

Zbigniew Brzezinski's unresolved contradictions

by Mark Burdman

Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21st Century

by Zbigniew Brzezinski

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At times, on reading *Out of Control*, one is tempted to think that Zbigniew Brzezinski is making a serious effort to morally redeem himself. Here we have the man who served with such ill repute as Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, issuing an "urgent warning" that the world is heading toward disintegration and disaster because of "the absence in the West of any binding moral imperatives," "careless toying with relativistic agnosticism," and "uninhibited relativism." These arguments would appear to be consistent with those of Pope John Paul II in the latest encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. We read him bemoaning that the United States has become a "permissive cornucopia," in which the drive for "instant self-gratification" prevails over all else. We have Brzezinski soberly depicting the 20th century as a period of massive criminality, barbarism, and "megadeath," and purporting to seek to define a new philosophy and ethic to avoid further disaster. Elsewhere, we read a sober analysis of the Russian situation, containing a warning that the West should desist from its insistence on "liberal free market" prescriptions for Russia, and postulating the near-term reemergence of a "Third

Rome" imperial force ruling in Moscow.

Despite the Brzezinski-speak, there is little in such segments that any sane person could disagree with, in substance. Is this the same Brzezinski who touted the "post-industrial technetronic age" in his mid-1960s book *Between Two Ages*, who architected a lunatic "arc of crisis" strategy for destabilizing the Islamic regions of the Middle East and Central Asia, who has been the chief theoretician of David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission, who participated in the notorious "1980s Project" of the New York Council on Foreign Relations, which recommended the "controlled disintegration" of the world economy and harsh measures of population control for the Third World?

The answer is, "no—and yes." Interlaced with seeming appeals to sanity are the worst imaginable outbursts of globalism, British geopolitics, and, at determining moments, a combination of stoicism and gnostic gobbledygook converging on outright ecological fascism. While much of his diagnosis appears to be sound, Brzezinski's proposed solutions are, in the main, politically and morally abhorrent.

Such contradictions make *Out of Control* intriguing reading. Brzezinski himself might soon again play a significant role in a Washington administration. On Oct. 17, the London *Sunday Telegraph's* Washington correspondent mooted him as a potential replacement for a discredited Warren Christopher as U.S. secretary of state. Brzezinski's recent pattern of attacks on U.S. policy toward former Yugoslavia, Russia, Haiti, etc., would imply that he is, indeed, poised for a rise on the power curve, pending the anticipated collapse of the current power arrangement and policy course of the Clinton administration.

More broadly, Brzezinski has always been a weathervane, pointing to certain “prevailing winds” in Washington and in various policymaking capitals, West and East, all the more so as he is ambitious. The book undoubtedly reflects his desire to be seen associating himself with more realistic factions in the transatlantic policy establishment, those who see that the current arrangements in Washington are leading to the demise of the utopian “democracy and liberal free trade” new world order consensus that has prevailed. Insofar as he addresses moral issues in this way, Brzezinski presents a profile of himself as sympathetic to views expressed by leading spiritual and religious spokesmen, ranging from Pope John Paul II to Russian emigré writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The book’s combined critique of moral degeneration and its promotion of “ecologism” and “self-limitation” is eerily similar to the polemics of Solzhenitsyn in his speeches in western Europe, since he arrived on the continent from the U.S. in late summer.

In “theological” terms, the ultimate problem of *Out of Control* is that there cannot be redemption without repentance. It is odd, although comprehensible from a standpoint of pragmatic self-interest, to see a Zbigniew Brzezinski bemoaning the moral decay of the West, without mentioning the fact that policymaking in the United States and western Europe in the last 25 years has been dominated by such institutions as the Trilateral Commission, Club of Rome, and Council on Foreign Relations, in which Brzezinski has been a leading figure (he is, in fact, listed as a featured speaker at the Dec. 1-3, 1993, twenty-fifth anniversary conference of the Club of Rome in Hanover, Germany). His role in these institutions, and therefore in abetting the plunge of the United States and other western countries into a post-industrial hell-hole, cannot be disputed.

By such omissions, Brzezinski remains a prisoner of the same oligarchical-geopolitical worldview as in the past, with devastating consequences for the policy prescriptions that he now proposes. The “Brzezinski factor” in U.S. establishment policy disorientation has been incisively analyzed more than once by Lyndon LaRouche (see *EIR*’s Special Report, “The Trilateral Conspiracy Against the U.S. Constitution,” September 1985). Indeed, it is hard to escape the suspicion that Brzezinski is trying, in this new book, to adapt his arguments to counter the deepening influence of LaRouche, the intellectual author of the Strategic Defense Initiative, among strategic thinkers in both the East and West. Of course, Brzezinski never mentions LaRouche, although it would be impossible to deal seriously with the subjects he purports to address without citing LaRouche’s diagnosis of the same problems and his series of positive proposals for solutions over the past more than two decades, and especially LaRouche’s major writings since he was framed up and sent to federal prison in 1989, such as *The Science of Christian Economy*, and “History as Science: America 2000,” published in the Autumn 1993 issue of *Fidelio*.

The ‘moral depravity’ of Manchester capitalism

As to the positive side of the ledger:

Brzezinski is—or has become—realistic enough to see that the push for a “new world order,” premised on a utopian concept of “liberal democracy” mixed with Manchester capitalism forms of “free trade,” will not succeed. He writes: “Democracy, based on the free market system, appears to be currently triumphant. But its triumph is derived more from the failure of communism than from the successful demonstration of the viability of democratic ideals under all and any circumstances. To much of the poorer world, that case is yet to be made on the practical level of life. Procedural freedom, without substantive freedom from basic wants, may not be enough—while the cultural hedonism of the West may appear to be less proof of the inherent superiority of the free market and more the consequence of wider global inequality.”

Elsewhere, he questions whether there is really “a universal surge in the appeal and staying power of democracy as such,” despite the universal “lip service” now being paid to the idea: “It would be an . . . egregious error to confuse the rhetorical uniformity with philosophical consensus. Though the notions of ‘democracy’ are fashionable, in much of the world the practice of democracy is still quite superficial and democratic institutions remain vulnerable. There is no shared global understanding of the real meaning of democracy, and especially to what degree democracy should go beyond the political realm and also entail at least minimum guarantees for individual material well-being. Confusion is even more evident in the concept of ‘the free market.’ . . . In many parts of the world, the understanding of its inner workings, and of its cultural mainsprings, is quite shallow. Moreover, unless democratic practice, and especially the economic performance of the free market system, leads to a demonstrable improvement in social conditions, it is only a question of time before a negative reaction to these concepts sets in.”

At one point, he associates himself with the critiques of “the free market” in the recent papal encyclicals: “The Catholic Church, the most powerful branch of contemporary Christianity, has more and more been pointing at what it considers the negative cultural manifestations of capitalism: its preoccupation with individual material and sensate self-gratification, regardless of social consequences. Papal encyclicals and exhortations, while accepting the productive efficiency of the free market, have been sharp in their denunciation of the moral depravity inherent in a culture that places the satisfaction of all and any individual desires above social responsibility and of the dangers inherent in a market—including the role in it of the mass media—that competes in the constant stimulation of such desires. . . .”

Brzezinski’s critique of the collapse of universal moral standards cannot be disputed. His warning that the United States cannot truly be a workable global superpower, under

conditions of a general moral, cultural decay threatening internal disintegration, must be taken seriously. He raises a central paradox. While the U.S. would seem to be the “peerless global power” at this point, the internal dynamics in the U.S. could quickly render it incapable of acting effectively in the world.

Brzezinski lists “20 basic dilemmas requiring some degree of redress,” which “constitute, in effect, the agenda for America’s renewal and for the effective reaffirmation of America’s capacity to exercise global leadership.” Among

What does all this gibberish mean? The giveaway is the verb “plunge”: Who in history ever “plunged” into space (or could have, if he or she had wanted to)? We catch sight of a Brzezinski still in the ideological and philosophical straitjacket that has characterized the past 25 years of his career.

the entries, there are “indebtedness”; “low productivity growth rates”; “deteriorating social infrastructure and widespread urban decay” (for example, “a highway system, including bridges, in need of major repairs, a practically nonexistent fast-rail transportation system, as well as inadequate sewage, dams, and other facets of modern social infrastructure”); “a greedy wealthy class”; “a truly parasitic obsession with litigation”; a strong emphasis on the spread of poverty, crime, violence, drugs, and social hopelessness; “the massive propagation of moral corruption by the visual media”; and “the emergence of potentially divisive multiculturalism,” which threatens to “balkanize multi-ethnic America by the deliberate deemphasis of the nationally unifying and socially equalizing effects of a common language and of shared historical traditions and political values.”

Writing in italicized emphasis, he warns: “*The real challenge to America’s special global role increasingly comes not from without but from within. In effect, America’s principal vulnerability may not be the tangible challenge of its rivals but the intangible threat posed by its own culture, which increasingly weakens, demoralizes, divides and incapacitates America domestically, and which simultaneously attracts, corrupts, alienates, and revolutionizes the outside world.*”

Elsewhere, he warns that Europe could be heading in the same direction, increasingly rejecting Christianity as a “ritualistic anachronism” and replacing it with “a secular and

predominantly hedonistic mass culture.”

Congress of Vienna’s seeds of destruction

In dealing with Europe and other vital questions, Brzezinski never breaks out of his geopolitician’s straitjacket, and therefore tends to undo his own good arguments. After his prefatory section warning of growing “disintegrative forces” in the world and of a threat to America represented by “the massive collapse . . . of almost all established values,” his first chapter, “The Politics of Organized Insanity,” begins: “The 20th century was born in hope. It dawned in a relatively benign setting. The principal powers of the world had enjoyed, broadly speaking, a relatively prolonged spell of peace. Only three major eruptions of international violence had disrupted the basic tranquillity sustained by the system established during the Congress of Vienna of 1815.” Later, he speaks of 19th-century Britain “exercising a balancing role in order to prevent the emergence of a single globally dominate state” and “providing needed equilibrium.”

This is all pure rubbish à la Henry Kissinger and Kissinger’s British mentors. The Congress of Vienna founded an oligarchical system, aimed at wiping out the ideas associated with the American Revolution and the 1809-13 “Wars of Liberation” in Germany. By so suppressing republican culture, the Congress of Vienna sowed the seeds for what Brzezinski calls our own “century of megadeath.” In fact, his concluding recommendations for a strengthened “trilateral” relationship among the United States, Europe, and Japan, linked to a reinforced “confederal United Nations,” is, in substance, an imperial system modeled on the Congress of Vienna.

Similarly, much of his discussion of Europe, and Eurasia more broadly—outside of the astute chapter on Russia—is geopolitics mixed with scenario-mongering written in Brzezinski-speak. The former Soviet Union is cast, in terms lifted from early 20th-century British geopolitician Halford Mackinder, as the “heartland empire,” the disappearance of which allows the United States to operate in Eurasia for the first time. “Geostrategically . . . the collapse of the heartland-based empire means that the 40-year-long effort to expel America from Eurasia is . . . over,” Brzezinski writes, elsewhere adding that the collapse of the Soviet Union “creates openings for the potential projection of American influence into the Eurasian vacuum.”

In Brzezinski’s strategic outlook, this region of the world becomes “the Eurasian oblong of maximum danger.” Here, Brzezinski exercises his penchant for geopolitical terminology fetishism, as he had done in the late 1970s with his “arc of crisis” fulminations.

What we see here is the complete absence of any *positive* program for Eurasia, under the charitable assumption that Brzezinski is not actively striving for the destabilization of this region. Implicitly, Brzezinski is only providing further proof that without implementation of LaRouche’s Eurasian

development program based on a “Paris-Berlin-Vienna Productive Triangle” from which infrastructural and agro-industrial projects can emanate, that region will rapidly become the epicenter of the most violent outbreaks in the world.

U.N. eco-fascism?

The deeper problem is not only that Brzezinski seems to have no understanding of economics, but he commits the axiomatic flaw of decoupling morality from economics. This contrasts sharply with LaRouche, whose warnings about the demise of western civilization Brzezinski otherwise echoes or parodies.

Thus Brzezinski writes: “While religions can intensify the worldwide concern with the issue of inequality, it is far from clear whether they can provide a concrete model as the answer to the felt need for an effective and globally appealing social order. Christianity can perhaps stir the West’s conscience and Islam can mobilize Muslim resentments. But neither at this stage offers a practical response to the central dilemma. There is neither a viable Christian economic model nor an Islamic example of a modern society.” He also invokes Pope John II’s *Centesimus Annus*, to make the case that one cannot derive a valid economic and social system from moral strictures. Whether he is faithfully representing the Vatican’s view in this respect is not here to be discussed. Insofar as he is faithfully representing it, the reader is referred to Lyndon LaRouche’s book *The Science of Christian Economy* for a rigorous critique.

In Brzezinski’s case, his divorce of morality from economics intersects a more noxious problem. He has a gnostic’s paranoid reaction to science and technology, to what he calls “physical power—over nature, over humanity’s life and death.” He writes that “it is an illusion” to think that any transformation in this domain is “truly controlled by mankind. . . . Man does not control or even determine the basic directions of his ever-expanding physical powers. The plunge into space, the acquisition of new weapons, the breakthroughs in medical and other sciences are shaped largely by their internal dynamics. Each innovation breeds another; every expansion of knowledge, skill, or capability is but a step forward, not just in opening new doors to the future but actually in leading mankind into that future. The human being, while the inventor, is simultaneously the prisoner of the process of invention.”

What does all this gibberish mean? The giveaway is the curious use of the verb “plunge”: Who in history ever “plunged” into space (or could have, if he or she had wanted to)? We catch sight of a Brzezinski still in the ideological and philosophical straitjacket that has characterized the past 25 years of his career. The Trilateral Commission, the Club of Rome, and related organizations have always had a paranoid hatred for exploration of outer space. The Club of Rome, with its malthusian “limits to growth” propaganda, was created, in significant part, with the aim of stopping the U.S.

space program. Brzezinski was involved in the mid-1960s discussions that led to the creation of the Club of Rome, and his “post-industrial technetronic age” concept was launched as a result of these pre-Club of Rome planning sessions.

Where this all takes us is summed up in the following astonishing passage, near the end of the book: “Ultimately, . . . the effort to gain control over the collective destiny of mankind will succeed or flounder on the critically important philosophical/cultural dimension. . . . To reiterate a point made earlier: Cultural and philosophical change is a matter of historical waves and not of disparate policy decisions. That change can be influenced by a heightened moral and ethical awareness but it cannot be directed politically. Change can only come out of a fundamental reevaluation of the core beliefs that guide social conduct and from a recognition of the need for a globally shared concept of the meaning of the good life, with the latter based on notions of self-restraint in social self-gratification. The West’s ecological movement—whatever may be said about some of its specific advocacy—may be the first step toward such self-limitation.” Still further, he insists that “the imperative of self-restraint . . . has to apply to physical power, which has to be deliberately restrained through international agreements and voluntary moral codes.” Brzezinski has become so carried away that he has contradicted, with his “deliberately restrained through international agreements” demand, what he had just said, that the required change “cannot be directed politically.”

Specifically, his view is that “historically responsive trilateral cooperation can also help to infuse into the United Nations a more constructive sense of direction.” (This reader counted no fewer than nine uses of the word “trilateral” in his concluding pages.) He continues, in his emphasis: “*The U.N.’s time has finally come. It is only within the framework of that global organization that the common problems of mankind can be collectively addressed. . . .* The enhancement of the role of the U.N. is likely to be more significant in such less political areas of central concern to human survival as assuring global habitability, environmental lawmaking, a worldwide consensus on population policy, and the encouragement of increased flows of overseas development aid to the poorer states. . . . Despite existing global cleavages, an incipient global consciousness of a common destiny, inherent in the growing awareness of the finite nature of resources and the vulnerability of the world’s ecosystem, is maturing.”

We are right back to a United Nations-guided ecological police-state, a globalist utopianism—admittedly of a different character than the “democracy and liberal free trade” that we hear so much about these days. Brzezinski would have been better off really repenting for his sins, and rethinking the axioms and postulates that led him in the past to make crucial mistakes in defining policy and that have contributed to bringing the world toward that hell that, in this book, Brzezinski presumes to be trying to prevent.