



"Ever since the continents started interacting politically, some five hundred years ago, Eurasia has been the center of world power."

"It is imperative that no Eurasian challenger emerges capable of dominating Eurasia and thus of also challenging America."

Zbigniew Brzezinski's Seminal 1998 Book

Introduction

From a Western perspective, the world order has been relatively orderly and safe for an era. That changes. New relationships will emerge, which will also act in a coordinated manner, albeit perhaps in a (partly) different way than the West is used to and wants.

Rulers compete for territory and global hegemony, and also in the field of the humanities one can almost speak of "clashes of all against all". These turbulent developments, together with the impact of the drastic transitions and transformations that are taking place, make the world uncertain and grim.

Due to the almost a century of taking stability, peace and prosperity for granted in the Western Hemisphere, the idea of and how to deal with other worldviews and dynamics has not really come to the attention of citizens for a long time, despite the 'sea of' freedom. Systems worked well and in recent decades it was liberal democracy and the free market that guided us, not the world of culture and philosophy.

But ideas, ideologies, philosophies and systems do not last forever and were not discussed well. Civilizations rise and fall. Is the Western world in decline?

The mutilated world

Is the Western Hemisphere in decline? Many people think so. It is also thought that the time of old-style colonialism, which is long behind us, is a cause. Did the end of this long-abandoned practice contribute to the decline? Or are there other conceivable causes and arguments? Too little innovation (power) and public/private investment? Lack of strong leaders with a vision? Broad empathy for people with overly progressive ideas about social and political injustice? Vacuum in citizen involvement? Denial? Egocentrism?

Not all developments are equally reassuring: the world is struggling with confusion and madness, with rulers fighting for territory and global hegemony and there are clashes between and within both cultural, political philosophies and ideologies as well as social and all kinds of other individual views.

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This grim situation, together with the impact of the drastic transitions and transformations that are taking place, give rise to the idea that values, certainties and perspectives are lost.

Eurasia and the US

The Eurasian landmass is home to most of the world's population, natural resources, and economic activity. "Eurasia is the "grand chessboard" on which America's supremacy will be asserted and challenged in the years to come" Brezinski argues in 1997. "The goal is to manage the conflicts and relationships in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East so that no rival superpower arises to threaten our interests or our well-being."

Do recent Russian aggression and Chinese renaissance then herald the beginning of a decline in Western dominance? Does the rise of regional powers play a part? The US and China are leading the way as world powers, Europe will have to put its shoulders to the wheel, and Russia has ambitions to regain imperial power.

Europe is never finished



Europe has an age-old cultural heritage, beautiful natural areas, a diversity of world languages and globally spread cultures that no other continent has to this extent.

Europe is also a patchwork, a union of states, a centre where people sometimes fly at each other's throats and an area where people have been searching for a shared identity for centuries.

But Europe is not, or better yet, never finished and does not meet modern requirements to play on the grand chessboard. When the queen is at the edge of the board, she covers 21 squares and has the most freedom of movement of any chess piece. This chess piece can be moved diagonally, horizontally and vertically as far as desired.

The love, ambition and the urge to design

Europa's beauty inspired Zeus' love, who approached her in the form of a white bull and carried her away from the coast of Tyre in Phoenicia to Gortyn on Crete. He loved her so much that he showered her with three priceless gifts:

- the first one was a bronze man, Talos, a giant automaton made to protect her in Crete from pirates and invaders. He circled the island's shores three times daily;
- the second was a dog, Laelaps, which could hunt anything he wanted;
- the last one was a javelin that had the power to hit its target, whatever it was.

It is clear that protecting and defending is an old ambition.

Zeus took dangers into account and gave tools. But where have his gifts gone? The strategic compass, global gateway and global strategy? The European Union is reactive and functions as well as the member states allow it. Only in times of crises does she make progress in the cooperation process. But that's opportunistic and a long way to go. The future calls for a vision for Europe, its role on the global stage and the implementation and functioning of it when it comes to issues of geopolitics, sovereignty, identity, security, IOs, IR, IL.

What next?

What does the new world order look like? What do we want it to look like? These questions are not new, but the current era forces us to ask them again and work on them.

While it is important and inevitable for the future of the world to reconcile in a timely manner, to look back and to reflect regularly (using reason), a point on the horizon is needed to move forward.

The world needs a grand narrative ([Social Contract Theory](#)). For the West, the narrative is freedom, liberal democracy and capitalism and, one may hope, (European) humanism and the aspect of religion. But the world is changing and demands that humanity should not stand aside and watch, but is obliged to shape changing circumstances itself, which balance shared citizenship and cultural differences.

International relations are changing and shifts in power are creating tensions, but all forms of government will have to respect the rules of geopolitics and multilateral cooperation to avoid "war of all against all". Reform of the UN, a modern social contract, and answers to [immigration issues](#) ('Pegasus' August 2024, Caux Round Table for Moral Capitalism) must contribute to avoid conflicts.

As said, if the queen is at the edge of the chessboard, she covers 21 spaces, that is if EU awakens geopolitically, this union must take this place among the US and China, deliver, and use the existing freedom of movement on the board to maintain space for discussion with Russia. Power and influence (coupled to adequate instruments), as well as available natural resource stocks are of decisive importance here. Remind: Europe has the ECSC example of from the past.



Time to put our shoulders to the wheel together, strengthen international cooperation and share the facilities of this earth where necessary.