

Dan Leahy's Book Outline:

THE GRAND CHESSBOARD **BY ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI**

American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives (1997)

INTRODUCTION

1. Eurasia, primarily its Western periphery, has been the center of world power since continents started interacting politically 500 years ago.
2. Last decade a tectonic shift: Collapse of USSR meant a non-Eurasian power is key arbiter of region and first global power (The US).
3. Eastern region now vital center of economic growth and political influence.
4. American foreign policy must ensure that no other power controls this "center of the world."

HEGEMONY OF A NEW TYPE

The First Global Power.

1. **World War I weakened and WW II meant no European power** would be a world power. Two non-European hegemon split it: the USA and USSR.
2. USA contained on three fronts: Korean War, Berlin Wall and then Afghanistan with financing local resistance and build up in Persian Gulf.

USSR imploded, like empires, that "fall apart" rather than fall from "economic and social strains." (9) (Good quote about empires -- possibly relevant to USA.)

3. Other Empires: Roman and Chinese. Collapsed internally due to: too large, cultural hedonism and financial inflation. Still, however, regional powers.
4. **A Global Analogy: the Mongol Empire.** Ruled by military domination without a claim to cultural superiority, as with China and Roman. Attempted continuation through assimilation of local cultures, but disappeared. (1206-1405). Then, Europe.

The First Global Power.

5. Europe's supremacy was not, however, derived from a single European power (19). While **cultural superiority** was essential for Spain, then France and finally Britain, not even Britain ruled Europe and when it imploded in WWI so did Britain.

6. The US is the only comprehensive global superpower based on domination of military superiority, global growth, technological innovation and cultural appeal. (24).

The American Global System.

1. Mirrors the "domestic American experience" - pluralistic character of both American society and political system.

2. American public less imperialistic therefore US uses "technique of co-optation." (25) reinforced by "cultural domination" - and appeal to world's youth, use of US educational system.

3. Ideological appeal: "quest for individual success enhances freedom while generating wealth." (26)

4. Foreign countries drawn into domestic bargaining in US political arena. The US as center of continuous bargaining system played by American rules.

THE EURASIAN CHESSBOARD

1. **Importance:** Largest continent. 75% of population; Most of world's physical wealth; 60% of world GNP; 3/4 of know energy resources. Six largest economies and military spenders. Overshadows American if untied.

2. **America Can Prevail IF:** if Middle Space drawn into American influence; If Southern region (India/Pakistan, Middle East) is not dominated by a single player and if no Eastern unified force expels US from its "offshore bases."

3. **A Difficulty at Home:** "But the pursuit of power is not a goal that commands popular passion, except in conditions of sudden threat or a challenge to the public's sense of domestic well-being." (36)

THE EURASIAN CHESSBOARD

4. A Difficulty Abroad: Three Grand Imperatives -

"... to prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, to keep tributaries pliant and protected, and to keep the barbarians from coming together." (40)

5. Nation Roles:

a. France and Germany in Europe. Britain is not a geostrategic player. US prefers Germany.

(Question: to what extent is French ATTAC/Le Monde Diplomatic involvement in P.A. a French foreign policy??)

b. Russia and China important; Japan's self-restraint makes it Not a geostrategic player in Asia.

c. Central Asia: Islamic fundamentalism could challenge US primacy here, but no core state and political cohesion. (therefore, diffuse violence). (54)

d. Threats to US Primacy in Eurasia:

(1) an 'antihegemonic' coalition of Russian and China (and maybe Iran)

(2) A Sino-Japanese coalition; but hard to imagine given Japan's history in China and US attention to Japan's actions.

(3) French-Russian realignment.

THE DEMOCRATIC BRIDGEHEAD

1. Europe is America's entrance into Eurasia. It's experimenting with "postnational" organization, but it is not yet a "political Europe."

2. Two Agendas: France is reincarnation and Germany is redemption + American security. France has a delusion about a global power, but it cannot protect Germany nor Europe. This is a US role.

The reunification of Germany defeated both France and Russia economically. The next step is German-Poland reconciliation as a stepping stone to further integration northward and eastward.

THE DEMOCRATIC BRIDGEHEAD

3. A "Europe" needs both France AND Germany. German economic leadership in a united Europe advancing via Poland to the Ukraine. France can play a regional role in North Africa.
4. RISK: -- Europe could get absorbed in "social hedonism" (73) - expansion of a state sponsored social structure - a "cultural condition that combines escapist hedonism with spiritual emptiness..." -- dangerous.
5. US policy: strengthen EU drive, maintain Transatlantic Dialogue and eventually integrate Russia into Europe.

THE BLACK HOLE

1. (December, 1991). Collapse of USSR meant "black hole" within which US had to prevent reemergence of another Eurasian empire that could obstruct US goal of "... shaping a larger Euro-Atlantic system to which Russia can then be stably and safely related." (87)
2. Loss of Ukraine (Odessa). Loss of Caspian Sea as Russian lake, now Russia one of five claimants. Plus China's economic strength now new and with 1.2 billion people a threat.
3. A Eurasian partnership or EU analogy seems hollow even though Russia has maintained military bases in many of its former republics. Without the Ukraine, Russia would be "asianized." (113)
4. 1996 Anti-Hegemonic Alliance. Russia-China and Iran. Nothing to gain and no real cement in "anti-hegemonic" notions.
5. **Russia's only choice is Europe.** It should act like Kemal Ataturk. Give up its imperial ambitions, or notions of partnerships or anti-hegemonic alliances. Accept independence of Ukraine. But, no Russian Ataturk is in sight.

THE EURASIAN BALKANS

1. **Unstable.** A combination of internal political instability and a lack of a regional hegemon invites intrusion and more instability. = definition of "Balkan."

2. **A Prize** as a transportation link (east and west), as an area for a regional hegemon (Turkey, Iran, China, Russia), **but most important economic prize: gas and oil reserves.**

3. **Nine Countries:** (Use Chart, p.127)

Caucasus: Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan. (historic nations)

Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan - are Turkic. Tajikistan is Persian and Afghanistan is a Pathan, Tajik, Pashtun and Persian ethnic mosaic.

Kazakstan: 18 million. 35% Russian. 20% non-Kazak. Nationalism difficult.

Uzbekistan: 25 million and more homogeneous population. Maybe 75% Uzbeks. Claim descent from Tamerlane (1336-1404) - with Tashkent as capital.

Tajikistan. 6.5 million. 2/3 Tajiks. 25% Uzbeks. But, almost as many Tajiks live in northern Afghanistan.

Afghanistan > 22 million. A nation-state in name only. The jihad against Russia raised religion to dominant dimension. (132).

4. **Elites and People.** Nonreligious/secular political elites versus Islamic revivalism creates instability within these emerging nations.

5. **Multiple Contestants and Pipelines.** Russia, Turkey (Ottoman Empire), Iran (Persian Empire of 500 BC).

Pakistan: Deny Iran influence in Afghanistan and Tajikistan and get pipeline to Arabian Sea. India therefore would favor Iran and Russian influence.

Russia: Azerbaijan is priority. Seals off Central Asia from West (Turkey), but A is opting for a pipeline through Georgia to Turkey.

Turkmenistan: Pipeline through Afghanistan to Pakistan and Arabian Sea (Unocal route).

US Policy: No single power comes to control. Russia as partner, not dominator. Focus on Azer, Uzbek and Ukraine. Turkey to Europe.

THE FAR EASTERN ANCHOR.

1. **Chinese Perspective:** 150 years of Chinese humiliation at hands of England (Opium War), Russia (Stalin's domination), Japan's war in China and US' support of Japan. .
2. Democratization vs. bureaucratic control. Internal tensions of natinalism vs internal divisions. Still a poor nation, etc. **means Regional Power**, not global power.
3. China sees the need to keep the US as a regional player, not a hegemon and keep it attached to Japan. This will lead the US to eventually choose China as its partner.
4. Japan is not Germany. It is isolated and not Asian. It is more Western.
5. **Policy:** No military burden for Japan. Bring China into region. Open G-7 to China. Japan as a global economic power with US via a Free Trade Pact, bilaterally.

CONCLUSION

1. US is global power and eurasia is globe's central arena. The only alternative to US is "international anarchy."
2. Maintain geopolitical pluralism, shifting to partners and then global core of political responsibility
3. Ensure that no combination of forces could expel US from Eurasia.

Unified Europe (social Hedonism); Russia integrated into Europe (imperial ambitions). Investments into Central Asian independent states is key, as well as a "central Europe" Ukraine. Turkey to EU is important.
4. Eventual long-term goal: Trans-Eurasian Security System (TESS) -- EU/US-Russia, China, Japan and India.
5. US is probably last of global power. Possible because anyone can become an American, but only Chinese are Chinese. Nevertheless, it won't last for long and the US has a short window of opportunity.