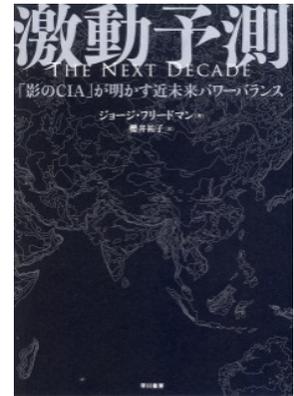


SPACE JAPAN BOOK REVIEW

From a satcom engineer's point of view

Reviewer: Takao Ueda, Editorial Advisor



George Friedman: “The Next Decade: Where We’ve Been ... and Where We’re Going”, Doubleday, 2011

This book was written by George Friedman, founder and CEO of STRAFOR that has the nickname of “behind-the-scenes CIA”, and is a sequel of “The Next 100 Years” reviewed in April/May 2011 issue of Space Japan Review. Whereas “The Next 100 Years” handled the forecasts on America and the world for the coming century, this book discusses the forecast on the next ten years which are more realistic for us all. Therefore, the author argues the America’s policy enthusiastically, slightly different from the usual forecasts. It is interesting that this book can be read like the special instructions for the U.S. President.

The forecasts start from America that has become the “unintended empire”. In “The Next 100 Years”, Friedman forecasted that America, that dominates the oceans of all over the world, will dominate the world in 21st century. Here in this book, the author expresses the greatest concern on the present America that is not conscious of being the “empire”, notwithstanding it has acquired the power and the position of the “empire”. According to the author, in order to manage the unintended empire while retaining the virtues of the republic, cunning and wisdom of the president are necessary. He further asks that the president’s job is to anticipate what will happen, minimize the unpredictability, then respond to the unexpected with cunning and power. How adequate this demand is! It may be the fault of ourselves who cannot ask such demand to our Prime Minister and politicians, that we are now so frustrated by the politics of Japan.

In the author’s opinion, the overriding necessity for American policy is to secure the interests of the empire, by setting regional players against each other and keeping these players in opposition to others to maintain the balance of power. Since America lost sight of the above policy by sticking too much to the war against terrorism in the past 10 years, America will be troubled to manage the present situation in the next 10 years, according to the author. This forecast is presented mainly on the policy with Iran and with Russia that has revived while U.S. didn’t take the adequate means to hinder their revival.

Here, what is important to us Japanese is that if we apply this view by Friedman for East Asia, America always wishes to restrain Japan and China each other to maintain the empire. We should realize that the naive expectation that America will defend Japan any time at the crisis between Japan and China, could be only the illusion, if we readily accept his view. This “illusion” on the Japan-U.S. alliance is addressed clearly in reference [3] and [4] written by U. Magosaki, which would be the good references for our further consideration.

In actuality in this book, Friedman addresses his unique opinions on U.S-

Japan-China relations as follows: “American strategy must be to prolong Japan’s dependency to America as long as possible.”, “U.S. must be careful not to push Japan hard.”, “The first step in the U.S. strategy toward Japan must be to ensure that China doesn’t splinter, because the weaker China becomes, the freer Japan will be to flex its muscles.”, “Anything that constraints Japan, even marginally, is valuable to the United States.” These words might be frightening for the Japanese diplomats who rely on America fully. As stated in “The Next 100 Years”, the stronger country that will be hostile to U.S. is not China but Japan in his opinion, and this book somewhat discusses the situation preceding the second Japan-U.S. war in mid 21st century, as forecasted in “The Next 100 Years”.

Although it is not considered adequate for Japanese people to immediately become skeptical in the national security issues with America (like some past leaders in the Democratic Party in Japan) after reading this book, valuable opinions stated in this book and in reference[3] and [4] should be well understood and digested by us for further debate.

The reason that the reviewer chose this book for SPACE JAPAN BOOK REVIEW was that “space” was discussed in the noticeable way in the concluding chapters of this book, as in “The Next 100 Years”.

The author states that the view over a next decade for the increasing energy consumption leads to the sources that are cheaper, possible to increase available energy dramatically, and located in areas that the U.S. will not need to control by sending in armies. That should be the development of space-based solar power program funded and executed by the Department of Defense, according to him.

Furthermore, Friedman comments that America should prevent challengers from building forces that can threaten American control of the seas since the foundation of the empire’s power is the oceans, and that the U.S. Navy is the strategic foundation of the U.S., followed closely by U.S. forces in space, because it will be the reconnaissance satellite that will guide anti-ship missiles in the next decade, and shortly after that the missiles themselves will find their way into space. This view by the author coincide with the concern presented in reference [5], that America cannot overlook.

In the beginning of this book, the special message by the author titled “For the publishing of Japanese version” is sent. In this message, he defines Japan as the “earthquake type society” where the sudden large scale revolution occurs after the invisible long years change with the accumulated pressure in the very deep place, whereas America is defined as the “glacier type society” where everything changes gradually all the time. Friedman believes that the earthquake will certainly occur some day in Japanese people’s mind, just like the enormous natural power was set free by the huge earthquake of March 11. He also believes that the earthquake in Japanese people’s mind will occur after Japan endured the pressure by America jeopardizing Japan’s national interests, and that Japan becomes the more influential regional player than China in 21st century.

Right after the disaster on March 11, calmness and gentle behaviors of Japanese people under adverse circumstances were praised from the world. The reviewer was pleased to hear the praise, but wished at the same time if the excellent leader-

ship and crisis management capability of Prime Minister and key government leaders were praised. In that sense, it is considered helpful for Japanese people to recover their confidence that the author is convinced of the potential revolutionary power of Japan to become the strongest country in East Asia.

REFERENCES

- [1] George Friedman: “The Next 100 Years: A Forecast for the 21st Century”, Doubleday, 2009
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- [4] Ukeru Magosaki: “Introduction to the Strategic Consideration for Japanese People – Beyond the Japan-U.S. Alliance”, Shodensha, 2010 (in Japanese).
- [5] Craig Covault: “China’s Military Space Surge”, Aerospace America, March 2011, AIAA.