



**Global Foundation for Democracy Conference
“Creating the Democratic Mindset: Education for Democracy”
Barcelona, Spain – April 2006**

Opening Remarks

The Right Honorable Kim Campbell

Good Morning. As some of you may remember when I met you last fall in Geneva, there was a time in my life when I actually spoke Russian. But it's very rusty now so I will stick to my mother tongue. My name is Kim Campbell, and I have the great honor to be Secretary General of an organization called the Club of Madrid, which is an organization of former presidents and prime ministers who work to use their knowledge, their experience and the political capital that they have obtained through their work in government to promote democracy and support democratic transition.

Last fall when I participated in the Global Foundation for Democracy conference in Geneva, Irwin Katsof asked if perhaps the Club of Madrid would assist in providing the content for another conference to be held in Barcelona. We're very pleased to have been able to work with the Global Foundation for Democracy to create today's discussion, because democracy isn't just a set of institutions. It isn't even just a set of skills. It's a way of thinking, it's a set of reflexes that enable people to come together and solve problems; to accept losing an argument without violence knowing that they'll argue again and that there will be opportunities for them to continue to pursue the issues that they care about; that there are ways of solving problems for communities to come together to build projects, to regulate their lives together. But in many parts of the world people don't have those mindsets.

I was a Soviet specialist, which is why at a time in my life I spoke Russian. One of the interesting phenomena of Marxist-Leninist countries is that the Communist Party was the leading organ of all aspects of life, and its whole goal was to break down relationships of trust between people and to disempower people to come together to solve their own problems. And so when the Berlin Wall fell, there were many societies that lived under this kind of rule, where people really had a difficult time in learning and mastering the skills and being able to make institutions work. But it's not confined to the former communist countries. As you'll hear today, there are many parts of the world where building strong civil societies and giving people the understanding that they need of how to move into democratic rule is a challenge.

Today you are going to hear from a remarkable group of men and women, many of whom—in fact, most of whom—are actual heroes. They are not just experts, they are heroes. They are heroes and heroines for what they have done in government. They are heroes and heroines for what they have done to empower people around the world to create democratic institutions. They are heroes and heroines for the kinds of risks they have taken in their own lives to make the lives of other people better. And what is most important is that they bring to you not just a theoretical understanding of the issues that we are addressing today, but a deeply personal, practical, hands-on experience. What you are going to hear today is not just a theoretical discussion of issues but

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an understanding of issues from people who have themselves addressed these issues and worked to make changes in their society. And just as we heard last night from Lord Ashdown, who is himself a battle-scarred veteran of the political wars, he is not someone who has just read about politics, how do we think about democracies? Is the nation state a sufficient repository of democracy, or do we have to look at institutions both greater than the nation state, but also lesser than the nation state, at lower levels? Do we have to look at them as part of the overall system of empowering people to make the kind of decisions and create accountable institutions that are what democracy is all about? We realize from listening to his discussion that a lot of this process of keeping democracy healthy in the 21st century, even in countries where it is well established, may require us to unlearn some of the things we have believed about democracy. Many of the people that you are going to listen to today have also been engaged in societies where they have had to help people unlearn certain assumptions they made about their right to hold power, about their ability to forestall change, to keep change from happening in their society.

So it is with great pleasure that I now introduce to you and ask to come forward the members of the first panel who will address the issue of education for democracy and why it matters, who will try to set the stage based on their own experiences of what we're really talking about today. What is really involved in making change in society or how the mindsets, the attitudes, and the characters of thought are so important as a foundation to that process.

So without further ado, I'd like to say on behalf of members of the Club of Madrid and our staff, incidentally, Agustina Briano and Olalla Pruneda, who are here from Madrid, have done an extraordinary job working with the staff of the Global Foundation for Democracy. And I want to thank them very much because they are spectacular. The Club of Madrid is not a huge organization, but we have an extraordinary Secretariat and really wonderful people who are passionate about the mission of making democracy work, but who understand that that often involves a lot of hard work in making it possible for people to have the dialogues that we are going to have today and I want to thank them.

I would like to invite our first panel to come forward to set the stage for what I know is going to be a fascinating and interesting discussion. I want to just conclude by saying that it is important that this be an interactive process. Our panelists have a lot of interesting things to say to set the stage, but they are eager to have your comments and your questions and to engage in a conversation with you about this very very important issue. So once we've made our presentations, we hope that in this first panel and throughout the day that you will not be shy and that you will engage us, challenge us and share your own perspectives on these very important issues so that we will all leave reinvigorated and with new ideas and new possibilities for making the world a better place. So welcome, thank you and we invite the first panel to come forward.