

# American Culture and the Demise of Empire

Cultural Decay and Motivating Empire. The Grand Chessboard Part 2

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✘ Zbigniew Brzezinski's described in his book *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (1997), how the focus of American global primacy should be to unify the world under the dictates of the United Nations. This was described in my first article entitled [America's Role as the First, Only, and Last Truly Global Superpower](#).

There are many problems associated with the emergence of the United Nations out of the ashes of the American empire. Brzezinski makes clear his distain for the limitations that "populist democracy" puts on his desired movements around the Eurasian chessboard and his revulsion at the potential for an "impotent global power".

"It is also a fact that America is too democratic at home to be autocratic abroad. **This limits the use of America's power, especially its capacity for military intimidation.** Never before has a populist democracy attained international supremacy. But **the pursuit of power is not a goal that commands popular passion**" [emphasis mine] - 35

"A genuinely populist democracy has never before attained international supremacy. The pursuit of power and especially the economic costs and human sacrifice that the exercise of such power often requires are not generally congenial to democratic instincts. **Democratization is inimical to imperial mobilization.**" [emphasis mine] - 210

"Indeed, the critical uncertainty regarding the future may well be whether America might become the first superpower unable or unwilling to wield its power. Might it become an impotent global power?" - 210

## Four Key Dimensions of Power

"In that context, for some time to come- for more than a generation- America's status as the world's premier power is unlikely to be contested by any single challenger. No nation-state is likely to match America in the four key dimensions of power (military, economic, technological, and **cultural**) that cumulatively produce decisive global political clout." [emphasis mine] - 195

Little needs to be said about the first three dimensions of power; military, economic and technological. The fourth dimension, culture, is very important and rarely given appropriate attention. Brzezinski and the elite above and around him are well aware of the power of the creation and manipulation of culture. It is an essential component to convincing the

American public to execute the elite designed imperial goals as well as the eventual and necessary removal of American primacy to make way for the emergence of the United Nations' rise to dominance.

### **American Culture and the Demise of Empire**

The current culture in America is aimed at the ruination of the American society and the empire few Americans realize they are a part of. This process requires many different things, but Brzezinski highlights the major themes; lack of association with empirical accomplishments and goals, lack of social cohesion, individual decadence, etc.

“Moreover, most Americans by and large do not derive any special gratification from their country’s new status as the sole global superpower. Political “triumphalism” connected with America’s victory in the Cold War has generally tended to receive a cold reception” - 36

“More generally, cultural change in America may also be uncongenial to the **sustained exercise abroad of genuinely imperial power**. That exercise requires a **high degree of doctrinal motivation, intellectual commitment, and patriotic gratification**. Yet the dominant culture of the country has become increasingly fixated on mass entertainment that has been heavily dominated by personally hedonistic and socially escapist themes. The cumulative effect has made it increasingly difficult to mobilize the needed political consensus on behalf of sustained, and also occasionally costly, American leadership abroad. Mass communications have been playing a particularly important role in that regard, generating a strong revulsion against any selective use of force that entails even low levels of casualties.” [emphasis mine] - 211

“In addition, both America and Western Europe have been finding it difficult to cope with the cultural consequences of social hedonism and the dramatic decline in the centrality of religious-based values in society. (The parallels with the decline of the imperial systems summarized in chapter 1 [Rome for example] are striking in that respect.) The resulting cultural crisis has been compounded by the spread of drugs and, especially in America, by its linkage to the racial issue. Lastly, the rate of economic growth is no longer able to keep up with growing material expectations, with the latter stimulated by a culture that places a premium on consumption.” - 212

### **Proper Motivation**

Brzezinski’s geostrategic imperatives will require a final surge for the dying American empire. To accomplish this, he recognizes the need for the sudden emergence of a “direct external threat”.

“Moreover, as America becomes an increasingly multicultural society, it may find it more difficult to fashion a consensus on foreign policy issues, except in the circumstances of a **truly massive and widely perceived direct external threat**. Such a consensus generally existed throughout World War II and even during the Cold War.” [emphasis mine] - 211

“It is also a fact that America is too democratic at home to be autocratic abroad. This limits the use of America’s power, especially its capacity for military intimidation. Never before has a populist democracy attained international supremacy. But the pursuit of power is not a goal that commands

popular passion, except in conditions of **a sudden threat or challenge to the public's sense of domestic well-being**. The economic self-denial (that is, defense spending) and the human sacrifice (casualties **even** among professional soldiers) required in the effort are uncongenial to democratic instincts. Democracy is inimical to imperial mobilization." [emphasis mine] - pg 35

This was provided four years later by the attacks of 9/11.

### **Terrorist threat**

Brzezinski does however highlight nicely the inherent feebleness of today's direct external threat - Islamic fundamentalism.

"A possible challenge to American primacy from Islamic fundamentalism could be part of the problem in this unstable region. By exploiting religious hostility to the American way of life and taking advantage of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Islamic fundamentalism could undermine several pro-Western Middle Eastern governments and eventually jeopardize American regional interests, especially in the Persian Gulf. However, without political cohesion and in the absence of a single genuinely powerful Islamic state, a challenge from Islamic fundamentalism would lack a geopolitical core and would thus be more likely to express itself through diffuse violence." - 53

But, he does also underscore the usefulness of terrorism, or the threat of terrorism to push his ideas.

"It is also noteworthy that international conflicts and acts of terrorism have so far been remarkably devoid of any use of the weapons of mass destruction. How long that self-restraint may hold is inherently unpredictable, but the increasing availability, not only to states but also to organized groups, of the means to inflict massive casualties- by the use of nuclear or bacteriological weapons- also inevitably increases the probability of their employment." - 213

### **Creating the New Global System With Culture**

The planned decay, or collapse, of the American empire must coincide with the emergence of the United Nations. Brzezinski mentions the tool to be used to generate a more international culture required for the acceptance of and obedience to global government.

"These efforts will have the added historical advantage of benefiting from the new web of global linkages that is growing exponentially outside the more traditional nation-state system. That web- woven by **multinational corporations, NGOs** (nongovernmental organizations, with many of them transnational in character) and **scientific communities** and reinforced by the **Internet**— already creates an informal global system that is inherently congenial to more institutionalized and inclusive global cooperation." [emphasis mine] - 215

The use of multinational corporations should need no explanation with the almost daily international corporate mergers, interdependence derived from the separation of production and consumption, and the uniformity of products across the entire globe. NGOs and the

scientific communities are hard at work pushing for international institutions in their rabid campaign against global warming. The internet too, is a powerful tool in promoting a global digital culture.

*My next article will draw attention to Brzezinski's call for the expansion of the European Union and NATO, the establishment of an Asian Union, and his work with the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission in forming an American Union.*

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