



TRANSCRIPCIÓN

**INTERVENCIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO, PEDRO
SÁNCHEZ, EN EL JOHN F. KENNEDY JR. FORUM DE LA
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INTERVENCIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO, PEDRO SÁNCHEZ

Muchas gracias por tus palabras,

Buenas tardes,

Good afternoon,

Dear Professors, students and friends,

It is a great honor to be here.

Few places have shaped the fate of humankind like Harvard. A university where discoveries are made. Ideas are debated. And the future is born.

Today, though, I want to begin by looking back — at the story of a young student who came here more than a century ago.

He was from Kentucky. From an industrialist family of European origin.

And what he found in Cambridge was a place of astonishing technological transformations.

In the four years he was here as an undergraduate, he witnessed the invention of electric lighting, the launch of the first typewriter, and the world's first telephone call, made by Graham Bell in March 1876, just a few blocks from here.

But those years of innovation were also a time of severe crisis. The so-called “Long Depression” destroyed thousands of businesses and caused mass unemployment. Nominal wages fell by a quarter. Inequality widened. And the US experienced its first nationwide strike, with riots in the streets, federal troops charging crowds, and dozens of people killed.

Our student felt this crisis firsthand. After graduating from the Law School in 1877, he returned to Louisville and found a city shaken by bankruptcies and hardship. His own father, who had once owned a factory, a mill, and a steamboat, had lost everything and was now working as a bill collector.

Things were tough. But our student, our student didn't give in to despair. Instead, he set up a law firm —here in Boston— and started to take on cases for workers against big corporations and to get involved in several policy crusades.



That man –of course– was Louis Brandeis. The people's lawyer. Remembered today as one of the architects of what truly made America great.

And that wasn't hate. Or military might. Or golden chandeliers.

It was the modern doctrine of free speech.

It was the right to privacy.

It was the possibility of having a decent job, a decent insurance, and the chance to rise beyond the circumstances you were born into.

Brandeis believed that prosperity should be shared. That growth should widen opportunity and freedom, not narrow them.

And he knew that the only way to make it possible was to prevent vast concentrations of economic power.

Because an economy run by a handful of men does not simply produce unfair prices and weak innovation. It produces unfree citizens and weak democracies.

It produces a system where all the important decisions are made in boardrooms, where the people have no say.

This is why Brandeis fought so hard to limit the grip of the monopolies that controlled the land, the transportation system, and the country's finances. And after him, many other men and women did the same.

The history of American democracy, to me, is the history of the fight against that kind of economic concentration.

And I'm telling you this –dear colleagues, dear friends, dear students,– because that fight is not over. In fact, it is at a critical juncture, since it has reached a planetary scale and an existential dimension that Brandeis would have never thought of.

Today we face new oligarchies.

New billionaires who control no railroads or oil pipelines, but something far greater.

They own the social media and streaming platforms where we conduct our public debate.

The systems that run our economies, public systems and daily lives.

The digital spaces that shape our fears and our hopes.

The AIs that answer all our questions.

And the problem is that many of the algorithms behind these technologies are not built to serve us. They are built to enslave us.

To weaken our critical thinking. To distort our public debate. To turn our attention into profit. To destroy our rights and institutions. To advance a political agenda that serves only a few.

We know how effective they can be. Research shows that 45 percent of young people now get their news from these platforms, 45 percent, and that around 70 percent use chatbots to do their homework and solve their doubts.

So, these technologies are becoming our oracles. Our parents, our teachers, our doctors.

And every one of them is owned and controlled by a few men, and I repeat, men, who publicly despise the democratic institutions, the laws, the liberal values that have guided our societies since the end of the Second World War.

Think about what that means.

It is like entering in a new nuclear race — except, this time, the most powerful capabilities are not being developed by states, but by companies, private companies. With no transparency. With no accountability. With no control.

This is where we find ourselves.

And the question is how we move forward. As I see it, there are two options: fight or flight.

Many politicians and pundits choose the latter. They acknowledge the harm, of course, and the structural threats these unchecked technologies pose — and they tell us that regulation is impossible. That these technologies are too powerful, too complex, too fast-moving to be tamed.

And I reject that.

I am well aware, of course, about the difficulties. But I am convinced that democracies and states are still, and I repeat, still more powerful than the tech oligarchs.

Still. But not too far, or not for too long.

That is why we have to act. Now. With speed and resolve.



We have to forget, by the way, once and for all, the digital utopia we were promised in the nineties of the 20th century.

We have to ignore those who claim that *deregulation* will make us more competitive — because speed is useless if we are heading in the wrong direction.

And, of course, we have to abandon the fable of self-regulation.

A few days ago I heard the head of OpenAI, say that the world is right to be afraid, but that , and I quote “we should trust them.” End of the quote.

Let me answer that with three words: no freaking way.

No way.

Not on our watch.

The age of gods and feudal lords is long over. We are not placing the future of humanity in the hands of a few billionaires. We are going to place it where it belongs: in our own hands. In our democratic institutions.

And please, don't get me wrong. I am not a Luddite. I am not proposing that we smash Meta's servers or burn down X's headquarters.

Over the past eight years, since I am in office, my government has invested more than 40 billion dollars in developing and adopting these cutting-edge technologies — from AI to quantum.

And we've done it because we know that they could help us overcome many of the challenges that our societies and my country, therefore, are facing: climate change, demographic decline, inequality, low economic growth, or unwanted loneliness.

So, I am not suggesting we will get rid of these technologies. What I'm saying is that we should control and supervise them. I'm saying we should limit their self-improvement capabilities.

Establish strict third-party oversight.

And demand full reporting on any incidents that occur.

We should also slow down their development until we find a way to make this tech safe and channel its power toward the goals we really have as a society.

We need to understand how to prioritize the automation that improves and protects jobs, and discourage the kind that destroys them.

So how to support the applications that clarify the truth, and ban the ones that distort it. How to encourage the algorithms that make us safer, and tackle the ones that put us at risk.

In short, we need to find the way to make these technologies benefit us —the people— not a handful of tecno-oligarchs.

And for that, we will need effective laws, controls, and penalties.

In other words, we will need to regulate this industry, just as we regulated food, cars, weapons, medicines, and every other major market in history.

We have to regulate digital technologies, and we have to do it now.

Even though this is uncharted territory that changes by the day.

Because complexity cannot become an excuse for inaction. If anything, it must be a reason to experiment.

Brandeis once wrote that “a single courageous State may serve as a laboratory.”

In Spain, we are trying to be that lab.

So, my government has decided to apply a variation on the very principle these tech corporations have been following for years: regulate fast, before they break more things.

So, we are acting now, on every front we can.

We are passing laws to make algorithmic manipulation a criminal offense and to keep children under sixteen off social media.

We have built public tools to track, measure, and prosecute hate speech.

We have regulated influencer advertising.

And we have proposed legislation to make executives legally responsible for the violations committed on their platforms. Because those who create the risk and benefit from it must also carry the responsibility.

Moreover, we were the first Western country to adopt a Charter of Digital Rights.

We have created Europe’s first Agency for the Supervision of Artificial Intelligence, and the first sandbox to test this technology in health care and education.



And under our presidency, the EU passed the first AI act. And now we have brought to Brussels the first proposal to ban and prosecute the creation of deepfakes, at European level.

Of course, we know none of this is enough. There is still a great deal of work to do.

We have to put forward solutions, even if imperfect.

We have to test, we have to measure, and we have to improve them.

And we have to do it together. That is the reason why especially I am here. We have to do it together.

Because the digital space is like the atmosphere: there is only one. If we want to save it, all of our countries have to act at once.

You know, there was a Belgian statesman, Paul-Henri Spaak, who used to say that there are two kinds of countries in Europe. Small ones, and those that have not yet realized they are small.

When it comes to facing down the tech oligarchs, that is true of every country on Earth.

No parliament can supervise, alone, a technology that recognizes no border. No regulator can audit, alone, a company larger than most economies.

Nations may be tempted to see this as just another tech race. To believe that what matters is getting there first.

We have heard this during this week. But with AI, being first does not make you safe. In fact, it exposes you to huge dangers. Because at the end of this race, there might not be a finish line to cross — but an abyss to fall into.

That is why we need rules that no country, no company, and no billionaire can escape.

We need common standards. Independent scrutiny. Shared obligations. And the courage and means to punish those who fail to meet them.

And to create all these things, those of us in government, and that is why also I am here, will need your help. We need your help.

Because academia has a major role to play in this.

Right here in Cambridge, in the labs and lecture halls around this room, some of the technologies I have been describing are being used and built.

Some of you —students of Harvard— will refine their algorithms. Many of you will work for the tech billionaires who own them. Or serve in the governments whose job it is to restrain them.

You are crucial actors in this fight.

So please, do not let these big corporations blind you with their money, their false promises of universal prosperity, or their doom-mongering.

Do not believe them when they say this technology is too complex, too fast, too global, or too valuable to be controlled.

Every generation of tycoons has made that same argument.

And every generation was defeated, in the end, by the same force – the will of the people. The will of the people.

I know these are hard times to be an optimist.

The road ahead is rough, and it is lined with powerful enemies.

But Brandeis's struggle for a fairer, more democratic America was no easy ride, either.

It took workers willing to organize. Public servants willing to innovate. Institutions willing to adapt. Leaders willing to lead.

You can be some of those people.

The people who make the difference.

So, I beg you: do not settle. Do not be afraid. Take up this fight. Make it yours.

Turn your concerns into determination.

Because the future will not be written in code.

It will be written in action. Your action. Our action.

Thank you.

Mathias Risse.- Thank you, Prime Minister.

Before I ask you about the the more serious things that we had to discuss.

I want to actually, I'm getting distracted by your socks.



Already happened over lunch, so I just want to I just want to acknowledge how cool that is to be sitting here with somebody with cycling socks.

And I just want to say.

Presidente.- I love cycling.

Mathias Risse.- I just want to thank you for your amazingt to our visual culture. Good.

But now that we got the distraction out of the way, on to the more serious subjects.

So, I'd like to start a little bit by talking about state capacities in relation to technology, specifically in Spain and Europe, and then kind of go from there to talk then about the the tech oligarchs that we mostly encounter around here.

So one long standing challenge when it comes to governments getting anything done, effective regulation, is the pace of change, as you alluded to this a little bit earlier, the pace of change is breathtaking.

Technology gets developed, but that also has a personal dimension, so it's very hard to get people who are sophisticated at technology to work for government.

And, you know, they make way much more money in the private sector, but also their skills are more recognised in the private sector. Working for government often isn't cool, so it's just kind of a well known package of problems.

So and that's a very, in a way a very pedestrian problem, but very real for a prime minister.

How do you get people into doing this kind of regulatory work in government?

Presidente.- Well, as you said, it's quite difficult because, of course, there's an asymmetry when we talk about remuneration, salary remuneration.

But I would say that, you know, one thing that we have launched in Spain is a public digital company. And also launched the first, let's say, civil servants specialized on IT.

So, we have lawyers. We have economists. We have mainly lawyers and economists. I have to say. But we don't have it experts. So, I think that so far the response has been very, very positive.

So, I would say that in this angle things are moving perhaps not as fast as I would like, but they're they're moving in the right direction.

Then, of course, there are like different layers. The first layer is at national level. The second layer in our case, as European country, is the European Union regulation. And finally the multilateral level.

I have to say that last year perhaps it was not in the front page of newspapers, but the UN Assembly approved, for the first time ever, a UN panel of experts on AI. We hosted the first meeting in Spain. We wanted to do it in the national Parliament, because we want to send a message that politics, science, academia should be together, work together in order to give an efficient and equitable respond to this technology.

And it has been working very positively during these last 12 months. And it was so inspiring to see all countries represented by science on equal foot, equal basis. And I think this is also very important when we talk about multilateral level.

And, as I said earlier in my speech, the European Union, thanks to our leadership during our Presidency of the European Council, passed the first AI act worldwide And it was, you know, criticized buy many of these tech oligarchs by saying that this will reduce innovation, that this will be, you know, create more obstacles for the, you know, economic growth of of Europe.

Okay, we're ready to, you know, to amend it. But I think, as I said earlier, we need to test, we need to see the outcomes. And we need to improve this regulation. But we have to regulate.

Mathias Risse.- Regulation, of course, is something that the European Union is good at.

And, you know, you know, this is the Kennedy School of Government, I mean this as a compliment, this is nothing to be sneezed at.

But if we're thinking about the role of Europe in the tech space these days. So, regulation, European Union knows what to do.

But one challenge there, of course, is if you look at computational capacities and how they are distributed around the world. There is about 75 to 80% of computational capacities in the United States, about 15 are in China. And all the rest of the world shares the rest. And the EU is somewhere, is a single digit in computational capacities.

So, there's a challenge that you have. On the one hand, you need to build capacities in Europe. And, you know, there's increasingly also a discourse in Europe where this perception is articulated that Europe is getting sandwiched quite a bit between the American and the Chinese model.



So you need to build capacities. And you are doing that in Spain. Are you investing in AI? Bring more AI in the economy. You invest in data centers. You invest in other forward looking technologies like neurotechnology. So you do quite a bit of that, but you have to catch up quite a bit and you have to do that while you also want to take on the big American players, the tech oligarchs, as we call them here.

So, there's a balancing and navigation between these building, while also, in a way, picking, seeking the good trouble, as you know, as American civil rights people would say. How can you how can you do that?

Presidente.- But let me first reflect upon this the deregulation issue. Because it's true what you see from not only from the US Administration, but from many European governments, that we need to deregulate.

And perhaps it's not the correct expression. I would say simplification or good regulation. But deregulation to me means and resemble to what happened during the financial crisis.

And this is something that we are witnessing in the cryptocurrency world, in finance, again, after what happened during the financial crisis.

So, this speech this way of thinking is something that we have also to fight. At least this is what I'm trying to within the European Council. Let's talk about simplification. Let's talk about good regulation, but never talk about deregulation. And I think this is a, you know, a nuance. But to me it is very important.

And second, going to your question. So, if we simplify you need of course data. You need talent. And of course, you need power computation, as you said. So, in talent, I think that Europe has a lot of talent. Data. I think that we have passed acts, laws at a European scale in order to protect data from of our citizens with regard to, you know, what happens in the US.

And finally, the Commission has launched a like two or three months ago, a project of gigafactories to build five six gigafactories across the European Union. And Spain would be proud to host one of them.

All in all, what I'm trying to say is that this idea of the open strategic autonomy means, for instance, trying to boost our autonomy when it comes to technology and the capacity to develop AI.

Mathias Risse.- Now, in terms of the scale of the problem that we're up against. I really appreciated that you emphasized, that you said we need to be acting all

at once, right? So, we really need something to happen at the global scale. And there was a window of opportunity for that, right?

So, March 2023 was when everybody got freaked out because ChatGPT released, you know, its more potent models and everybody realized what we were up against.

And so there was this flurry of summits and other international activities. You were already in office. You probably did a lot of that yourself.

So, even China was very interested at that time to regulate. And I think there was a good deal of momentum recognizing that the arrival of AI is a challenge at the level of humanity and needs to be addressed at that level.

Then we had elections in the United States in November 2024, and the United States basically completely dropped out.

And the way I see the global picture these days is basically ... it is in fact, the United States, in fact, one could say it is one man who is holding us back when it comes to a global agreement on where to go with artificial intelligence.

How do you see the prospects for us acting altogether at this stage?

Presidente.- So, I see that in these states, there are states that are regulating the AI. In Europe there are many countries, governments that are regulating AI. We also did it at the European scale.

When you speak with other countries and other regions, they are quite aware about the threat and risks of AI and they are doing the same.

For instance, you know, of course, for cultural and historical reasons, we are very close to Latin America, to Iberoamerica, and we are going to have a summit of the Iberoamerican community next month, next November in Madrid.

And one of the issues will be an agreement on how do we work together in order to regulate AI and to frame the responsible development of AI.

So, this is something that is happening. We are also building up a coalition of digital willing within the European Union. We started four or five countries. And nowadays we are more than 20 countries of 27 countries, bipartisan. You have centre left, centre right governments aware about the threat and the need to work together.

And also at the multilateral level, we launched the coalition of the Digital Willing along with the Australian government, three days ago at the General Assembly, with the Australian Government, with the French government, with the Kenyan government and the Spanish government.



And there was a huge and massive participation of different countries and governments.

So, all in all, what I'm trying to say is that there's a momentum, there's a momentum.

And perhaps when it comes to China, of course, they have already stated publicly, this is at least my understanding, that they are ready to negotiate through the UN system a common regulation. And perhaps this is the time that we see tonight that President Xi and President Trump meets at the White House. They can agree that, okay, let's work together through UN to have a common regulation.

Mathias Risse.- Do you think that's likely?

Presidente.- Well. Let's hope so.

Mathias Risse.- And I just want to come back to the role of the U.S. a little bit more because, you know, as I mentioned earlier, the United States is 75% to 80% computational capacity. So in a way, you know, almost everybody acting at once. If that big guy doesn't help, the cause doesn't get us far, does it?

Presidente.- Of course. I mean, this is as you said. I noted that here in the States, this issue about the data center is a big topic, a hot topic.

I was reading some polls of the CNN this morning that 70% of citizens in the US declare being concerned about AI, and more than 70% of US citizens also say that their government is not doing enough in order to regulate responsibly the AI.

So I think that perhaps the government is not so empathetic with this situation, but there's more and more people in the States that are very much aware about the implications of AI.

And, at the end of the day, a democratic government must give a political response to the social concern. So this is going to happen. I don't know when, but it will happen.

Mathias Risse.- Since you mentioned data centers.

That's also a way of bringing the tech oligarchs, you know, the personalities of the tycoons. And, you know, what they want are on stage here.

So, one ambition that we are seeing there is to build data centers in space. So that's, that's in the news. It's putting them up in the sky.

And that has something in common with the cryptocurrencies that you also mentioned, namely the endeavor by the tech oligarchs to basically circumnavigate established systems.

Cryptocurrency is all about circumnavigating a tightly regulated international banking sector and putting data centers into space, into the sky. You know, somewhere up there means circumnavigating, just ignoring state power to getting outside of state jurisdiction.

And that, I think, teaches us something about the ambitions that some of the major people in tech have.

And there's other symptoms of what's going on there. The this expression P(doom). I know you're familiar with, but I just explain that briefly. P(doom) is the probability of doom, right? So, the the probability of what we are doing leads to extinction. And in the tech domain people are asking each other that. What is your P(doom)?

And my best understanding of that is roughly among major people in technology. The P(doom) is in the 30% and above.

So, that means that our future is created by people who think that the likelihood that they are bringing us to extinction is at least one third.

And so, putting these things together, you know what we're having here is a group of people who are who are not just after wealth, but they are pursuing a vision for the future, a transhumanist vision for the future, a long term vision of the future.

Presidente.- And the pope stated about it. I mean, I think they're very sophisticated, because when you speak with them, they tell you –going back again to the regulation– they say, well, there are like two paths. There's within these tech companies a debate. There are those who say we cannot regulate. We have to regulate the product, but not the technology, because technology is neutral.

Well, history shows that technology is never neutral. Technology is power. And they understand quite well and they use it.

And and the other approach within the tech companies is: well, let's slow down.

But sometimes these people say slow down because in the race they are behind the others, not because they have like an altruistic vision or will to slow down and to control the technology.

So, all in all, what I'm trying to say is that, as I said earlier, we cannot trust them. We have to take back the control of this technology through democracies.

Mathias Risse.- And what I'm what I'm trying to articulate here is kind of enforcing that point.



Because, basically, we are dealing with a group of very wealthy, very powerful people who are perfectly willing to accept the likelihood of a major calamity if that's what it takes to move humanity to the next stage.

So, and I think this is something distinctive about the American tech scene that in Europe is kind of alien. But I think that is really what we're up against here.

Presidente.- Look, the other debate is the alignment of AI.

We have to align AI to human values and so on and so forth, which okay, you know, there are many philosophers, many psychologists, many experts on social science working for these tech companies.

But, at the end of the day, what we need to do is to take care about humanity and our citizens and to not forget empathy, you know, the basic values that really make humankind and make humanity move forward and advance.

So, somehow we're losing that side, and we're focusing on trying to humanize AI and dehumanized humanity. And this is the paradox.

And as you said, I completely agree. This is another paradox. You see these tech oligarchs investing massively in a technology that could exting humanity, but at the same time, they are investing also massively to get immortality.

Mathias Risse.- So I will turn to the audience in a moment. I have one more question for you. There's four mics around the room. Please line up there. The general rules and the forum are always, please introduce yourselves, keep it short, ask an actual question.

One thing we'll do slightly differently this evening. I'll turn for the first question to Shoshana Zuboff here in the front rows. And Shoshana is really the spirit behind this event. And she will get to ask the first question.

But I will ask you, I want to ask you one more thing, Prime Minister, and on a slightly different topic.

So, you've spent a few days in New York, and those of us who have followed the news in New York, one didn't even have to be there to have one's mind buzzing from what happened in New York and, in particular, Donald Trump's speech at the UN gave me a deep shock, I must say.

I'm used to a lot from this president, but there is a president of the United States who in April already threatened Iran with genocidal annihilation. But one could somehow, if one really wanted to be benign in interpretation, one could think to oneself, okay, this was a social media tweet.

Now he goes to New York. He stands in the hall of the UN, an institution created largely by the United States to bring global betterment and, you know, economically, politically, and to make certain statements unsayable, right? So, to have threats of annihilation unsayable by major politicians.

The president of the United States is there and basically articulates that now such threats have become a policy. This is now United States policy in a very official speech.

You were there. So, I'm just curious what what goes through the head of the prime minister of Spain when the president of the United States gives such a speech?

Presidente.- I think that what you expect from a politician that gives a speech before any fora, but especially when it comes to the General Assembly of the UN is that you articulate a speech based on facts.

And so, you know, of course, you have your ideology, and this is something that we have to respect. Your vision on how the society has to behave or to move. That is okay, that is fine.

But when you speak before other governments, you should articulate with facts.

And, you know, last year, for instance, he spoke about climate change and he said climate change is an elite, globalist, let's say fake. And that's that is not happening. And he spoke against the renewables, the green transition.

You know, the experience in Spain is that, since I'm in office, we have increased the production of renewables up to 60% of the total electricity.

That means that we have managed to drop dramatically the electricity prices for household, industries and enterprises.

Which means that nowadays in Spain we pay a lower electricity price than for instance, in Germany, France, Italy or the European average. And that means that we are attracting foreign investment. We are industrializing our economy.

So, all in all, what I'm trying to say is that you have to give a speech with facts. You can agree or you can disagree. But what you cannot do is just give an ideological speech without facts.

Mathias Risse.- Okay. Thank you.



P.- [Shoshana Zuboff] Thank you. Thank you for this very stirring, moving, beautiful talk that you've given us this evening. Very powerful and leaves me with so many questions to ask you, but I'm going to be targeting one specific train of thought. I want to talk to you about the future.

I think we all know that the democratic decline is upon us. The breakdown of our democracies has exploded over the last two decades, which are the two decades that have been seen of the explosive growth of these oligarchs or whatever we're choosing to call them. Their global power. Their planetary power, as you put it. So this is not a coincidence. This is not mere correlation. This is cause and effect.

Now, what that suggests is that there's something in our institutions that was able to be vulnerable to these toxic methodologies and toxic processes that surveillance capitalism, these insanely wealthy now corporations have injected into our lives, our daily lives, been able to tear our societies apart, have been able to cripple our democracies.

So that makes me think about the future, because our job now, you know, I ask myself every day, what does the future need from us now? It's not an easy question to answer.

It needs more than our, you know, belting up and sorting out and kind of, you know, reestablishing and re strengthening the institutions that we've had.

There was something that wasn't enough. And we have to do more. We have to do different. We have to do better. We need new institutional forms. We need new ways of thinking and acting within those institutions.

You talk about a coalition of the digital willing. You mentioned it tonight. You mentioned it in other speeches of yours, which, as I told you, I've watched many times and I find it a very stirring, exciting image.

I would like to ask you to talk more about your vision of what this coalition could mean, what it could be, how it could be some new creation of the future rather than just doing better what we've done in the past.

Presidente.- I fully agree. I think that the risk here is that we undermine the UN system. So we need we need a coalition of the digital willing at global scale. But it has to work together with the UN system and match with academia, with science.

You know, I've been, as I said earlier, prime Minister of Spain since 2018, I have been the president of my government in a very difficult moment, such as the pandemic of Covid 19. If there is something that I learned from that experience and I would like to

share with students and, of course, with you is a clear need for policymakers to work together closer with science and academia, because we don't have the means, we don't have the knowledge, we don't have the specialties that you have. And that is why it's so important to have this kind of cooperation and collaboration.

So to respond to your question, when we speak about the structure, I of course engage and launch with other countries this coalition of digital willing, but it's important that it runs and work in parallel with the UN system, because if we don't do so – or at European level – If we don't do so, we won't have the institutionality to deliver, to materialize those ideas into a specific and concrete actions. And this is something that fortunately we're doing at European level.

And it is very interesting because it's a very democratic process. First of all, because you find there, in the coalition of the willing at European scale, you find small countries, big countries – in the European dimension, I mean –, and we open the discussions. We started with the social media and the youth, but suddenly we realized that the debate and the scope is much bigger. And we started to speak and think about other issues.

And fortunately, in her latest speech before the European Parliament, during the State of the Union of the European Union, Madam President Von der Leyen announced that she was going to take some of these policies and proposals that we launched and make them at the European level. And that would make a difference, an impact.

Of course, to me, perhaps we're running late. We should do it faster. But again, democracy has its procedures, and we have to defend those procedures in order to legitimize the decisions that we take.

And I would say that we need you. I mean, it's not a protocol or a political correct statement to say we need the academia, we need science, we need we need you to help also policymakers.

You know, policymakers nowadays in the 21st century means you're jumping from one crisis to another. So the interesting side, the experience that I can share with students here is that you should respond to the urgency, not losing the sight of the importance of the transformations that you have to deliver to your country.

That is why, for instance, nowadays Spain is well prepared, or at least more prepared than other countries, because we have managed to impulse this green transition that made us more resilient towards these energy shocks that we are suffering first from Ukraine in war and last with this Iranian war.

P.- Thank you. Bienvenido, señor presidente. My name is Miguel. I'm a grad student at MIT studying computer science and my question for you today is what



real capacities government like yours have today to stop potential manipulation of information and what is your proposal to develop them further.

Presidente.- We have a legal framework at European level that was approved by a bipartisan in Strasbourg. We call it a Democratic Shield to fight against misinformation, to fight against fake news.

The problem is that when you convert that European debate, which everybody agrees, into... you know, because we are obliged to, let's say, import those laws that, of course, we pass in the European Parliament to our national legislation, that things will change and it turned to be a fight against one party, another and another, because you are trying to control freedom of speech or the media and so on and so forth.

But we have already the legal framework and we are passing different [grabación cortada] but there's still a lot of work to do in this regard.

P.- Hello. It's a pleasure to meet you. I'm Peter, I'm a junior at the college and an AI safety researcher. I agree with a lot of the points that you made about artificial intelligence, and about how money is a corruptive influence in politics often. And in that context, I'm very curious to ask you about the fact that your wife, your brother, your former attorney general, your former chief of staff, your wife's personal assistant are among nine different corruption investigations currently ongoing into your government.

Some people are in jail in connection to this. Some people are on trial, some people are under indictment. And so I'm curious, when we have this conversation about how to restore faith in government and how to shed the perception the government is influenced by dark money, how you see yourself and your government at a time when, according to European Commission opinion polls, many Spaniards think that you're one of the reasons behind corruption within Spain. Thank you.

Presidente.- Well, thank you for this question. I would say that of course we suffer some cases of corruption. And I think that when it happens, no matter the countries. I think that what you must ask your government is to respond effectively. And this is what I did with the cases of corruption that are truth and unfortunately, my government and my party suffered.

But this is one side and there's another one. Which brings me to my family, my wife and my brother. And I'm sorry to say, those are not corruption cases or scandals. Those are other thing.

And to me, well, I think that the opposition and some far right associations have crossed some red lines that bring me to a reflection that I would like to share with you as a politician.

Being Prime Minister or a politician is rewarding because you can do a lot of things for your country. And I am proud to say that I did a lot of things for my country. And there is the outcome and the evidence and the facts. But to suffer this personal attack is very difficult to assume and it's much more difficult because a young student like you, you already condemn them and you say that my brother and my wife are guilty and this is not fair, because they are not. It's another issue which brings me to nasty politics, but not corruption.

P.- Hello. Good evening. My name is Nicholas. I'm a graduate student here at Harvard. Mr. president, you have warned us about the growing dangers of uncontrolled technological growth guided by non-state actors. Unfortunately, as your government admitted a couple of years ago, these dangers have already affected you. More specifically, your phone and that of three other cabinet members which were hacked by the Pegasus virus. Months after this hack, you reversed 40 years of Spanish neutrality in Western Sahara, and more recently, you defended Morocco after the invasion of Ceuta, even after originally denouncing it as a violation of Spain's territorial integrity.

If technology can shape the path and even threaten the very existence of democracies, what makes us sure that the impact of this technology that this hack may or not have had on you and is having on your policies right now, how can we assure that it is not shaping your day to day actions at the head of the Spanish democracy? Thank you.

Presidente.- So there are many questions inside your question, but just to respond to each of these questions.

First of all, it is true that we were hacked by Pegasus. We don't know who did it, but it was under investigation and we denounced it before the Audiencia Nacional this case. So it was true that we were hacked, but we don't know the actor or the non actor who hacked our mobile devices.

Perhaps, you know I can be criticized for many things as prime minister, but I don't think that I show in my political decisions to be dependent or not defending what I think it was worth for the interest of my people and my country.

And that brings me to the second question: Western Sahara. We have stuck this situation and this crisis for more than 50 years. Morocco, the United States and many other countries. In Europe there is only one country that doesn't support a UN resolution regarding this option of having an autonomous region within Morocco, the



Western Sahara. Only one. The rest of the European countries, also Spain, support this UN resolution and works in order to find a diplomatic solution under this resolution for Western Sahara.

But in the meantime, I just want to share with you that the first country more committed in financing humanitarian aid to the Western Sahara people is Spain, under this progressive government.

The third question that you made... So there's a thing. I understand that you don't trust what I say, but look at how difficult to me or to any other person is the following reflection: why should I have to defend myself of a fake news or misinformation such as this Pegasus situation? I denounced it before the court justice. And if there's someone who has other insights and information. Just please make it public because I cannot defend myself. This is what I would like to share with you.

P.- Buenas noches, presidente. My name is Daniel Santos Ramirez. I am a master's student here at the Kennedy School. I wanted to take a moment to celebrate your defense of the democratic agenda here in this space. And to warn us about techno oligarchies.

I want to ask you about an elite that is a bit smaller, but no less oligarchic and no less authoritarian. The Maduro regime in Venezuela, now led by Delcy Rodriguez is still refusing to call for free elections in Venezuela. Even after the events of January the 3rd, with the capture of Nicolas Maduro, we don't still have a date for a presidential election, and I think we can agree that it is more than now necessary if we want to have a true democracy

In the middle of this, there are members even of your political party, like former President Zapatero, who have close political ties with the Maduro regime and alleged financial ties with the Maduro regime.

I believe this does not aligned with the agenda that you are defending here. And so I want to ask you in this space, if you would take a moment to call for free presidential elections in Venezuela and to distance yourself from figures like former President Zapatero. Thank you.

Mathias Risse.- Just a signal that this had to be the last question. This is also an invitation for you to just say two other things to the audience.

Presidente.- First of all. You know that we have passed this law, amnesty for migrants, early this... it was this... until June. More than 1.2 million migrants were recognized, normalize their situation thanks to this political decision that we took. which, by the way, is quite weird, unfortunately, nowadays in Europe and across the world.

The first nationality to ask for that amnesty was Colombia. The third and fourth were Venezuela, Ecuador and many other countries of Latin America. Argentina, many others...

Since I'm in office, we have recognized for humanitarian purposes permissions of residence for more than 200,000 Venezuelans in Spain.

And I am blamed because I don't defend the cause of a democratic Venezuela. No, I didn't recognize the electoral results of Maduro. I always advocate for free elections in Venezuela, but at the same time, I say that the future of Venezuela has to be decided by the people of Venezuela.

Mathias Risse.- So I can see from the lines that are still standing there that we could be here a long time. We did get the signal that we need to end. But let me just say three things the way of thanking you, Prime Minister.

So first of all, again, thank you for your amazing leadership in the tech space. The future of humanity is at stake. It is a truly dramatic moment. We need you. We need more people like you. And I'm profoundly grateful that you are doing this work out there.

The second thing I'm very grateful for is that your presence here also is a way of honoring the important relationship between governments and universities, which has helped both sides so enormously, also in the United States in the post-war period, but you know that something we can no longer take for granted, that this is something that both sides honor and your presence here is much appreciated also under that aspect.

And thirdly, it also does really thank you so you knew going in here that they could ask anything. And it's amazing for a leader of your caliber to do that, to be okay with that and to sit here and to field questions, knowing that there could be anything. Also not something to be taken for granted these days.

Thank you very much.

Presidente.- Thank you.

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(Intervención original en inglés)*