

**A review of the book:**  
**Andrzej Lubowski, *Świat 2040. Czy Zachód musi przegrać?***  
**[World 2040. Does the West have to lose?], “Znak”, Kraków 2013**

*by Natalia Gburzyńska*

The book entitled “World 2040. Does the West have to lose?” by Andrzej Lubowski was released in 2013 by “Znak” Publishing House. The content is divided into four parts. Part one is entitled “Tough Life of a Fortune-teller”, part two – “Where Are We and Where Are We Heading To?”, part three – “Riddles, Hopes, Pitfalls” and the last one entitled “Slides of Future”. The book ends with an epilogue.

Andrzej Lubowski is a well-known economist and journalist. He has published articles from economic and the managerial fields. He graduated from Warsaw School of Economics. He lives in the US and he has been working in the US financial sector for nearly 20 years now. He used his experience of working at Citibank, Visa USA and both Polish and American boards of supervisors in writing the evaluated book. The Author’s professional career has been aligned to the energy sector, technologies and banking. He is aware of the difficulties that come with the attempts of forecasting in which way the world will be developing. According to this he quotes Niels Bohr’s<sup>1</sup> words:

<sup>1</sup> Danish physicist, Nobel Prize winner in Physics in 1922.

“The forecasting is extremely difficult, especially the forecasting of the future”.

The author tries to set himself against three visions of the world in 2040 that have been created by an analysts of Goldman Sachs bank (“BRIC swallows G7” theory), the analysts of Citibank (“Africa outruns Europe”) and Robert Fogel, a Nobel Prize winner in economy (“China declasses the world”). These three perspectives are based on the belief that the World 2040 development factor of most importance is the demography. The starting point of the discussion is the Author’s opinion that the energy policy and the specific mental determinants of the particular nations are more important than the demographic issues.

All three forecast have a common ground – the era of the Western World domination is about to end. Each forecaster picks another scenario for which country will replace the United States (BRIC countries, Africa, China). The vision passed in the book “World 2040. Does the West have to lose?” is holistic. Its author has travelled a lot – not only around the United States, but also around China, Japan and India. He used his experience

in the undertaken analysis. His visions are valiant and they refer not only to key international players, but the whole region.

Lubowski has investigated carefully the world prognosis that refer to the global economy. He proved his expertise in the subject, but also his literary gift. The book, that forces us to think and to analyze, offers also the opportunity to relax and respite. "World 2040. Does the West have to lose?" provides the reader with knowledge about a current global situation and the changes of the contemporary world. We can find there the answers on the following questions: Will the United States fall down from its pedestal of the strongest world economy? Will the Chinese economy be able to become a successor without destroying the natural environment? Will the European Union stagnate in the crisis that knocks on its door? Will the EU, that has been established to join together, have to be divided? Will Russia be able to threaten the other upcoming markets? How the world will handle Islam and its followers? And, last but not least, how does it all affect Poland?

The Author refers to the situation in America and concludes that it is not threatened with bankruptcy nor that the dollar is going to be superseded. Nevertheless the Author appends that the USA faces numerous challenges which the American citizens are not aware of, whereas the authorities keep on avoiding

any action that might improve the situation. In Andrzej Lubowski's opinion these challenges are, to mention a few, inflated armaments and high costs of public medical care, which redound to prolong the citizens' longevity.

The EU has, according to the Author's words, a lot to be done before it will become a real community. The writer agrees with the words of one of the experts, who concludes: "the common anthem and hanging up all the flags doesn't mean that the Europeans have built a community". In his opinion, the lack of sense the unity is the main problem in Europe. People are weary of the vision of integration that is eroded with bureaucracy and forms to be filled. Europe has been called in the book "the most luxurious old people's home" and "a museum" (the chapter about Europe is titled "World Power or Museum?"). Lubowski states: "if Europe doesn't aspire to transmute into a luxury old people's home surrounded with a glowering crowd of unemployed youngsters, and then become a contribution to the history, then the whole Western World is needing some urgent changes."

The opposition to the invalid and haunted with problems, West is fresh and open for innovations East. The Author pays as much attention to the new international players as to the Western issues, which is currently not a popular tactic. The Author's attention is focused mainly on Japan, India and

China. Both India and Japan are considered in the Lubowski's book with a doze of abstaining and scepticism. The Author recognizes their strengths and potential, that might be used. At the same time he emphasizes the demographic limitations of Japan and contrasts of India, that may block the vision of creation the consistent future.

The main opponent of the Western world may become, in the opinion of the Author, China. The People's Republic of China has at its disposal – if not to mention the obvious factors such as market domination or foreign reserves – an ace up its sleeve which is a monopole on rare metals production and the struggle for production of high technologies. In the context of Chinese market development the recent symbiosis called “Chimerica”, where one country produces and sells cheaply and the other one wants to consume cheaply, is effacing. The writer thinks, that the problems on the pivot between America and China will accumulate as the Americans still want to play a key role on the international arena, whereas the Republic of China strengthens itself in a conviction that the leading role belongs to China. In the context of American and Chinese relations the Author proposes a very interesting thesis – in his opinion the competition on this axis will be based not only on the economical issues, but also on the ideological battle and the scuffle of the national values. This is a kind of

issue that the US is not able to see, claims Andrzej Lubowski.

The Author has rejected the thesis that is getting more popular that the BRIC countries (he missed letter “S” – symbolizing South Africa, on purpose as he assesses its importance as marginal) will become the economical power of the future. In his opinion they have no chance to overhaul G7, which has been forecasted by Goldman Sachs experts. The writer does appreciate the potential of all four economies (Brasil, Russia, India, China), however he points out that there is a long way in front of them before they will become tycoons bigger than G7. He criticises Russia the most. The Writer points out to Vladimir Putin's country, among others, demographical shrinkage or the fact that China builds more roads in a week than Russians are able to build within a year.

Presented visions refer to all the continents, which causes that the scope of the presented changes, which may occur in the following decades, is very wide. The Author presents not only the biggest world economies, but also perspectives, which may affect all the globe. Both theory and experience, and good style of Andrzej Lubowski are the reasons why the book can be read with bated breath and with great pleasure. Narration is lead in a way that it is hard to get away from reading, wanting more and more information. Publication provokes, forces to the intel-

lectual effort, to thinking, analyse, and besides it caution against blind faith in economical or political forecasts. It helps to understand that the modern world is a machine made in a way that the general world tendencies have great impact on the common citizen, not only the local play ground.

To summarize it is worth to quote the words of Andrzej Lubowski: "More and more diplomas, less and less common sense, more and more medicines and less

and less health. (...) We have reached the Moon and back, but we keep on having a problem with crossing the street to say 'hello' to a neighbour. We have understood the atom, but we are not able to overcome our own biases".

This is the direction that Western civilization is heading to. Does it have to lose? We will find the answer on this question within the next several dozen years, but it is worth to read Lubowski's book today!