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I feel a little bit like the philosophy teacher in Moliere's play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, et la philosophie, Messieurs, I have seven minutes to close this session, and I am not sure that I will reassure you.

My presence here was linked to the fact that one could consider the inability of governments to take risk the major risk facing humanity right now, the inability to make reforms in time, to impose reforms in time, to explain these reforms. To lead and compromise might be, in a way, the number one risk. We have seen that in the Arab world not long ago. We can see that in other parts of the world tomorrow.

In a way, my subject – in spite of the six minutes I have, which is a caricature – would be to say that there is a major gap between the evolution of science and technology, which both make us dream, and also have nightmares, and the stability of human leaders, the stability of human nature. I think there are, at that level, several stereotypes, which I would like to concentrate on.

The first of these stereotypes, if it is a stereotype, is to oppose the short-termism of western democratic societies, with the long-termism of non-western, non-democratic societies. I remember a debate at the tri-lateral commission in Washington a few years ago. A very bright Chinese representative turned to the crowd and said, you Americans think broader, you Europeans think deeper, but we Chinese think longer.

I think it is fair, in a way, to recognise the fact that China, being the combination between a civilisation and a state, has the ability to integrate the past, and to plan for the future in a way that we do not. The great book by Henry Kissinger on China opens with a vision of Mao Tse-Tung, sitting with his generals at the time of the war with India, and using the example of an emperor in the year 1200 B.C., and everybody in the room understood perfectly what Mao Tse-Tung's strategy was about. The Chinese are making 100-year plans, for example, for the organisation of their cities. They are thinking in the very long term.

However, are Chinese leaders today willing to take the risks which are probably necessary to reform, in the short term, their political system? Is the new Chinese leader willing to make the enemies within the politburo of collective leadership that are probably necessary?

That is the first question, long-term versus short-term. You have to face the present. Is there such a difference between non-democratic regimes – I spoke of China, but I could also have spoken about Russia – and democratic regimes? The tradition within democratic regimes is to say today, quoting real politicians, I know what I have to do for my country and my citizens, but I do not know how to do it, and be re-elected tomorrow.

That is, in a way, the crux of the problem which is, I would say, the growing divorce between the reality of the world, based on interdependency – that is, globalisation – and the growing autistic, if not provincial attitude, of the political class. The rule of the game is to change the status quo that cannot survive. The rule of politicians is to survive as long as possible, and that may mean, in the short term, not to affect the status quo. In the long run, we are all dead. In the long run, there will be a tsunami, "après moi le déluge".

That is probably the major risk we are facing, which is the inability of political leadership to move beyond a certain autistic provincialism, which is so comfortable, and which has become very strong. What can we do? I would like to return to four fundamental ideas. Politics is, in reality, the noblest activity. It is the most central activity, because politics really does affect the lives of all citizens. The important thing is to restore, in the minds of politicians and citizens alike, the sense of the nobility and centrality of politics and politicians.

From that standpoint, I would conclude, because I know my time has been extraordinarily short, with what I would call the four major responsibilities of politicians and statesmen. The first one is simply to lead, to lead with the power of ideas. This is Abraham Lincoln, who decided that slavery cannot be accepted any longer. This is Churchill, who



decided that the nature of the enemy was such that it had to be resisted at all costs. It is Mandela, who decided that the end of apartheid, principles, the reconciliation with the people who had sent him to jail for 27 years. They had the ability to lead with the power of ideas.

The second point is the ability to resist the strength of populism and the forces that are around you, pushing you with the wrong ideas at the wrong time. The ability to say no to them, that this is not me, this is not in my country or in my culture.

The third point is the ability to explain, to convince, which means in a way to replace negative, easy demagoguery with difficult pedagogy, and give a crash course on the reality of the world, the kind of which we have had the morning, explaining the risk and the cost of not doing things, and the cost of doing it, but in the long run, the need to do something.

There is a fourth quality, which I think is fundamental, and that is not only the ability to lead, to resist, to explain, but at the end of the day, to compromise, because the politician that does not have that fourth quality will not make it. The rarest thing on earth is to see a combination of these four key qualities, because a lot of people have one or two of them, but very few have the ability to do these four things.

I was given the task to conclude with something else, but may I leave you with this thought: the major risk, at the end of the day, is the refusal to take risks when they are needed.