

Debate with Madeleine Albright: The Czech Republic's Role in the World

(transcript of the spoken word)

Jan Urban: Hello everyone. Anyone who does not know who our guest is today should not be here. We will be speaking Czech. If there is a word we do not catch the first time, we can switch to English. And there is a little surprise at the end. Maybe a magician will come. Madeleine Albright.

Madeleine Albright: I am really glad to be here and thank you so much, Honza. But I have to say that sometimes, people do not know who I am. A little while ago, I was flying through Chicago from China and I was taking everything off for all the security people there and I had put all my little bottles in front of me and the woman in front of me said, "Where did you buy all these little bottles? Mine do not work very well." And then I went through the magnetometer and the guard looked at me and said, "My God, it is you. I am from Bosnia and everyone in Bosnia knows who you are and if it were not for you, there would not be a Bosnia. You have to come to Bosnia. And can I take a picture with you?" So he suddenly stopped the whole long line and we took a picture. And then I went back and the woman looked at me and said, "What just happened?" I said, "I used to be the Secretary of State." And she said, "Of Bosnia?" So...

Jan Urban: Well, I think there is not much danger of that here. But just to prevent any speculation, this is not the Secretary of State of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The topic for today's meeting is *The Czech Republic's Role in the World*. Madeleine Albright will give us a sort of general introduction.

Madeleine Albright: Thank you. I wrote a book called, *Memo to the President Elect* and I gave it to Barack Obama and I wrote: "With the audacity to hope that this book will be useful." And in it, I described all the problems that the next American President would have and he really does have them all.

First off, how to do something against terrorists without the number of terrorists increasing because of what he does; to do something for nuclear non-proliferation; to help there not be such differences between rich and poor in the world; to help there be something done about protecting the environment and energy and for there to be enough food for all. And also to give democracy back its good name. And I did not even put the financial crisis in there.

Those are really horrible problems and then two 'hot wars', as we call them: Iraq and Afghanistan. And it is necessary to talk with Iran and Korea and we have to take heed a little of what is going on in Africa because that is where most people are dying. And that is happening in South America too, actually, because Hugo Chávez is causing various problems there. So that is the biggest programme. And we have to ask what game other countries are playing. And I always say, "America is the strongest country in the world but it cannot do any of these things by itself."

Right now, I am working on a new *Strategic Concept* for NATO. As you know, NATO had its 60th anniversary and its members decided to put together a group of experts or, as I like to say, of elders, to work on it and I am the chair. We talk about what responsibilities all of these countries have. And I think that the Czech Republic, now as an ally in the Alliance and in the European Union, has a large share of

them and should be looking at all the problems that I talked about. I know it is not easy, especially when one lives in a small country in the middle of Europe. But to think about the problems that I described to President Obama, so that people understand how it is all so complicated and how these problems are all interconnected. And so, I think that the important thing is to think about what the Czechs and others can do to really work on these problems. And I think that we can talk about that some more.

Jan Urban: End of introduction. Your questions – as is the tradition, students have priority. Wait for the microphone and speak Czech if you are Czech. We will start in the corner there, then this gentleman here.

Audience: Hello, Valvoda, student of the Faculty of Arts. I have a question: How would you assess the Czech Republic's performance in foreign policy over the last year and a half? Jacques Rupnik recently mentioned that the Czech Republic has become the largest non-profit non-governmental organization in Europe. Do you agree with that opinion? Please comment. Thank you.

Madeleine Albright: It is terribly important that I am not a diplomat. I am a Czech-American and I have to say that I have always been proud that I was born here. And I truly follow everything and I am here because it has been 20 years since the Velvet Revolution and we all followed it. And people in America still think that everything that happened 20 years ago was something miraculous. And people look to it as a model. President Havel, when he first came to America, I helped with it a little, and he spoke to our Congress and even now he is a great hero in America. People think that he did fantastic things here. And I myself am terribly proud of the fact that I was there as Secretary of State those 10 years ago when the Czech Republic entered NATO. And I was also very glad when you became members of the European Union.

And I also thought it would be very important, once the Czech Republic presided over the European Union. People looked forward to it and talked about it. I have to honestly say that when I was in the Clinton administration, whenever something happened in the Czech Republic, people would say, "Your Czechs, your Czechs did this, your Czechs did that." I am always responsible for everything that happens here. And the truth is, I was sad when I saw what happened. That actually, at the moment of the presidency, when it really could have been something important, the government collapsed. I did not really understand it and in fact, there was a chance here to prove something truly important.

And I also have to say, and I am starting like this because this is coming. I think that waiting that long with the *Lisbon Treaty*, people looked at it – what is actually going on and why? The truth is that plenty of people in the world believe that there is global warming and it is a little bit strange when the President of this country does not believe it. So these are issues where people really want to know what is going on here. And that is why I am glad that I can be here for this 20th anniversary and go back and really explain a little what is going on here. And I hope that I find out from you what is going on. Because I know we are not supposed to say that it is all up to you, up to the young people, but it is all up to you. So I would be quite interested in what you think about it all but at the moment, I think that Czech politics has not been so wonderful in the last little while.

Audience: In the student declaration, it is written that the Czech Republic is an inscrutable partner and also that Czechs tend to deal more with their own problems rather than taking an interest in what is going on in the world. Is that a fair diagnosis and is it a problem?

Madeleine Albright: You know what, that happens everywhere, in America too, for example. With the problems in our economy right now, with high unemployment, people pay attention to themselves and not what is going on in the world. But the reason that I listed all these problems that exist in international

politics is to show that we all have to work together and that to pay attention only to oneself, not only is it selfish, but it also does not help. And that all these various problems are connected and that it is important to think about what can be done out there and that a person cannot only pay attention to themselves as an individual and that a country cannot only pay attention to itself.

Jan Urban: The gentleman in the middle here.

Audience: Good afternoon, Madam Secretary. My name is Tomáš Bouška, I would like to greet you and welcome you back to Prague. I want to ask you about a kind of tricky thing. We are commemorating the 20th anniversary here and I would like to ask whether you would not happen to have a kind of manual for us for how to deal properly with that recent history because we today have a great educational problem and not just in schools, maybe in families as well, how to talk about that history. It is not yet far enough back for us to speak completely openly about what it was like. And teachers in schools have a lot of problems about how to even begin explaining it to the young generation, to the very youngest ones. So I want to ask if you, from a neutral perspective, have any advice for us. Thank you.

Madeleine Albright: Thank you for the question and you can laugh at me but I was born here. My father was a Czechoslovak diplomat and during World War II, we were in London and then we came back here for a few months and then he was the Czechoslovak Ambassador to Yugoslavia and then, because the Communists came, we left. On 11 November we arrived in America and I learned history from my father and I really had these ideas that this was an amazing country between the wars and that President Masaryk was wonderful and that Czechs and Slovaks really like each other and so forth. Various things about what a wonderful country this was.

Then, when I was a student, I wrote about what Communist systems looked like and what changes in a Communist system. And I wrote my thesis about what happened here in '68, what influence Czechoslovak journalists had on the changes and I looked a lot at what happened here. I thought that the way Czechs were thinking about how to reshape Communism into "socialism with a human face", that that could be something important and significant. And just a few months ago, I talked with Gorbachev about the fact that really, the fact that Soviet tanks were sent in here – that killed Communism. Because something was going on here, the Czechs were really thinking about how to reform the system so that it worked for people.

I really followed this. And when things were happening in Europe in '89, what was terrible – I was just talking about this now at lunch – I wrote an article in the paper, it was something like 12 November 1989 and I said, "In Berlin they are dancing and what are the Czechs doing?" And nothing was going on here, from what we could see. I also wrote about Poland and so forth. But all of a sudden, everything woke up and then I went back and I looked at all the roots of this and various dissidents that had been working on it for years. And Václav Havel, who was doing time in prison, and other people who are here today, they worked on it so much. And I think that the Czech people really earned it because they had these democratic ideas inside them and they saw that it is not possible to live like that – under Communism and under a system that really kills people's souls.

When I looked at it, I thought it was something magical. And I came in January, President Havel was already president and I went to the Castle and I gave him a book because my father wrote a book about the history of Czechoslovakia. I gave it to him and he said, "I know who you are, you are Mrs Fulbright." And I said, "No, I am Mrs Albright." And then, because I was here with the *National Democratic Institute*, which was an organisation that was also helping people in Poland and other countries learn about democracy, so I asked him, "How can I help you?" And he said, "You can help us by helping us write an election law."

So we had various experts here, we worked on it and then other people at the Castle, Michael Žantovský for example, said, "Now we are founding an office for the President, can you help us?" So we went to Vikárka and we sat there and we made all sorts of pictures of how it should look. It was snowing, it was January and I walked back across the Charles Bridge back to the hotel and I thought to myself, "What am I doing here, I have already lived my whole life and now I am back here." For me, it was really a wonderful moment and then Havel came to America and, as I said, everyone really held him in great esteem; for me that was a really important moment. And I think that it was your parents that worked on this and they deserve for everyone to know what they were like. The question was about courage, how brave they actually were. And for me, and I hope that we can talk about this a bit, it is interesting why you do not feel that at the moment. Because it is not easy to live in a democracy. Democracy is not an event but a process. It is not just one minute. I came back in June for the elections, I was one of the election monitors, and people were happy to go vote, it was wonderful. Then we came back and Honza Urban was actually a campaign manager – so we know each other. And then we went back to Lucerna and people sang *We Shall Overcome*. I get a little emotional about this. And that is why I want to learn from you a little what happened here in the last 20 years.

Jan Urban: More questions, I saw a hand up over there somewhere, do I see some hands? OK, go ahead.

Audience: Karel Světnička, although I do not look like one I am a student, I was not allowed to study before. I have a question. I will come back to what you said a minute ago about our current President. When you think back to some diplomatic conventions from before, how would you, when you were still a diplomat, or actually the top diplomat, how would you have explained in international policy the fact that the President announces something to the nation about the Beneš Decrees and then immediately leaves for Moscow? How would you explain that?

Madeleine Albright: You know, it is not entirely easy for me. You live in a free country and I am an American and I can leave. But the truth is that I do not really understand what your President does. I really do not understand because first of all, from what I learned, I always thought that Czechs, Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic, are suited to Europe. I was here in '91 and we did a kind of big study; we asked people whether they wanted to be Europeans. I do not remember the percentage now but it was huge. Everyone wanted to be a European. And not just a Czech or a Slovak but a European.

So I was really amazed when the first questions of whether he wants this country to be a member of the European Union even came up. I do not understand the politics of it. And why he went to Moscow, that too. One has to go to Moscow, I also travel to Moscow. It is important to have good international relations with the Russians. It is a big country and it is close to you and there is various history involved. For me, it is not a bad thing to go to Moscow. One has to talk to people one does not like and explain, really, what is going on there. But I do not really understand what your President does. I have to see him this evening so I will have to watch myself.

Audience: Ms Albright, Igor Blažević. A question; I personally do not understand when Hillary Clinton goes to China and says that human rights are not on the agenda. Or when Obama, who arouses such hope and has all these tasks that you described, avoids meeting with the Dalai Lama. Do you have an explanation or a reason for it? For me, it is rather confusing.

Madeleine Albright: First of all, I have to, when I have said such horrible things about Klaus, I have to also say something against President Bush. Because I think that the American diplomacy of the last eight years has been horrible and things took place that really complicated matters for the United States.

And there are enormous problems with how to work with China or what to do with the Russians and so forth and I think that it is important to do both things at the same time. Talk about nuclear weapons with Iran and also say that the people they really voted there should be supported. When I used to go to China it was always so; it was really boring. Because they always had to talk about Taiwan and we always had to talk about other things. It was always the same but I decided that we were going to talk about human rights and that we would meet with the Dalai Lama and we were going to talk about those difficult things that we needed to talk about.

But I do not want to defend our government; I think that it is important to meet with everyone and support the ones who are dissidents. For me, it is very important.

Jan Urban: Students have priority, so the microphone there please and then František Janouch.

Audience: Kateřina Machová-Ondřejová, Faculty of Arts. I would like to somewhat selfishly go back to the Czech Republic. I think that the problem is that everyone abroad, really, mainly sees the President and the things that are going on elsewhere in our international policy and they are really hard to read because they are all so scattered. I would be interested to know if you have any advice for us on how to come across as more consistent, to find one certain direction and then to stick to it, so that we are readable for the rest of the world. What would be the most important thing to do in this regard?

Madeleine Albright: Well, first of all, I think it is important to see oneself as the ones who are doing something to solve all the problems that we need to work together to solve. And even when it is a small country, there are truly things that are needed; first of all to help. For example, for me, one of the worst things in the world is the difference between countries; where there are rich people and terribly poor people and these are problems that we can work on together, give aid and also to travel and give advice.

I also think that there is really an enormous environmental problem with global warming. And that is something that everyone has to work on. America really has to work on it because we cause the biggest problems. China is causing more now but to work together on what is happening in Copenhagen and on all those things I talked about. Even when someone has only a small part in all that, because we all need to work on it. But the main thing, I think, is that it is important to be an example of what people who are free can actually accomplish.

When I was listening to the panel before, about what democracy actually means; democracy needs people to work on it every day and not to suddenly give up on all the politicians and say, "I do not want to have anything to do with that." Because without human work, nothing will happen. I think that the most important thing is that this is a country where democracy has a tradition and which can show and work with others for further democracy.

Audience: My name is and I have a question for Mrs Madeleine, who led American foreign policy for many years. Was it a competent policy in your opinion? Were there competent people there or not? I will say two things that I have encountered. In 1986, I wanted to send the first computer to Václav Havel. It was a kind of tiny little computer. Havel, when he received it, had all the customs formalities taken care of in ten minutes and took it home with him. Whereas I, in order not to violate any rules, had to negotiate with the US Ambassador two months to get an exemption from the *COCOM Regulations*. And I only got it after two months. We probably could have sent it another way but I did not want to violate any regulations.

And the other question is even more important. 20 years ago, 4th November 1989, Karl Schmidt, President of the *National Endowment of Democracy*, came to Wrocław. We went out for a dinner together. He was in Prague for three days, he had dinner with Ambassador Shirley Temple and he told me that he was convinced by the American Embassy that the regime was very stable, that within two or three years nothing would be going on in Czechoslovakia. How would you comment on that?

Madeleine Albright: First of all, maybe people here knew that something was going to happen but the truth is that none of the people who were experts on Communism thought that the Wall would fall. And the people who say they knew are lying. Because based on what I read, no one predicted it. I was always angered, for example, by the fact that in '68, nothing was happening in America, in '56 either. And I think that, according to American foreign policy especially, it is hard to make a revolution; the people have to do it from the inside. And I think that we have learned a little not how to make it happen but rather how to support it.

Mr Michnik just left but it happened that there were various people, labour unions and so forth, who supported *Solidarity* in such a way that they were not making a revolution but helping them. And I think that it was not well understood. As I said, I wrote this kind of clueless article where I said, "What is happening in Czechoslovakia? Nothing is happening there." When in fact, I just did not understand it very well. Because people came here and they did not have the chance to really talk to people. I was here in '77 and I did not understand at all what was going on here at that time because I saw people who were old, who did not understand it well themselves. I think that it is tough to really get inside that circle of people who understand it. We saw each other for the first time in March 1989, you remember it (to Václav Havel), I was at a dinner where Jirka Dienstbier was and then I started to understand a little bit what was starting here. But I think that we did not really understand it.

In terms of *COCOM*, we were really afraid of those computers. We have all kinds of laws about what to export and which of our technological inventions we can give to the Communists.

Jan Urban: I apologise, I overlooked the fact that we have a balcony too, so you, Sir, go ahead.

Audience: I am a foreigner, so I will speak in English. Can I? Thanks.

Madeleine Albright: I will try to understand.

Audience: OK. No, it was for the audience, not for you, clearly. Ms Albright, I would like to ask you what is, in your opinion, the difference between the Russian invasion in Czechoslovakia and the American invasion in Czech Republic, Poland and other European countries, now that nowadays, the U.S.A. impose their choices, also in the military fields in these countries. Oh yes, when you want to make your military installation and you want to impose them in other countries. Or, for example, when your Air Force kills several people in Italy. You know and you do not take any responsibility for that. That is a military invasion. It looks smarter than usual but is still a military invasion. What is the difference?

Madeleine Albright: I do not even know how to begin to answer that. If you do not understand what the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was in 1968, you need to go back and read. And by the way, I do not defend every piece of American foreign policy. But I think, basically, that the United States goes into a country on a request, in many ways of trying to help. And we have made many mistakes but there is nothing that compares to Soviet tanks riding in and killing the free spirit of the Czechoslovaks in 1968.

Audience: Excuse me, I apologise in advance, I was given the name Josef Novotný and I am not a student and I was never able to be one. I have a question for Ms Madeleine Albright. If you truly have an interest in the pure history of these 20 years, please, give me three minutes, I will summarise a bit. The question will be part of it, just a second. Allow me just to return to the Činoherní klub because it started there with the fact that the head of *Svobodné slovo* brought in *Svobodné slovo* for the first time. At that moment the whole group that was in the Činoherní klub divided up into revolutionaries and functionaries. The news from *Svobodné slovo* got to Theatre ABC, from ABC to the Academy of Film and then to the other theatres. And so the revolutionaries joined up with the students. And the others were the ones that were meeting in Špalíček and in Laterna Magica.

Jan Urban: The question please.

Audience: The question is, that this system that was created, created new unhappy people. And I am asking, these unhappy people, who never knew the feeling of freedom, are actually the greatest enemies of freedom.

Jan Urban: So the question is whether ...

Audience: So the question is, what do we do about it?

Jan Urban: OK, we understand. Thank you, Sir.

Madeleine Albright: You know, I think it is really difficult to converse with so many people. But I would like to say this: Democracy means that people want to decide about their own lives. Everyone wants to have the right to decide about their own life. But it also means that people have to take responsibility for their own lives and they do not have to wait and they cannot wait for someone else to do it for them.

And when people are unhappy, it is really important that they work for what they want. In America, we say that it is not about everyone being the same but that everyone should have the same opportunities for improvement. And I think, as I said before, that democracy is terribly complicated. America is over two hundred years old and we still have some problems with it, too. This optimism comes from the fact that we can all make something of ourselves; and that being unhappy is not a function of a whole life. Everyone can do what they decide to do with themselves and I think that is the most important thing.

Audience: Irena Kalhousová, I am not a student anymore, either. But we were talking about the fact that Czech foreign policy is kind of hard to read and I would like to ask about current US policy because the question already came up. With China, it is unreadable and it also started to be unreadable towards this region, as we have witnessed in recent weeks. If you could tell us, how do you actually perceive American policy to this region? Whether we have already become absolutely unimportant and will continue, accordingly, to be disregarded and we should therefore begin to prepare for that somehow. Thank you.

Madeleine Albright: Now, I am speaking as a former American politician, the Secretary of State. I have to say that it is terribly interesting, when a person was born here, how it is different to be a representative of America. It is the biggest, really the most powerful country and it has various responsibilities that a small

country does not have. And for what we as Americans have to do for stability, what to do with all those problems that I wrote about and how we should actually approach it.

I think that Europe is extremely important for America at the moment; it is the best partner we have because we pretty much think the same, not in all cases, but in general. We have values that we agree upon. And people in America want to see a strong Europe. I know that President Havel wrote that, or signed it, that people do not actually think enough about those values. And I responded to him, "You can be glad that you are not the biggest problem in the world." And what is also important is that you know you suddenly cannot be victims. But you have to also be partners and see yourselves as partners because you are in NATO and the EU. And there are also responsibilities and it is not possible to just be the ones who think that nothing is working here or what can you do, that you are poor, that you do not know how to do this and so forth. America needs you as a partner and to deal with other parts of the world. And that is how we see it, as Americans.

Audience: Hello, Sandra Brožová, student of the Faculty of Law. Madam Secretary, welcome to Prague and allow me to thank you for your support, for lending your auspices to the Prague Student Summit, an amazing educational project that I am taking part in. And allow me to ask for your personal opinion on the fact that your current President Barack Obama was recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, despite the fact that he is in his first year in office and has not yet had a chance to achieve anything particularly remarkable.

And on the other hand, our President Václav Havel, who is responsible for democracy in our country and through his long-term efforts and actions contributed to the fall of the whole Soviet Bloc and really to the development of all of Central Europe and possibly even all foreign policy in the world, has been nominated many times but never yet received the prize. So thank you very much for your answer.

Madeleine Albright: Well, for one thing, I have nothing to do with it. And for another thing, Obama did not nominate himself. Someone else did that. I think that there is a bit of the question that was asked earlier in that. People expect a lot from what he will do. And I think that for him, it is very difficult to suddenly be named like that at the very beginning. I think that he himself was very surprised. And as we say, he did not nominate himself. And I myself think that Václav Havel really should get it because he did all the things we are talking about here. And when I look at everything he has done, I think that he should get it. And I also think that Bill Clinton should get it.

Audience: Hello, Jaroslav Bican from the Faculty of Arts. I would like to come back to the role of the Czech Republic in the world and I would like to ask if the Czech Republic should not actually really have its role in the world a little better defined, somehow, rather than just being good partners in NATO and the European Union. Whether it should not actually find some kind of specific area where it would kind of base its position on its historical experiences and the like. Thank you.

Madeleine Albright: I think, and it is good to be sitting here with you (to Jan Urban), because I think that it would be good if Czechs took what they have learned in those 20 years. Essentially what it is to build up a new democracy. And there is plenty of countries east of you that need that. Really, that would be important for them. And Honza and I did various things with *National Democratic Institute* – he was in Chile, and what people learned in one country really can be transferred to another and not only do you have the good things here but also those things in which it is hard to build a democracy and the principles of the free market. And what you have learned can be transported elsewhere. And there are lots of countries where that can be done. And you also have fantastic technology and there are things that a small country can do in others. I think; teach.

Jan Urban: I will take the liberty of interjecting. There are a few familiar faces from *People in Need*, an organisation that in this sense was already influencing Czech foreign policy many years ago and which provides exactly this sort of aid to countries where democracy does not yet hold sway. And in addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself is also attempting some sort of definition like this. I would just like to point out what I saw from up close, which was three years of a government-sponsored programme in Iraq that did not bother with military, oil or infrastructure projects and did something that Czechs are world leaders in and that is the conservation of monuments. Even today they remember it in Iraq because nobody else was doing it and yet for them it is a huge part of their national identity. Even today in Baghdad and especially in Kurdistan, they remember Professor Cepl, who was there just after the war and lectured there about constitutionality. So I would just support what Ms Albright was saying. We do have something to offer, it is just not being done systematically.

The microphone is coming. There was another question here.

Audience: Michal Hoda, Faculty of Arts, student. I would like to ask Madam Secretary how Czech participation in NATO, for example, is seen in Washington. And whether she has the feeling that the United States is falling short, somewhat, in explaining its foreign policy goals within this alliance. A number of fellow citizens have the opinion about Afghanistan, say, which is a big problem right now, that the United States is kind of waging its own war there, even though when the attack in New York happened and the towers were hit, there was a feeling of solidarity here and it was understood why the United States was going into Afghanistan. And today, a little later, when the war is starting to drag on, to get complicated, then we often meet with the opinion that the United States is waging its own, strange war against someone or other who does not interest us and we have been pulled into it. I would like to ask you, since you are not an active diplomat anymore and you can speak a little more openly, how Czech opinions, positions, are evaluated in Washington and whether they do not get the feeling that they are failing a little bit in this regard.

Madeleine Albright: The problem here is, as you said at the start, it started in Afghanistan with the fact that America was attacked. NATO is based on Article 5, that if one country is attacked, everyone reacts together. I think that America made a big mistake in the fact that NATO actually said that Article 5 applies for Afghanistan and the Americans did not react. So in the beginning we went in alone and then people from NATO joined in.

I criticise President Bush a lot for a lot of things and one of them is that he said that what was going on in Afghanistan was not as important as what was happening in Iraq. And everything was transferred to Iraq and we went in there in this kind of *Coalition of the Willing* from the start and Afghanistan was completely forgotten. In the meantime, all kinds of horrible things were going on in Afghanistan with the Taliban and so forth.

And now President Obama is suddenly coming back to it and Afghanistan is the biggest thing that threatens NATO and America because we are all in the Alliance together, for all. The problem is, and we have this problem in America too, that it is really difficult to explain to people what is going on in Afghanistan. It is not hard to say why we started there but why we are still there. And as you know, President Obama is currently deciding how to proceed. But right now, I am in this group that is thinking about how to proceed with NATO. And we are focusing on what is going on in Afghanistan and what it means for NATO and for the whole Alliance.

And the truth is that we all have to work together because the Alliance is dependent on that. But it also has to be explained why we are there because we are an Alliance of democratic countries who needs people's support. And I see that Obama and others, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for example, are travelling from one country to the other, Vice President Biden was here to ask for everyone to help more.

And I think that this help can come not only in the form of soldiers but also in other things, for example helping with rebuilding and various civilian activities. Yesterday, we were at NATO, I was talking there with the NATO commanders and they said that they need a civilian unit. So I think the Alliance can help in other ways too.

But the Alliance itself is extremely important and everyone in it has to help. But our presidents etc. have to explain what they are doing and why and I would explain it like this: terrorism is everywhere. And this was an attack on America and next time, it could be on other countries and in this, we must stick together.

Audience: Jan Hron, Faculty of Arts, formerly. I would like to get to Russia now, because lots of people here perceive Russia as a threat. So I want to ask whether Russia is a dangerous country from America's perspective as well.

Madeleine Albright: I think that it is not. The truth is that it is quite tough to determine what kind of relations we have with Russia. What was important for me, when it was being discussed, was whether we won the war or whether they lost it. I say that they lost it and they are not just different words but a reference to the fact that their system actually completely fell apart. And that what was happening in the '90s and later had never happened before. How to reduce the power of those who were actually enemies – that had never been dealt with before.

We wanted to do it with respect, so that it would really be resolved well. The Russians have now got this idea that we were not nice enough to them in the '90s. And that is why there are these strange relations because they want to be a great country who thinks that the countries around them still belong to them. And the truth is we have to have realistic relations with Russia. And that is being worked on. And when Vice President Biden talked about "resetting", that means that we are really looking for a form of relations with the Russians that would allow us to work on certain issues together, for example on Iran or on global warming and other things that we have to work on. And this also relates to questions of human rights – we have to say what we think. So when horrible things are going on in Georgia or in Chechnya, for example, we have to talk about it out loud. So that is what it is like: Let's cooperate where we can and compete where we have to.

Jan Urban: On the balcony.

Audience: Hello, Lenka Šmejkalová, Faculty of Law at Charles University. I am going back to democracy. The Czech Republic has been democratic for 20 years, for me that is my whole life but in terms of politics and history it is like nothing. And 'daddy' Masaryk himself always said that democracy needs at least a hundred years. I think that our democracy is in a relatively large crisis at this moment but it seems to be because we do not have the people, we do not have representatives who we can respect. That is why I would like to ask whether you have a kind of recipe for how to acquire, let's say, politicians worthy of respect. Thank you.

Madeleine Albright: I have to say that in America, we just had eight years of a horrible government. And the truth is that young people set to work and now we have a whole new generation of political people in America. America electing Barack Obama happened because young people got involved. And there were campaigns that young people worked on. I am currently one of the oldest people in Washington. It is all a new generation.

And I know that people can say, well, we are unhappy or this is no fun or why not just go to the cottage and let all these people do what they want. And the truth is that democracy only works when people work on it. It is work. And I know that someone said here at the beginning, "Do not say that we young people have to do it." But you do. I know what it is like in America. I teach at Georgetown University and after September 11th, people suddenly changed completely and these young people suddenly said to themselves: We have to do something, this is our country, we have to work on this ourselves and we cannot leave it up to other people.

And I know that it is a little different here but we messed it up, our generation messed up a lot of things and I think that you all have to take hold of it. Because you have to be those politicians. And politician is not a dirty word. The truth is that democracy does not work without people who are in politics. People have to be in politics.

I think the important thing is that you are the people who can do something that was fought for by those people who stood in Wenceslas Square 20 years ago and jangled their keys. They did it for you. And you know what? I, when I called that first day, Jirka Dienstbier was the Foreign Minister, I called him and I said, "How can I help you?" and he said, "Help the students." The students did it, they were your parents. And I think that it is important that your generation has to get involved in it and it is work. Democracy is work.

Audience: Hello, my name is Ivana Dědicová, I am not a student anymore but I would like to thank the students for this event, for me it is like a shot in the arm. And I would like to ask you, Madam Secretary, in your experience and your political perspective, how the West, the world looks at us as a Republic because the topic is the *Role of the Czech Republic*. In particular, in the last little while – a year or two. Let's say the EU presidency, then the fall of the government, then the conflicts that are holding sway now and preventing politics from functioning effectively. And whether the world is interested at all, whether anyone is dealing with it in any depth and whether there is any active political figure here that the world really respects, aside from Mr. Schwarzenberg. Thank you.

Madeleine Albright: Well, I think people are watching. First of all, everyone is celebrating 20 years now. When I was in the government, we celebrated 50 years of everything. The end of the war, everything. And now we are celebrating 20 years. And everyone is interested in what actually happened in all those countries in the last 20 years. And people talk about Germany and how Germany actually became a great country again and Angela Merkel, what power she has. And really, people look to her as an important figure who can work with others to improve the world.

And I think that people look at the Czech Republic a little like, more could be happening here; that it is a country that, for one thing, has intelligent people and an enormous chance to do something bigger. And as I said before, there is a little bit of disenchantment in what did not happen during the presidency. Everybody says: This is actually the first of the new countries to preside over the EU and all these things that could have happened. And the fact that we actually saw what I said before, that democracy is not a perfect system. There was a vote of no-confidence approved by Parliament and that actually broke up the government right at the moment when a working government was needed. So people were a little bit disenchanted by that.

And I think that there is a chance again now, when everyone is thinking about what happened 20 years ago, to take it again and say: We understand what has to happen, we need to work on it. Just now, I had a new public opinion poll done. And you can see, you do not have to believe me but that the younger generation, your generation, is the one who wants to do something. And that older people already think: It is already passed us by. But everyone is really looking. I should give you all that poll because you can see such energy in it, people who want to do something. I think that it has to happen. And for me, I have to say, Václav Havel is the greatest hero.

Jan Urban: Here in the middle, please. And then, since we have the microphone here, then the gentleman four rows back, or the other way round.

Audience: Good afternoon, Madam Secretary. Aleš Veselý, political science student. I would like to go back to the European Union. In today's modern world, global players are developing. There is you, the United States, there is China, there is Russia. You say that the European Union is needed as a partner to the United States. But I, as a European, would be more interested in when we will be an equal partner. Or rather, the concrete question is, how long will it take before the European Union becomes an equal partner as a global player in international politics?

Madeleine Albright: Once the European Union starts thinking a little about what is going on outside of it. When we look at it in America, it is kind of one bureaucratic thing after another. There are lots of people in Europe who think that America does not want a strong Union but we need it too. And we are constantly watching the various debates and hoping that there is going to be a new president and a new representative for foreign policy because we need a partnership and not just for all the various things between us but for example what we can do together in Africa or in Central Asia and so forth. Because we have the same values, we could really do it. But we are kind of a little bit frustrated by how you are constantly just, as we say, navel-gazing.

Audience: That was going to be my question as well. I am a schoolmate of this gentleman here, a political scientist from this faculty. So I will knock the question over to a different region. The Japanese Prime Minister, the newly elected one, recently said that he is planning a currency for China, Japan, South Korea and all of Asia and that he has kind of a similar ambition to make Asia into a kind of global actor. What do you think about that? Thank you.

Madeleine Albright: You know what; I think we always want to see the dollar as a standard. But we cannot have any influence on it, if they want to do it. We have doubts about what the actual value of the Chinese yuan is, whether it is properly valued and I know that Obama's going to talk about it when he is in China. It is necessary to have a good currency but I really do not have an answer. I just know that we would like the dollar to be strong, for it to be the means of payment that we work with. And with the euro.

Jan Urban: There in the back.

Audience: Hello. Rebeka Vodasová. I wanted to ask, it is probably clear that the image of our Republic in the world is not so great right now. It has been said quite clearly what the goals are, meaning to become a solid partner and to take care of problems that the whole world has right now. I would be interested to know where we should start, whether there is maybe an area where we are doing a good job, where we can be trusted. Basically whether there is something to kind of push off from. Thank you.

Madeleine Albright: The truth is there is no one model. 20 years ago, we founded the *Community of Democracies* in Warsaw. And the reason we put it together was so that people could learn democracy from each other, so that the best approaches could be put together. So people would look at what works elsewhere. There is no one model so I could say: This is American democracy, this is German democracy and so forth. The best thing is when democracies help each other.

We put together this declaration in Warsaw because we wanted something to be connected to Warsaw other than the Pact, so we called it the *Warsaw Declaration*. But I think that really, the *National Democratic Institute* or other democracies are the basis of what a person needs to learn. When the other panel was talking about the fact that there needs to be the rule of law here, that is extremely important. And the truth is that these institutions are necessary. And I was the chair of this organisation and from the start; we thought that the most important thing was elections. Elections are necessary but they are not the only thing in democracy. In various countries, there are problems with democracy but really, democracy has not given everyone a good life. So now I say that democracy has to do so because people want to vote and eat and that is why it is important for democracy to be connected with economic development.

It all goes together. And I was a student for so long that I remember various theories about whether politics or economics come first and that something needs to be first and something second. I think that it has to come at the same time. So people have to have a life thanks to democracy. And really, to have work as well. And people also have to learn that economic and political relationship.

Jan Urban: Thank you. We have a question, the gentleman there in the red sweater, coat, jacket. Sorry. Blue t-shirt.

Audience: Good afternoon. Ms Albright, I would like to ask you, you have experienced diplomacy in the context of a big country but here we are talking about the Czech Republic as a small country and I would like to ask you whether you could compare the paths, how well a big state works internationally and how well a small one. What are the differences and what do they maybe have in common?

Madeleine Albright: That is an interesting question because I have thought about it often. You may not believe it but I first came here as an American in '67. And then someone told me that my father had been convicted so I did not come here that often. And then I came back in the '80s and saw Wendy Luers and Bill Luers, who was our Ambassador here. And I came when the dissidents came to our embassy. Whenever I came, I always thought about what it would have been like if we had never left. I am probably about the same age as Václav Havel and I thought about what it would be like if I had stayed here. So I am always thinking about things like that.

When I was a representative at the UN, the Czech Republic was there too and we worked together. When I was the Secretary of State as well, I often met with the Czech Ambassador and I thought about these things. What is different is that when someone represents one of the biggest countries in the world, they have all kinds of responsibilities that a small country does not have. And one has to keep that in mind, a little. And when a small country teams up with a big one and they understand the same things, that is a little bit the issue with Afghanistan, then it is more than one plus one.

You can see that it is an alliance of responsibility. But a small country can also show how to behave with dignity and how to think about being what it is and not just suddenly get lost in it all. But it is completely different. And I do not know if a person can change from being the representative of the biggest country and suddenly that of a small one. But it is different and there are lots of people who do it and I think that a person has to play the cards they are dealt. But they have to play with them. It is the same as when a person does not function in a democracy. We have cards, that is our life and we have to play with it. And a small country has to play the game as well.

Jan Urban: Friends, we are wrapping up. I would ask for the microphone, please. OK, one quick question there and then Martin Bútora with the last question.

Audience: One quick question. Václav Klaus just now said that the Czech Army should primarily protect our homeland and should not be involved in foreign missions. You are going to see him today. Will you say something about it?

Madeleine Albright: After what I said about him today, he will not talk to me. This is really interesting for me, all your questions, because it shows what you are thinking about. What role a country like the Czech Republic actually has and how it can work with others. I think, for example, that if the Czech Republic were attacked, then you would say, correctly, that America has to do something. You are NATO partners. And if you were attacked then we, Americans, have a responsibility to do something. And likewise you, being members of NATO, you have that responsibility too. That is the deal.

And when I came here in '94 I was still with the UN but we came to really explain something a bit different – the *Partnership for Peace*. That was one of the first roads to NATO. And we came here and we told people that we are offering them this *Partnership for Peace* but that NATO is not a philanthropic organisation, it is not a scholarship organisation and that it is a responsibility. And you accepted that responsibility by becoming members of NATO. And I think that I could tell Mr Klaus that.

Jan Urban: And please, before we hear the last question, this problem ruined my sleep last night, because my friends and I were arguing whether the Czech Army has fifteen or thirty tanks.

Madeleine Albright: And how many does it have?

Jan Urban: Apparently eighteen. The microphone to Martin Bútora, please.

Martin Bútora: Ms Madeleine, I am going to try in Slovak but slowly. You were talking about the Alliance now and about NATO. And the Alliance is preparing a *New Strategy* now, I think the seventh now, and aside from those big shots in Brussels, you are the chair of this kind of council of the wise...

Madeleine Albright: The old.

Martin Bútora: ...who are supposed to advise. What should the Alliance's *New Strategic Concept* be? Whatever you could tell us about it. And likewise, are any of your advisers on this council of elders from the Czech Republic? Or from Central Europe?

Madeleine Albright: There is not. First off, I have to say this: the Secretary General chose the council. And there are 28 countries in NATO but only 12 elders in this group. But we started the process and we will be organising consultations in all countries. And we listen to various representatives from all countries but there is no Czech on the council directly. But I know something about what is going on here and now I know more but we will be consulting, with Slovakia as well, we will go to Bratislava and we will be here too officially.

Jan Urban: OK. The surprise is on the way. But before it arrives, I will take the liberty of a little interjection as a thank you. About forty years ago, this board was black. And one day, at the start of the '70s the newly designated instructor came in, I do not remember of what, and his name, Karel Vaš, was written on the board, and someone had written: "Karel Vaš is a murderer." Karel Vaš was the prosecutor who sentenced

General Heliodor Píka to death. That is the kind of professors and teachers who the normalisation regime of the time put in this classroom at this faculty. If, 40 years later, you have Madeleine Albright here, who was the Secretary of State of the United States of America as a native Czech, you have exactly the limits of the path that this country has undertaken in those 40 years. The board is also white, not black, and we live on a different planet.

I would like to thank those who organised this and our good old Faculty of Arts and Dean Stehlík who made it possible, Democracy Czech-Up and all those possibly slightly angry young people who wanted to say something and took it as far as this beautiful meeting. So thank you all for that; for us older people it is a big event.

Madlenka, allow me to present Gao Yu, the Chinese independent journalist and political prisoner, former political prisoner, on whose behalf you interceded as the Secretary of State, for her to be released. It did not entirely work out, she got an extra two years, but it is about what Madlenka was saying: Democracy is work. It does not always work out but Gao Yu is truly a personality, a defender of human rights who deserves our applause and who wanted to thank Madeleine Albright.

If there is someone in this room who, after all this, still thinks that there is no point in fighting for human rights and trying to accomplish something, they should not be here. Have a nice day and thank you for everything. Thank you, Madeleine Albright.