and I would say they're going outside today I mean it can be snowing and freezing outside and they have these snowsuits on and people are connecting with nature outside from a young age and they have a visceral connection with nature. I always say this to my husband, I'm so happy I married him for many

reasons but for one he's a big outdoors person, he grew up in Virginia in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

As a Chicagoan, you don't have that same connection. So that is something, I mean this collective purpose really impresses me and of course it translates into all different spheres of life but especially the environment I mean lets work together because this is our earth. If there's anything I could bring back and something I always try to convey to young people and young Americans is a call to action on working together to solve the problems. I mean it may take a bit of sacrifice like a smaller house, smaller car or no car, but we really need to focus on these challenges and we have to have a social purpose behind it and I think they do that really well.

[AMB] And you know, on the social inequality question I mean what is to me so impressive about Sweden is, again, it's a country of nine million which is not very big but they are absolutely committed to the challenge and opportunity of development assistance around the world and absolutely engaged especially in advancing innovation. It will be through innovation and ways to empower people around the world through job creation, gender equality and so forth that we will end social inequality and stop the rampant increase of social inequality so that is part and parcel of their development assistance strategy.

What does Sweden do on both the public and private side that allows it to have a prosperous yet equal society?

[AMB] Well I mean you take a look at some of the public private partnerships that we've been able to advance in Sweden. And a public-private partnership is generally the most innovative approach because what we've learned is that government to government solutions won't work on some of these development challenges so what we've done in Sweden is advance a public private partnership between USAID, our development agency, and Volvo trucks, which is a Swedish company, and the Swedish development agency which is called SIDA and that public private partnership is focused not on Sweden or on the Nordics or Europe, but in 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa towards advancing job creation through truck repair training, truck driving training, and the like because in the end empowering people through employment is some of the most lasting and enduring assistance one can provide so that's the

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kind of thing that we've been trying to advance and I'm proud that we, the US Embassy Stockholm, have managed to work with a foreign auto company to join a public private partnership to the tune of millions of dollars with our development agency USAID. That's a good result.

How can USAID and SIDA help development entrepreneurship in developing countries?

[AMB] I think that's exactly what the Volvo deal is about in Africa because it's also gender based. A lot of the training is for women who traditionally have not been truck drivers or truck repairers. So there's a particular opportunity there, demographically. And so that's a focused, targeted development assistance project that has brought in the private sector and its technology and intelligence.

Zooming out of our focus on bilateral relations with Sweden, what do you see as the role of the United States in the world in the next 10 years?

[MRS] Well, I can give specifically more light to our experience because I think it's quite relevant. Diplomacy has changed a lot. What was once a function about keeping things in and gathering information, all of a sudden with the President's election and his view of the world, I mean President Obama has campaigned and led on a new role of America in the world – one based on partnership, one based on dialogue, one based on openness. That is a big change, in addition to that the fact that Twitter was founded, blogging began, social media really opened up the world. I think those two trends have been concurrent with something that we've seen that at least with diplomats or the way in which we see our role in part it's going to be about conveying the values of what America is about and I think that's a lot of what I've tried to do. I think the challenge of the future will be the gender challenge, will be big and small organizations need to be innovative and entrepreneurial. How will we continue that?

Finally the environment and sustainability. The interesting thing is I think sustainability is holistic. It is everything from empowering women to children's rights to LGBT rights, sustainable development is about the empowerment of youth, of immigrants, of women, and I think our government has already started that. I mean there's a global entrepreneurship ambassador and all sort of incredibly innovative State Department initiatives that are relatively new and I think foreign policy and diplomacy will have a much broader mandate, a much more open one, and that will be much more challenging but also much more inspiring.

[AMB] I mean I will say that when I look 20, 40 years out, you know there are specific strategic questions that could provide opportunities for changes in direction that I'm sure that you'll pursue that would advance peace and security. But I will say more generally the US will pursue a global role to advance a shared security, shared prosperity, and shared equality because we live in an age where when people, when denied, any of those three things, will insist on it as they should. And we have a record and a self-interest in advancing that and I think that's what American leadership will and should provide.

What do you see as the big roadblocks to that vision? What do we have to overcome?

[AMB] Well part of that depends on all of us getting along meaning this. Some of these challenges will require unprecedented international cooperation and unprecedented self-sacrifice and we have to realize that a global approach on some of these challenges and aligning of the interests to address these challenges will require all of us to sacrifice in different ways and I think being prepared to do that to achieve a good result is the right thing to do and so I think speaking openly and honestly about what exactly will be required to achieve this result to achieve this alignment of interest because many of these challenges do not allow for a single nation response there has to be a global approach in order to solve them.

In some of your opinion blogs you've talked about how US diplomacy could combat corruption, where there any specific instances or countries you were looking at and how do you think the US could respond?

[AMB] Under President Obama there is an unprecedented crackdown on global bribery and corruption. And that is now widely known and I think part of this is incentivizing good behavior of everyone involved, both bribe makers and bribe takers and there's specific initiatives that the administration has pursued to incentivize the best behavior. I, anecdotally, have never witnessed the focus of the business community on global corruption as I see now, and I think partly that's inspired by the vast increase of investigation and prosecutions for corruption that have been undertaken in the last seven years.

Shifting gears a bit, any advice for undergraduates?

[AMB] Let me offer this – nothing is as professionally empowering as passion. Be true to what really interests you and pursue it because you will

find energy and creativity and intellectual innovation that you cannot produce for something that you're not passionate about so be genuine and true about pursuing your passion. I cannot believe how profoundly grateful I am to sit in front of you as a US ambassador in a country where my passions match our engagements so closely so I have pursued those pertaining to climate change and the Arctic with vigor, while of course absolutely the breadth of the engagement of the US – Swedish relationship with huge energy and vigor as well. But I am just grateful that I've been able to really zero in on some personal passions and in so doing advance the ball down the field and so if my advice to my former undergrad self and to you is be true about what you're really interested in. When you sit down at the end of the day what makes you think "Boy I'm really just really fascinated by this," and then go after that! I think that you will find remarkable stamina and unbelievably surprising opportunity in that.

[MRS] Leading off from just what you've said, in order to know what you love and be passionate about you have to try a lot of things. I think its very stressful - my brother is 17 - so he's stressed about, "What am I going to do, what am I going to major in, what kind of college should I go to." I'm 30, and I'm probably going to do something completely different in the next year or the next two years. My parents were immigrants and I'm an only child, and they certainly had a specific view of what I should do, what is successful, you must go to grad school.

I left my grad school after one semester to pursue and internship I never thought I would get in Senator John Kerry's press office. I didn't know anyone, it was amazing I got it. I left, I moved, it was the best decision of my life, the rest is history, we met, we got married, a few years later we're in Sweden. I mean people say this often but take the risk, it usually is always worth it. There have been a few times in my life, and I haven't been working that long, very few times have it not panned out. Challenge yourself. When I moved to Sweden, I'd never done a speech in my life, and I always tell young people in Sweden just say yes. "Natalia, will you speak to a bank? Yes. Will you speak to venture capitalists on microfinancing? Yes." But then I suffer for months. Ariana Huffington wrote in her first book "Fearlessness is like a muscle" and really once you put yourself out there you're used to it and you always go for it and it becomes really easy and exciting.

Finally, connecting with Mark, definitely passion and purpose. A job with meaning. After doing jobs without much meaning or were more super-

ficial. Sometimes I see my friends in Sweden who are female CEOs and they have several kids, husbands, and I think my god how do they do it they must be exhausted. And they always say they're so passionate about it and I always think oh they're just saying that. But now I feel it, I mean I go to bed at night thinking about what we can do more, I wake up excited for every day, needless to say I don't think its possible to top what we're doing right now which is helping to represent Barack Obama and America in another country in ridiculous and amazing and meaningful but I think once you feel that you can find that drive in other places and you bring it everywhere. So try a lot of things until it fits. These days millennial – the average young person—has 5 jobs before the age of 30 so you have time, don't get too stressed about it and enjoy the ride.

Any last words?

[AMB] I do think that diplomacy is all about people, about building bridges, about being present, which is absolutely what we've tried to do in Sweden and to engage as broad a breadth of Swedish life and society across the different struggles that America and Sweden share as well as the opportunities that we share, and we're profoundly grateful to be able to do that until the last minute of the last day.

[AMB] – AMBASSADOR SPEAKING

[MRS] – MRS. BRZEZINSKI SPEAKING