

BRZEZINSKI SCHOLARS FORUM IN KIEV, UKRAINE

On December 2-3, thirty-five Central and East European scholars joined Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski and several senior scholars from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) at the third annual conference of the Brzezinski Scholars Forum. This event presented an opportunity to discuss the most important political and security policy issues confronting a region of states that continue to make the difficult transformation from communism and centralized economies to free-market democracies. The Forum also afforded an opportunity for the scholars to develop an academic network that will facilitate collaboration in developing policy recommendations for governments and non-governmental institutions in the region.

CSIS organized this event, which drew participating scholars from Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Russia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, and Ukraine, in cooperation with Ukraine's Center for European and International Studies (CEIS). The conference was made possible with the generous support of Cardinal Resources, an American energy company operating in Ukraine.

Speeches by Ukrainian Prime Minister Yuri Yekhanurov and Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski highlighted the opening of the Forum on the evening of December 2. The Prime Minister's address concentrated on major domestic economic issues facing Ukraine as it moves toward crucial parliamentary elections in March 2006. Dr. Brzezinski's address emphasized the importance of Ukraine's successful transformation for the future of Europe, the prospects for democracy in Russia, and the establishment of a Europe 'whole and free' that would extend from Western Europe to Russia's Far East. With the Orange Revolution having clearly demonstrated Ukrainians' strong national identity, Dr. Brzezinski called on all democratic elements in Ukraine to cooperate in building a flourishing democracy, playing a central role in extending a peaceful and prosperous Europe.

The all-day conference of scholars on December 3 was also attended by Dr. Brzezinski and CSIS representatives. The morning session, co-chaired by Dr. Hryhoriy Nemyria of CEIS and Janusz Bugajski of CSIS, focused on transition and challenges for Central Europe. A luncheon address by Dr. Ivan Krastev, of the Bulgarian Center for Liberal Studies, dealt extensively with the complicated role played by Russia and the European Union in this process. The afternoon session, co-chaired by Dr. Robin Niblett and Dr. Celeste Wallander of CSIS, concentrated on the roles that the US and the European Union must play to support regional transformation and stability.

The final evening was highlighted by a foreign policy address by Ukraine's Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk, who emphasized his government's intentions to continue Ukraine's march to full European and transatlantic integration. CSIS will release shortly copies of some of the papers presented at the Forum as well as additional information on the participants.