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REVIEW

OF THE BOOK: BEYOND 2025: A FEW UNKNOWN QUESTIONS REGARDING US GEO-POLITICS

Authors: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Strategic Vision

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The celebrated American political scientist, without a doubt one of the most prestigious authors on United States foreign policy, who is conversant with the situation not only from the academic point of view, as Professor of Foreign Policy of the United States at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, but also as the National Security Adviser of former President Jimmy Carter. In 2012, he published his most recent work, *Strategic Vision*, which he subtitled *America and the Crisis of Global Power*, thus indicating the subject matter it deals with.

In the relatively brief, but dense, 208 pages, published by Basic Books in New York, Brzezinski gives his vision of the current strategic situation from a position, as it is normal in his work, which is centred on the United States and its international relations. He structures his work in three differentiated parts: an introduction and

some conclusions, both of which are set out briefly, and a central part in which he deals with four main subjects in their corresponding chapters. In the first place, there is the strategic retreat of the West, he then goes on to describe the phenomenon which he catalogues as the decline of the American dream; subsequently he describes how he sees a post-American world, after the year 2025; and finally, he traces out a new geo-political equilibrium, taking that same year as his point of reference.

Throughout this book, Brzezinski shows us the decadence of western power under the leadership of the United States, having recourse to certain historical analogies to establish certain parallels. But, above all, he is searching for an answer to a series of questions which refer to the effects of this decadence on the world strategic panorama.

Thus, the author attempts to answer such important questions as the implications of the transfer of power that is taking place, in a self-evident manner, from the western to the eastern hemisphere. What are the symptoms of the decadence of the United States - which he compares with the Roman Empire - or the reasons that have led this country to fail to take advantage of the unique opportunity that it had after its victory in the Cold War. In the same way, he analyses the main consequences of the loss of American leadership and supremacy in the world and, therefore, who is going to be especially affected by its fall. He also discusses the capacity of China to effectively take over the role of leading world power and, in relation with this Chinese ascendancy, what is the capacity of the west to balance this reality.

One of the most attractive points in his book is how, when dealing with the symptoms and causes of North American decadence, the author observes that there are numerous coincidences between the situation of the Soviet Union, prior to its fall, and the current situation of the United States. Therefore, he appeals to the need for a profound renewal and transformation of society and politics in America so as to avoid the United States coming to an end similar to the USSR.

He then, as it is logical, from an American point of view, sets out the solutions to the negative effects of the phenomena described, and proposes a series of actions and measures which should be taken to prevent the relative irrelevance of the west in the near future. He emphasises the need for the decadent but still influential powers, and the emerging nations, to be able to give a cooperative response to the great challenges that humanity now faces. The objective is to achieve a certain geo-political stability without which nothing would be possible and chaos would follow.

As for the relaunch of western power, always under the unquestionable leadership of the United States, Brzezinski points out the need for greater support from Europe, for which a strengthening of the unity of the continent is indispensable. This must be achieved - on this point his Polish origins influence his thinking - necessarily by means of the definitive reconciliation of Russia and Poland, with Russia and Turkey joining the European project.

As a corollary, his conclusions are based on two fundamental ideas. The first refers to the need to strengthen Europe and renew the United States so as to form a new West capable of competing with China for world predominance; while the second

reaffirms his conviction that the United States must remain a superpower - although not the only one -, playing the role of moderator and balance in Asia, similar to Great Britain in the 19th Century. That position is decisive in order to avoid an increase in existing tensions and the possibility of armed conflict, as a consequence of the rise of China and its regional drive.

Finally, we should add that this is an easily read book which is of enormous interest as it expresses a vision which, even if it is not necessarily shared by the entire American elite, is representative of the vision of the coming complex decades that is widely held in what is still the leading world power on such relevant matters as the role of America in the world order, that of Europe and the transatlantic relationship, the rise of China to the first level of power and the actions necessary to achieve a geo-political equilibrium which favours stability and will keep chaos and war at bay.

