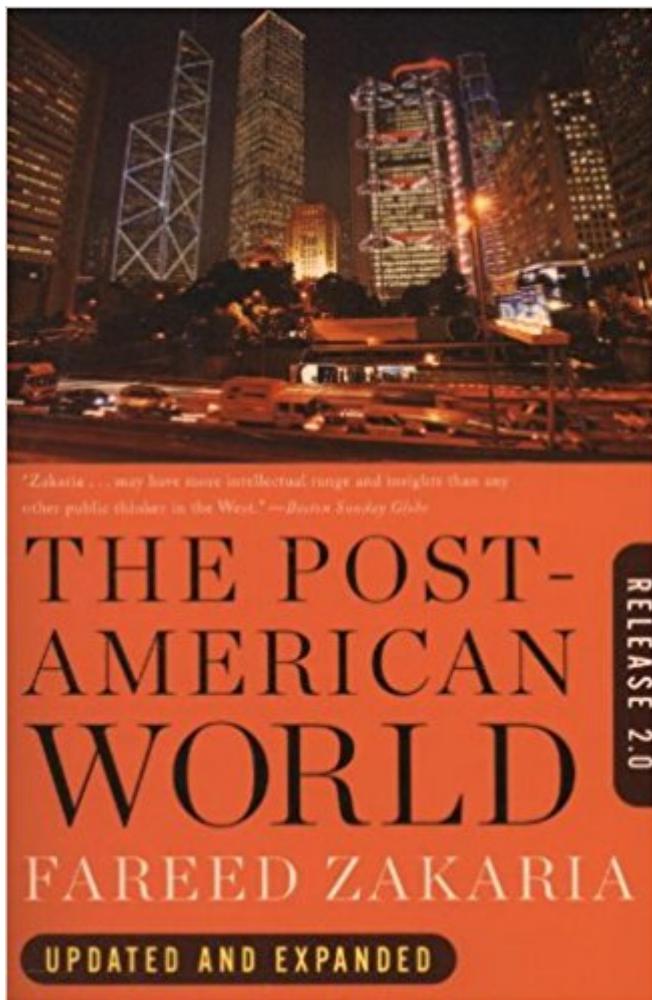


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The Post-American World: Release 2.0



Synopsis

“A relentlessly intelligent book.” Joseph Joffe, New York Times Book Review “This is not a book about the decline of America, but rather about the rise of everyone else.” So begins Fareed Zakaria’s blockbuster on the United States in the twenty-first century, and the trends he identifies have proceeded faster than anyone anticipated. How might the nation continue to thrive in a truly global era? In this fully updated 2.0 edition, Zakaria answers these questions with his customary lucidity, insight, and imagination.

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Customer Reviews

Fareed Zakaria and Ian Bremmer: Author One-to-One In this exclusive, we brought together authors Fareed Zakaria and Ian Bremmer and asked them to interview each other. Ian Bremmer is the president of Eurasia Group, the world’s leading global political risk research and consulting firm. He has written for The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Newsweek, Foreign Affairs, and other publications, and his books include Every Nation for Itself, The End of the Free Market, and The J Curve. Read on to see Ian Bremmer’s questions for Fareed Zakaria, or turn the tables to see what Zakaria asked Bremmer. Ian Bremmer: You made clear from the opening sentence of The Post-American World that you do not believe that America faces some kind of inevitable, irreversible decline. But how can U.S. policymakers ensure that the rise of the rest actually strengthens the United States? Fareed Zakaria: If more countries thrive in the existing global system, it means a larger world economy--more consumers and producers, investors and inventors. That’s great for America. As Europe boomed after World War II, America boomed with it. The rise of Japan

and Korea and Taiwan has not meant the decline of America. But the key has been that we have to be able to adjust and adapt. The US economy was enormously productive in the 1950s and 1960s--leading the world in almost every way, from technology to infrastructure to mass education. Our problem is that we no longer lead the world on many of these dimensions-- think of infrastructure or K-12 education--and the rest of the world has been hard at work catching up. So, the fault lies not in our competitors but in ourselves. The good news is, if we can rectify these mistakes, we should still do well in the emerging world. Bremmer: Given everything that has happened since 2008--the financial market meltdown, the Eurozone crisis, the Arab Spring--have you become more confident or less that the United States can successfully transition from its previous role as global hegemon to a new role as the most powerful among other powerful countries? Zakaria: There are two distinct (though related) challenges for Washington in a Post-American World. The first is economic, which I outline above. The second is political. Here the structural challenge might seem daunting. Political power is not like economic power. In economics, others can grow and that can be good for you--win, win. In politics, power is relative. As China and India and Brazil and Turkey all prosper and gain strength and confidence, whose dominant influence are they cutting into? The U.S. But even here, the picture is actually quite hopeful for America. The truth is, only America has power along all dimensions -- economic, military, political, cultural. And that gives it great strength, particularly as an agenda-setter. Also, the rise of these other countries creates uncertainty and anxiety in the international system. If the United States plays its cards well, it can be the crucial stabilizing force in the system. You can see that dynamic at work in Asia where China's rise has unsettled many Asian countries and they look to America to play a stabilizing role. It's a new diplomatic challenge for America, to be more of a catalyst and broker than hegemon and arbiter. It emphasizes brains more than brawn. Let's hope we're up to it. Bremmer: How can policymakers overcome the polarization of American politics to get this right? Zakaria: That's the trillion-dollar question. America's economy and society remain dynamic. Its political system is broken. First, recognize the problem. Stop mouthing slogans about how we have the world's greatest democracy. Our system is now highly dysfunctional and corrupt. We need to fix it. Bremmer: Among rising states, which do you think have the most staying power and why? Will some of the rest be left behind? Zakaria: China is in a league apart from every other rising power. It has the scale--in terms of sheer numbers--to have a huge global impact. It is also run by a competent elite, technocrats who plan for the long term and are moving China up the value chain. They are making huge investments in education and infrastructure, which will pay off over the long

run. I agree with you that China continues to have a long-term political challenge, how to combine a vigorous and open economy with a closed and bureaucratic political system. But so far they have managed to balance it--I think they will need to make much larger political changes in the next decade than they have in the last decade. Bremmer: How well do you think America is responding to China's continued rise? Zakaria: American business has been responding well to China's rise, helping it but also benefitting from it. American society is more closed and parochial than American business and so there has been little contact, which is a pity because we can always learn from others. Washington, at a foreign policy level, has actually done quite well in its handling of China. It has encouraged the integration of China into the global economy, it has tried to get China to be more rule-based and more committed to producing (rather than consuming) global public goods. And it has carefully and systematically shored up its alliances with key Asian countries, from India to Japan to South Korea to Australia, which is an important hedge against Chinese expansion. All in all, a solid performance. Bremmer: You devote a chapter to India's growing prominence. Are you optimistic that India's government will help spur the country toward the next stage of its economic development? Or is this still a country where progress will come mainly in spite of government? Zakaria: China grows because of its government, and India grows in spite of its government. I don't expect much improvement in India's public policy. The infrastructure will continue to lag, the education system will be poor, the government will keep doling out subsidies, and tax and regulatory policy will be uncompetitive. But Indian businesses are world class. They manage under very difficult conditions to perform amazingly well. They manage capital efficiently, understand global markets and brands, and have high quality management. India has good demographics, with lots of young consumers. India's story is a bottom-up story, rather than China's top-down story. But don't kid yourself. Ultimately, you need good government policy to go to the next stage. Unless there is massive and intelligent investment in human and physical capital, India will lag behind China substantially. Whether in India or America, bad government will be a huge limiting factor on a country's success, no matter how dynamic the society and the economy.

Photo of Ian Bremmer © Marc Bryan Brown

Starred Review. When a book proclaims that it is not about the decline of America but the rise of everyone else, readers might expect another diatribe about our dismal post-9/11 world. They are in for a pleasant surprise as Newsweek editor and popular pundit Zakaria (The Future of Freedom) delivers a stimulating, largely optimistic forecast of where the 21st century is heading. We are living

in a peaceful era, he maintains; world violence peaked around 1990 and has plummeted to a record low. Burgeoning prosperity has spread to the developing world, raising standards of living in Brazil, India, China and Indonesia. Twenty years ago China discarded Soviet economics but not its politics, leading to a wildly effective, top-down, scorched-earth boom. Its political antithesis, India, also prospers while remaining a chaotic, inefficient democracy, as Indian elected officials are (generally) loathe to use the brutally efficient tactics that are the staple of Chinese governance. Paradoxically, India's greatest asset is its relative stability in the region; its officials take an unruly population for granted, while dissent produces paranoia in Chinese leaders. Zakaria predicts that despite its record of recent blunders at home and abroad, America will stay strong, buoyed by a stellar educational system and the influx of young immigrants, who give the U.S. a more youthful demographic than Europe and much of Asia whose workers support an increasing population of unproductive elderly. A lucid, thought-provoking appraisal of world affairs, this book will engage readers on both sides of the political spectrum. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Mr. Zakaria has a very perceptive view of the future of the world and America's range of possible roles within that future. If you study history with a view to how the human race has developed, one of the themes within that view is that, for our protection, we continually learn to form larger and more inclusive groups within which to function. From that viewpoint, globalization and world unity are inevitable, so the question becomes "How can we best get there and best function, once there?" Though Zakaria did not say this in those words, he really outlined the general concept thoroughly and well. His multicultural background has given him opportunity to develop valid perceptions -- and in addition he has developed formidable powers of analysis. I loved his powerful but realistic optimism. I think all of us function best when we can embrace optimism. In some ways, his concluding point that the present United States is engulfed in a fear that is entirely inappropriate for a world leader is the most important of the many important points in his book. We CAN control our emotions -- and none of us wants to be hag-ridden by fear -- and the ideas and perceptions outlined in his book can help us to emerge from that atmosphere of fear that motivates too many USA actions at present.

Zakaria analyzes where the U.S. has been and how it has arrived where it is today. I am impressed by his insights into the dangers facing us today. Dangers that are plagued by our frightening ourselves over terrorist, seeing ourselves as imminently about to be personally in danger at all

times, giving up privacy and independence and espousing draconian laws. Even more, giving up power to demigogs and dictatorial politicians.

I enjoyed this overview concerning the roles open to America politically. Fareed sees the U.S. using its soft powers to shape the future. We should not bully others nor preach to them or judge their world view. We should show by example, by living up to our ideals and be a controlled actor. He is quite convincing and provides good information to support his advice.

I decided to read this because I saw that Barack Obama was reading it and I wanted to see what he has been thinking about. I can see where this will help him if he becomes President, because the author does a good job of explaining and defining the post American world. The author maintains that the 21st century is not so much about the decline of American influence as it is about the rise of the third world. China, India, and African nations are becoming more technologically advanced and globalized. Moreover, half of all PHD students in the sciences in the USA are foreign students from overseas. Fareed Zakaria also suggests that Americans need to continue emphasizing technological development and educational advancement if they want to stay competitive with the world. We also need to realize that not all Muslims are of the radical kind, and that we need to be more wise and discerning. The author also shows how the nations of the earth have tended to prosper under administrations that have emphasized development, like post Mao Tse Tong China. This is a good primer on the international landscape and people should read it.

Zakaria presents an excellent, balanced view of the future of American unipolarity and the impact of the Big Two - China and India, on America's future. Instead of doomsday predictions and worry about how China and India will take over, he presents a pragmatic view of how these and other countries are rising - not that America is necessarily failing. Zakaria also outlines a realistic roadmap for how America can avoid continuing as an international pariah and retain its influence, by realizing it is the most powerful part of a multipolar system, but the other parts add up to far more than its power. His repeated statements of how we live in fear rather than pride strike a powerful chord and should make all Americans focus on what we've done right rather than what we are told to fear.

The book was a gift to my father who expressed interest in it. The book arrived on time and as described in excellent condition. He is reading it and enjoying it very much.

Far sighted look at political and economic world history that explains what's happening in the world now and what's likely to happen next. Very smart and logical

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