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Nous entrons maintenant dans le débat avec une alternance de personnalités civiles et religieuses qui, je crois, traduit bien l'esprit que nous voulons donner à cette rencontre et à ces échanges dans une perspective de la gouvernance mondiale. Et pour commencer c'est Monsieur Geoana, le sénateur Geoana de Roumanie, ancien Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, ancien Président du Sénat, qui va d'ailleurs dans une terre de tradition orthodoxe, mais ouverte à toutes les sensibilités, nous donner une idée du paysage après l'expérience de régimes idéologiques. Je crois que c'est l'esprit dans lequel, aussi brièvement que possible, chacun nous allons essayer d'éclairer cette problématique. Je vous en prie.

Mircea Geoana, Senator

Thank you Ambassador, Your Holiness.

With the greatest respect, I had the privilege of a private audience with the Patriarch of Constantinople, in Istanbul, a few months ago. I would also like to thank Thierry De Montbrial and all of you for this remarkable meeting. A big thank you on behalf of the whole Romanian delegation and our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Titus Corlatean, who is present.

I would like to make a very brief contribution to this debate because we come from a country which suffered from the tragedy of communism. And because values, secularism and religion coexist in such a dynamic way in my country and our former communist countries, it makes them a very interesting study, a pilot project for what's happening with globalisation.

After the collapse of communism, a very interesting phenomenon occurred in these countries, with intensity and with considerable asymmetries. First, naturally, the population and youth of Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Ukraine turned towards religion. This is an important aspect. Since the collapse of communism twenty-five years ago, Romania has built more than 12,000 churches. We haven't built hospitals or schools at such a rate. There is an effort, a thirst for religious values.

At the same time, and this is the symmetry which worries us, as Christians and humanists, at the same time as religion is returning very strongly to us and the post-communist world, the moral compass is deteriorating in our countries. One might expect that the return of religion would also prompt a return of religious values to fill the void left by the collapse of communism and the rapacious capitalism we have built. The return of religion, with at the same time young people and the general population being distressed by this type of change, means that there is huge pressure on our societies. On the TV yesterday, after Laurent Fabius's excellent speech, I saw a first conversation in Kiev between the pro-European and, let's say, pro-Russian parties. The Patriarch of Ukraine was at the table. So the role of the Church and its representatives is very important and sometimes even political. At the same time, I don't think that we should view the lessons of History as clues to the structures of the future, because I think that we are very, very close to a moment never before known in the history of humanity.

We've had wars, we've had inter-faith fratricidal wars, and unfortunately we continue to have them. We've had natural disasters. We've survived them. But when we talk about the future of technologies, biotechnologies and genomics, the moment, as Al Gore said in his recent book, "When man plays God". When we will be in a position to invent, reinvent, change the destiny of humanity in its highest form - which is the existence of Man - ethical problems, political problems, governance problems, will, for the first time in the history of humanity, be more complicated than ever. We will have a lot of problems relating to governance and global competition; forces will be assembled around the world. But we've already experienced that. We will have to fight against it and try to control this evolution calmly. We will enter a period



when humanity's classic values will be questioned in an extremely violent manner. And I am worried that we aren't prepared for it.

Religion is also an ideology, and I am sure that the meeting between our Ecumenical Patriarch and Pope Francis in a few months, like your presence, Your Holiness, at the inauguration of the Pope, sends an extremely important message. Just as Paul II's visit to Bucharest, in the first orthodox country never visited by a Catholic Pope, is, obviously, an important symbol. But I want to mention the fact that global competition and the Judeo-Christian world that we have built over the past half-millennium will be in competition not only with China, not only with Asia, but with a model of society built on the values of religions which are different in structure, not in nuance.

The model that we built around the Mediterranean was exported beyond our borders, to the United States, the Americas. We have dominated the world with Judeo-Christian values for half a millennium. But there will be a competition for the model of society, society's hierarchy, society's discipline and the model of organisation of societies, with formidable competitors such as Confucianism and other Asian religions. And for the first time in centuries, we will have not only geoeconomic, geopolitical, technological and military competitors, we will have a formidable competitor whom we must treat with respect, because these are cultures and traditions which are so ancient that they deserve our respect, they deserve our admiration. But it is a competition, my friends, and this competition is weighed up in many different ways. And religion, politics, values and geopolitics will mark a turning point that humanity has never seen in its history, which is relatively long, but so short. So short.

This morning, and I will end here, I bought a book from FNAC, *A Year with Pope Francis*, which has a thought for every day. And of course, as it's December 15, I will conclude by reading to you what this tremendous Pope, who puts the values of solidarity and love for the poor back at the centre of his Church, his work, says to us for December 15. "December 15, light and shade, path and hope, sign and manifestation. It is the prophecy of choice, of promise and of alliance. It is the path which appears in the presages of earthly paradise, and which ends in the year of the eruption when the glory of the Lord covers the orchards with his light". That is humanity's moment, and it's fitting that it's December 15.

Thank you Thierry for inviting me, thank you Ambassador. Thank you all.