

BOOK REVIEW

The Jungle Grows Back: America and Our Imperiled World

By Robert KAGAN

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The world, as we know, is changing fast and new actors emerge in global politics while the U.S. under the Trump Presidency pulls back from international engagement. As Washington is retreating from its “global responsibilities”, the U.S.-led liberal order starts to struggle for survival, while the emerging powers are jumping up to fulfil the power vacuum left by the U.S. at the international scene. But what happens when the U.S. decides to “mind its own business”? The answer is neatly set forth in the title of Robert Kagan’s latest book: “the jungle grows back”.

In his latest book of 2019, *The Jungle Grows Back: America and Our Imperiled World*, Kagan argues that America’s withdrawal is the worst possible scenario, because without the essential role of the U.S. to keep the balance in distribution of power, the world will fall into instability. For him, the world is full of dangerous actors, who remind us of an unstable jungle, and in a possible absence of the U.S. power and order, they have the ability and desire to make things worse at the international arena. As Kagan claims, without any U.S. commitment to preserve the liberal order, it will soon lead into a chaos because the U.S.-led liberal order is like a garden that needs constant care in order to prevent the above mentioned jungle to grow back and “engulf us all.”

The Jungle Grows Back is a well-written text, with comprehensive insights that analyze the current state of world politics and it aims to explain the historical and geopolitical circumstances beyond liberal order’s birth after WWII. At the heart of the manuscript lies the question of today’s U.S. role in the world and why the U.S. has to be so deeply involved in world affairs. For Kagan these are reasonable, but not new, questions and doubts that trouble the mind of Americans. The book can be seen as an answer to the Trump’s administration “hostility” towards the liberal order and shows why a support to the liberal order is a crucial factor for world’s stability.

The first part of the book, which serves as an introduction on the U.S. role in

creating and maintaining the liberal world order, describes in an easy-reading framework the historical, political and economic background of the liberal order. In Kagan's *weltanschauung* the American-led world order was not a natural phenomenon - far from it. Furthermore, the liberal order was not a result of the culmination of an evolutionary process towards the progress of the consciousness of freedom. Neither was it a production of iron logic of economic determinism nor a construction of "a common inevitable evolutionary pattern in the direction of liberal democracy." There was nothing inevitable in the emergence of the liberal order after the WWII. The story of human progress and the inevitable evolutionary path towards democracy is a *myth*, as Kagan concludes. In fact, the U.S.-led liberal order is an abnormal order, an anomaly and a great historical aberration. Despite sporadically horrors, genocides and oppression of our time, the liberal order by any historical standards has been a relative paradise. In the past seven-plus decades there have been no wars among the great powers, something never seen throughout the history of mankind.

In his "Return to the 1930s" chapter, Kagan warns that authoritarianism is enjoying a renaissance and isolationist feelings that tend to focus on the limitations of the U.S. involvement in the world have revived. However, the latest isolationist resentment is a return to the 1930s when politicians and writers suggested a "return to normalcy". The Americans of the 1920s and the 1930s were not so different from the Americans of today argues Kagan, because both could not fully comprehend the dangerous implications of the U.S. withdrawal. Both Americans lived in a modern, democratic and capitalist society and were informed by modern science and modern ways of understanding the human behavior. Both made choices based on same insight and not on an unusual ignorance or an unusual fecklessness. Therefore, according to Kagan, the admiration of some American conservatives for Vladimir Putin as "a strong leader" is not surprising. Some generations ago, Mussolini enjoyed the same admiration and was supported as the strong leader, the Italian people needed.

But Kagan thinks that this line of argumentation is mistaken, because we already know what a world not shaped by the American power really looks like. Without the exercising of American power, the world "as it is" produces geopolitical clashes, famine, forced collectivization and international disputes for world domination. To prevent the division of the world and to construct peace, the U.S. created the "environment of freedom" which let "the better angels of our nature" prevail and produced a safe ground for democracy. After the Second World War, a new conceptualization of national interest and geopolitics arose and America transcended the traditional notions of national interest. Furthermore, America's new strategy after the war created an unprec-

edented liberal order which meant accepting the international responsibility to protect the interests of those who shared Americans' worldviews. According to Kagan, the liberal order was exceptional less because Americans were exceptional than because America's position in the twentieth century world had become exceptional. Additionally, the U.S. accepted its "global responsibilities as world power" after the Pearl Harbor tragedy and its role as a guarantor of peace on an international scale.

America's role as a peace guarantor was essential to liberal order's survival and, as former Secretary of State, Dean Acheson wrote, the U.S. after WWII became the locomotive at the head of mankind. The historic consequences of the U.S. involvement in world politics after the WWII were greatly revolutionary and incomprehensible back at that time. America's postwar policies went beyond narrow national interest and created new geopolitical realities and new patterns of international behavior. Despite being realists, the architects of the postwar order established a liberal system based on universal ideals and irrefutable principles. In fact, it was realism in the service of liberalism. This American global enterprise established a liberal order as a by-product of a new configuration of power after WWII and the U.S. rise to prominence. One of Kagan's chapters, "Life inside the Liberal Order", was characterized by democratization, pacification, and economic resuscitation. Germany and Japan are the best examples of the transformations that occurred in the geopolitical trajectories in the post-war world. For Kagan, the effect of these transformations in Europe and Asia were revolutionary and far more significant and lasting than the rise and fall of the Soviet Union. Ultimately the transformation of Germany and Japan - once warlike countries - lead to geo-economic competition, which was never translated into the military or geopolitical competition.

In a normal world, Kagan suggests, the Japanese and German economic miracles would have led them to challenge the order and its hierarchy. But in the U.S.-led liberal order this did not happen, because the liberal order demolished the old geopolitical ambitions, spheres of interests and balance power. However, the key element holding the order together was the perception by other powers of the liberal order as just and fair, and its voluntary based engagement. On the other hand, Kagan writes that life outside the liberal order was characterized by old and very traditional brand of geopolitics. In comparison to NATO and the liberal order, the Warsaw Pact was not voluntary and was a power-based arrangement. Kagan argues that the Soviets were behaving normally in a world that was no longer normal. Furthermore, the growing power of the liberal world order that was historically unprecedented transformed the foreign and domestic behavior of the Soviet Union. Perhaps the transformation of the foreign affairs patterns caused by the liberal order

played a significant role in bringing the Cold War to a peaceful end.

The world that emerged from the ashes of the Cold War had never been seen before in the history and led to the extension of liberal world order across Europe and through Asia, Latin America, and Africa. In the “new world order”, arms races among great powers were seen obsolete; trade and financial systems were relatively open; and democracy was accepted as superior to communism. The liberal order created an environment where cooperation was stimulated instead of competition, geopolitics was replaced by geo-economics, cosmopolitanism ruled over tribalism, etc.

But today the jungle is growing back. History is returning and we are witnessing a time where nations are reverting to the old and traditional geopolitical patterns. Great-power spheres of interests and geopolitical ambitions are creating international instability and regional conflicts. In recent years, Russia and China have pursued - of course in different manners - a more aggressive geopolitical attitude and have tried to regain their historical greatness on the world stage. Kagan argues that Russia and China’s foreign attitudes were encouraged by the lack of cohesion and confidence in the liberal world order. And this is primarily caused by the American jungle, a cauldron of anger, hatreds, and resentments which have been a big part of American politics and history. It is hard to support a liberal order when liberalism is under attack at home, suggests Kagan.

Today’s criticism of the liberal order on both left and right wings of American politics is related to the U.S. identity, American foreign policy, and dissatisfaction with America itself. In this respect, Kagan argues that the U.S. should preserve the liberal world order. Otherwise, the liberal order will be replaced by another order, which will more likely produce disorder and chaos of the kind that was seen in the twentieth century. Therefore, the liberal world order as a garden needs constant protection against the jungle that tends to grow back and engulf us all. In summary, *The Jungle Grows Back* is a valuable contribution to the academics and students of IR as well as the foreign policy makers, who are concerned with the current situation of the liberal order and geopolitical implications of the U.S. retreat from world affairs.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Arctic Council: Between Environmental Protection and Geopolitics

By Svein Vigeland ROTTEM

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Svein Vigeland Rottem, who currently works at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI) in Norway as a Senior Research Fellow, studies politics and international relations in the Arctic region as well as the Arctic Council. The Arctic region in general is rarely studied in the international relations (IR) literature possibly because it is located far away from many countries and is thus detached from the main debates in IR except for environmental issues. However, as the issues of global warming and control of natural resources have become increasingly visible on the international agenda, the Arctic - as well as Antarctica - have attracted significant attention in the last few years. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the percentage of IR scholars in the world who specifically study the Arctic region is still only 0.5.¹ This also points out to the need to explore the Arctic from an academic viewpoint and also inform the policy making bodies regarding the developments in the region. In fact, it is not only the circumpolar states such as the U.S., Russia, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland which could be easily influenced by the turn of events in the Arctic, but also the other states of the world which are closely concerned with environmental issues like climate change.

The book is comprised of five chapters and in the first one, the author highlights the lack of knowledge on the Arctic and the region's growing importance following the negative developments that have taken place regarding environment, while also mentioning the technological advancements in the region in the monitoring and extracting of the natural resources. The book outlines the Arctic's geopolitical history starting from the Cold War period and the cooperation efforts between the Arctic states since the Stockholm Conference of 1972 as well as Gorbachev's initiatives in 1991. The foundation of the Arctic Council and its sub-institutions such as the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) have directed the attention from realpolitik to issues like climate change and environmental protection. The change in the marine and terrestrial life of the Arctic resulting from pollution and

¹ Mustafa Aydın & Cihan Dizdaroğlu, "Türkiye'de Uluslararası İlişkiler: TRIP 2018 Sonuçları Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme," *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 16, No. 64 (2019), p. 10.

global warming has been greater compared with the rest of the world. Another important issue affecting the Arctic has been the natural resource extraction and related problems such as the oil spill in the ocean and the transportation activities in the area. The chapter also mentions the political rivalry between the states in the Arctic and argues that security disputes concerning the member states of the Arctic Council in other parts of the world should be kept away from the Council's agenda.

In the second chapter, the organizational structure of the Council is outlined including a detailed description of the duties of the ministries, senior Arctic officials (representatives of each state) and the working groups. The chapter also discusses the functions of the member states, permanent groups and the working groups and observers other than the Council's own secretariat. As opposed to the general belief that the members of the Council only include states and international organizations, indigenous population, which is estimated to be around 500,000, also gets represented in the Council. The author underlines that the Arctic Council has become a suitable platform to bring all players such as the observers of states and organizations, local people and scientists together to discuss the future of the Arctic region. The Council's six working groups whose members are chosen from the scientific communities of the member states perform the core functions of the Council ranging from monitoring pollution to protecting fauna and flora and recommending solutions for various problems. The chapter also mentions other issues in the Arctic with regard to the conflicting interests and attitudes of the member states. For instance, while some member states like the United States view political problems and national interests as the most important dimension of the Arctic-related issues, other states like Canada pay greater attention to the protection of the rights of indigenous people.

The author discusses the Arctic governance in the third chapter and focuses on the legal issues, power politics, signed agreements and the role of the scientific knowledge which is produced by the working groups of the Council. One of the challenges regarding the Arctic has been the Council's non-binding decisions except for the "Search and Rescue Agreement" which was signed between the Arctic states. Another challenge faced by the Arctic Council is the presence of at least two different groups of members with different agendas regarding the Arctic in the decision-making procedure. For instance, in addition to NATO countries and Russia, there are also neutral states in the Council which triggers a debate as to whether security issues should be tackled by the Council. There is also a distinction between the coastal states (A5) and non-coastal states (A3) which affects the hierarchy of the discussion topics on the Council's agenda. For instance, while the UN Law of the Sea applies to the A5 group, it cannot be applied to the A3 group. The chapter also emphasizes that the efforts of the working groups of the Council have been successful in drawing attention to a number of important issues in the Arctic including fisheries, biodiversity/protected areas and emission reduction measures.

The fourth chapter of the book analyzes the Council with all its components and focuses on the main problems of the organization such as the management, funding of projects, competition between members, practicality of the produced knowledge, etc. The chapter also shares the suggestions of various individuals and institutions in order to make greater use of the scholarship and field experience in the Arctic. As the author underlines, even the coordination between the sub-institutions of the Council has been problematic, although it has become better in the 2010s as a result of various initiatives. Some of these initiatives include the SAO and working group coordination meetings as well as the setting up of a permanent secretariat in Tromsø. In addition, the overlapping of the responsibility areas of the working groups seems to be an important problem that should be resolved. At the same time, however, the author believes what improves the continuity and stability of the activities of the Council has been the rotation of the chairmanship of the Council among the members. Finally, the chapter discusses the role of the observers and argues that even though the role of the observers is still a bit ambiguous, it could boost the effectiveness of the Council in terms of attracting more participants.

In the final chapter, the author discusses his own views about the Arctic Council and the Arctic region in general. After providing information regarding the structural and financial changes that has taken place in the Council over the years, the author indicates that the Council gets larger in size and increases its responsibility areas. It is important to note that the Arctic Council has been the only governance body in this region and the states of the Arctic region have been implementers of its decisions. Therefore, it is important to make the Council more effective and the knowledge they generate should become more practical for the region and for the world at the macro level. By recognizing the Arctic Council as the only governance organization in the region and avoiding the establishment of another minor organization or replacing the Council with another organization (e.g. the UN), the Arctic states could mitigate their contending geopolitical interests. The chapter is concluded with a brief summary of the factors that influenced the decision of each state to become a member in the Council which includes variety of factors like environmental concerns, protecting the indigenous people's rights or maintaining the balance of power in the region.

As a criticism, it should be mentioned that the fact that the same issues are repeatedly discussed in the different chapters of the book creates an organization problem. For example, the differing interests of the member states and the overlapping responsibility areas of the working groups are discussed in every chapter again and again. It would be much better for the readers to understand the issues if each chapter was exclusively devoted to a specific dimension of the Arctic governance. Furthermore, the positions and interests of the member states and non-member states vis-à-vis the indigenous people of the region could have been elaborated a little more. This would also reveal the complexity of the decision making process as well as the main weaknesses

of the Arctic Council. As a final criticism, the way the book describes the institutions of the Council as well as the relations between them is sometimes quite fragmentary which prevents the readers from fully comprehending the main issues.

Overall, the main purpose of this book is to familiarize the readers with the functions and activities of the Arctic Council as an international organization. These functions and activities at the local and global level are quite important in shaping the course of the political and especially environmental issues in the Arctic. When we take into consideration the growing importance of environmental challenges in world politics, it becomes more significant to study the Arctic region. The book provides the readers with a broad overview as to which states and international organizations have been playing a greater role in influencing the decision making process. In this regard, it is an important contribution to the study of the Arctic region in the IR literature.

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