BOOK REVIEW

Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World
Fareed Zakaria (W W Norton & Company, 2020), 320

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"Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World" authored by Fareed Zakaria, an American journalist, political commentator, and an international relations scholar, offers a roadmap for navigating the complex challenges that have emerged in the wake of the global pandemics, predominantly Covid-19. The author brings his intellect and global perspective to the key issues reshaping our world. While examining governance, economics, and culture, this book utilizes a broad lens called "applied history."

With each chapter focusing on a critical aspect of the post-pandemic environment, the book is structured around ten chapters and ten lessons. Through the skillful integration of historical background, geopolitical analysis, and interviews with leading experts, the book provides a thorough analysis of the dynamic forces that will determine the world's future course. This book is an enticing read, based on the understanding of world affairs, and simplifies complex ideas into readable and captivating narratives.

In the introductory chapter, the author discusses four crucial points. First, he argues that the pandemic has isolated countries, compelling them to rely on their capacities. States that were once closely connected through trade and economic interdependence have now had to prioritize their survival, imparting the lesson of self-sufficiency. Second, describing the world as "fast, open, and unstable," Zakaria asserts that simultaneously achieving stability, openness, and speed is an insurmountable challenge.

Third, human development poses a severe threat to nature, with the United Nation's 2019 report indicating that human actions have significantly altered 75 percent of the total land. Fourth, the author proposes instating an "anti-fragile system" to bring change. This involves prioritizing "resilience and security" alongside other economic activities, reducing meat consumption, and establishing a robust health system.

Furthermore, the author discusses three historical shocks that led to significant disruptions: the first one, 9/11, held a political dimension; the second, the Great Depression, was associated with financial crises; and the third is the Covid-19 pandemic, impacting humanity on various fronts such as economic paralysis, psychological distress, and feelings of isolation and loneliness. This emphasizes the importance of comprehending the post-pandemic world, a task Zakaria undertakes by exploring "Ten Lessons."

In "Lesson One: Buckle Up," Zakaria commends human resilience in facing historical challenges but warns against unchecked economic growth, which threatens biodiversity and increases the risk of diseases. He advocates for consciousness and preventive measures to address climate change and other crises. "Lesson Two: What Matters is not the Quantity of Government but the Quality" critiques the quality of the US healthcare system despite its claim to excellence, citing the higher Covid-19 death rate due to inadequate response. Zakaria stresses the importance of government quality over size.

"Lesson Three: Markets are not Free" asserts that open markets, besides redistribution, view public services as investments, fostering societal transformation. "Lesson Four: People Should Listen to the Experts and Experts Should Listen to the People" emphasizes the importance of heeding expert advice during crises, citing the negative impact of leaders ignoring experts in the United States, Brazil, and Mexico. "Lesson Five: Life is Digital" explores the transformative impact of the pandemic, making a return to a pre-digital economy unlikely. "Lesson Six: Aristotle Was Right – We are Social Animals" emphasizes the irreplaceable value of human contact despite technological advances.

"Lesson Seven: Inequality will Get Worse" addresses the pandemic's disproportionate impact, highlighting increased inequality due to reversed progress and inadequate healthcare in developing countries. "Lesson Eight: Globalization is Not Dead" explores the paradoxical relationship between pandemics and globalization, debunking arguments for de-globalization.

"Lesson Nine: The World is Becoming Bipolar" critiques the decline of the US, contrasting it with China's success in managing the crisis and its economic rise, signaling a shift in global power dynamics. "Lesson Ten: Sometimes the Greatest Realists are the Idealists" examines the nationalistic response to Covid-19, cautioning against narrow visions prioritizing self-interest over collective global efforts.

Overall, Zakaria delves into the unprecedented ways human development has occurred, ultimately producing vulnerabilities in societal and economic frameworks. More conscious, anticipated preparation and effectiveness in response are required to deal with such risks. Moreover, the author does not shy away from tackling thorny issues, such as the failure of large governments to deal with the pandemic, the fragility of democracy, and the rise of populism. Drawing on contemporary case studies, he suggests that a competent, well-functioning, and trusted quality government, rather than a large one, can resolve societal problems.

Furthermore, the book provides a panoramic view of the market-based economy and predicts that the world might face economic headwinds in the future. New trends, pandemic fears, and protectionism compound deeper structural shifts. Therefore, to encourage dynamism and stability, regulation and an adequately tailored market economy based on free and fair competition must galvanize to help workers more and capital less to avoid secular stagnation. In a complicated world, according to the author, there is a demand for more experts to manage the affairs of the nations, inevitably making them an elite of some kind and lending them power and authority. To avoid dismal consequences in the future, the experts and elite nexus ought to take pains to connect with

the people to understand their demands and requirements.

Zakaria's exploration of technological acceleration's increasing significance and threat assessment is particularly compelling. He explores how technological developments in biotechnology, artificial intelligence (AI), and other areas will transform economies and societies. Recognizing the potential advantages, he is cautious about the ethical dilemmas and inequalities that could occur due to the AI revolution, prompting readers to carefully contemplate the responsible integration of technology into the post-pandemic era.

According to the author, big cities are more prone to pandemic attacks due to the overwhelming integration and interconnectedness of people. Humans create cities, and cities make humans – two sides of the same coin. Any pandemic would not cease the development of big cities. For any city with good leadership, density should not be destiny; however, they should invest in healthcare and hygiene.

The book's central theme revolves around the stance that globalization is not dead, but threats to it are looming large. Nonetheless, hard-edged realpolitik might be back, with the rise of China and the existing superpower, the US. The negative implications of US-China competition would be wrenching, costly, and significant for developing countries.

The author seems optimistic about the future of the international liberal order advocated by the US. The international liberal order is easy to join and hard to overturn, producing the most prolonged peace period among the major powers in modern history. Contrary to this, he states, the international liberal order is also incomplete and has seen many conflicts, misery, and hypocrisy. But believing that cooperation can change the world is not a flight of fancy. As tense as US-China bipolarity may become, the chances of bipolarity in international politics are inevitable.

Zakaria ends by emphasizing the necessity of a functional multilateral system to address these emerging challenges. He favors

the international liberal order, pointing out its track record ben-efiting numerous individuals. The underlying idealism of lib-eralism is straightforward: cooperation yields better outcomes than acting alone. The author concludes the book by advising readers that believing in the transformative power of coopera-tion is not a fanciful notion but a matter of common sense.

To sum up, "Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World" is a thought-provoking and pertinent book in which the author has skillfully blended academic analysis with understandable writing. This book helps us understand the opportunities and challenges ahead due to the interplay of novel geopolitical and technological forces. Zakaria has simplified complicated ideas into lessons that act as a call to action, imploring people, orga-nizations, and governments to embrace creativity, teamwork, and resilience to build a resilient and peaceful world.

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