

THE NEXT 100 YEARS – A FORECAST for the 21st CENTURY

by George Friedman

“Conventional analysis suffers from a profound failure of imagination. It imagines passing clouds to be permanent and is blind to powerful, long-term shifts taking place in full view of the world.” - George Friedman

In his thought provoking book, George Friedman, founder of STRATFOR - the pre-eminent private intelligence and forecasting firm - focuses on what he knows best, the future. He offers a highly readable forecast of the changes to expect globally during the twenty-first century. He explains where and why future wars will erupt, which nations will gain and lose economic and political power, and how new technologies and cultural trends will alter the way we live and fight wars in the new century.

The Next 100 Years draws on a mind-blowing exploration of history and geopolitical patterns dating back hundreds of years and the book details shocking changes in store for the world:

- The U.S. Jihadist war will conclude - replaced by a second full-blown cold war with Russia;
- China will undergo a major extended internal crisis, and Mexico will emerge as an important world power thanks to the end of the population explosion in the West;
- A new global war will unfold in 2050 between the US and an unexpected coalition from Eastern Europe, Eurasia, and the Far East but armies will be much smaller and wars will be less deadly;
- Technology will focus on space - both for major military uses and for a dramatic new energy resource that will have radical environmental implications;

Friedman states that the US is economically, militarily and politically the most powerful country in the world, and there is no real challenger to that power. Ever since the Civil War, the US has turned from a marginal developing nation into an economy bigger than the next four countries combined. Militarily, it has gone from being an insignificant force to dominating the globe. Politically, the US touches virtually everything, sometimes intentionally and sometimes simply because of its presence.

He stipulates that the country that controls the world's oceans controls the world's trade much like Britain dominated the nineteenth century. Today, the US is the only major power to have native ports central to world trade on both the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans. So any attempt to forecast the 21st century must begin with the acknowledgement of America's naval power and its ability to project that power inland from the sea for decades to come. Power is created by fundamentals of geography, demographics, technology and culture, and countries like Japan and England are likely to become maritime powers if they are to maintain sovereignty whereas Poland, Germany and Russia must maintain an army. These geopolitical facts influence the whole texture and trajectory of these societies for the next 100 years.

Friedman maintains that until Al Qaeda gains political control of a major country they will have little real power. There are too many inherent divisions in the Islamic world for them to be a unified threat before its oil runs low and then they have no power. Almost every region of the world has political fault lines where quakes can easily occur and it has been American policy to leave these faults in place. It isn't to create trouble between the various factions but to prevent these factions from unifying and forming effective coalitions which would attack American self-interests. The policy is to create benign chaos which the US does very well.

The US so far hasn't objected to Europe attempting to organize into a single entity because it has been a buffer against the old USSR but since that has collapsed and Russia isn't so threatening it will be in US interests not to let Europe go too far with its unification. He states that North America has replaced Europe as the centre of gravity in the world, and whoever dominates North America is virtually assured of being the dominant global power. For the twenty-first century at least, that will be the US. But, Friedman insists that common sense is the one thing that will not prevail and the unexpected should be expected.

Friedman also disagrees that China is the next challenger to the US for three reasons. First, it is a very isolated country physically which means the Chinese aren't going to easily expand. Second, building a navy and creating well-trained sailors takes a long time. Third, China is inherently unstable. Whenever it opens its borders to the outside world, the coastal region becomes prosperous whilst the interior remains impoverished. This leads to tension, conflict, and instability. It also leads to economic decisions made for political reasons, resulting in inefficiency and corruption. Far from being a challenger, China is a country the US will be trying to bolster and hold together as a counterweight to the Russians.

Friedman's predictions are based on factors such as natural resources, geopolitics and population cycles. While some forecasts appear credible, others such as the armed border clashes between Mexico and the US in the 2080s and the space war pitting Japan and Turkey against the US and allies may appear as fantastic and terrifying as science fiction. However if there were only one argument Friedman could make about the twenty-first century, he says it would be that the European Age has ended and that the North American Age has begun. The events of the twenty-first century will pivot around the US. Not because the US is a just or moral regime nor does it mean that America has developed a mature civilization. However it does mean that in many ways the history of the US will be the history of the twenty-first century.

The increasing pressure for organisations to compete in a global environment and economy will force businesses to work more collaboratively. The rewards for partnerships is immense, many alliances fail because of the lack of knowledge and skills to establish a successful partnership, This excellent book gives you the panacea for making them work.

"There are some brilliant apercus to be found in these pages."
--James Neuger; Bloomberg

"The Next 100 Years is fascinating because of its dismissal of the conventional wisdom."
--New York Post

GEORGE FRIEDMAN is the founder and CEO of STRATFOR, the world's leading private intelligence and forecasting company. He is frequently called upon as a media expert and is the author of four books, including *America's Secret War*, and numerous articles on national security, information warfare, computer security, and the intelligence business.

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