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**Anis H. Bajrektarević**  
**FROM WWI TO WWW.**  
**GEOPOLITICS 100 YEARS LATER**

Less explored aspects of geopolitics, technology, energy and geo-economics, and other foreign policy essays

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Sarajevo author Anis H. Bajrektarević has already authored six books and numerous articles on, *inter alia*, geopolitics, history and international relations. Like its predecessors, *From WWI to www: Geopolitics 100 years later* deals with issues of those fields, exposing less explored aspects of geopolitics, technology, energy and geo-economics. While it opens by shedding light on how two hot and one cold war led to today's worldwide instability, it soon enough brings the focus on Europe, touching upon important considerations, such as its negative economic growth, and its forever high-valuable democracy, which is balancing between the rising of extreme-right parties and the hordes of immigrants and refugees arriving from Asia and Africa. During the whole book, after all, we can feel the author's uncertainty regarding Europe's identification: Is it a unity based on values and ideas or a unity based solely on economic and power motivations?



Without doubt, it would be an omission to not refer to the innovative title of the book, which intrigues the reader at first sight. Instead of just putting down the dates that signify the beginning and the end of the period that the author is referring to, he chose the captivating form of “WWI” and *www*. Obviously, the author refers to the one hundred years

between the First World War and the internet age we live now, when all the communications can take place remotely, the information is transmitted around the world in seconds, and the online world is becoming our new reality.

*From WWI to www: Geopolitics 100 years later* is an investigation of the European Union's identical crisis, creating questions about Europe's boundaries, challenges and concepts. In order to answer these questions, one cannot but turn to history, not only because history repeats itself, but also because history is necessary for the thorough understanding of the current situation and problematic. And, undoubtedly, Bajrektarević is an expert in presenting the history of geopolitics, stressing the points that brought us where we stand today.

Despite the fact that *From WWI to www: Geopolitics 100 years later* is a collection of papers, previously published in different languages and journals across the world, the book is very coherent, well-structured and conclusive. For instance, instead of describing directly the crisis and the issues that we face today, it also presents an extensive historical analysis through which it attempts to explain the socio-political circumstances that formed Europe the way it is. Moreover, in order to help us understand Europe better, the author makes us see the bigger picture, by covering in his book various relevant global issues.

This is why it becomes important to comprehend the US policies, as well as the oil politics in the Middle East, China's place in the petrodollar system and security issues faced in Asia. This is also why the author explains the current global challenges, such as the cognitive deficit crisis or the environmental crisis. It is all part of the framework that shapes Europe and affects it crucially while (re)discovering its character and mandate.

In his book, Bajrektarević refers to the origins of pan-European ideas, which later led to the creation of the European Union. However, through an exciting journey in the field of geopolitics, the author proves that Europe has changed dramatically since its foundation, and is struggling to achieve its integration, uphold its democratic values and regain its power in the global scene. So, by including, historical, political and cultural references, *From WWI to www: Geopolitics 100 years later* manages to cover the whole spectrum of what forms Europe, regarding its powers and strengths, but also its limitations and contradictions.

By explaining thoroughly the interaction of great powers, as well as the society's current obsession to advance technologically more and more, in order to produce more, it is not hard for the author to prove that the standards and goals of Europe are focused on its economic empowerment. After all, isn't the gain of more power the central axis

around which all the global policies rotate? And isn't the expansion of the European influence the reasoning behind the EU's position vis-à-vis the dissolutions that took place in the regions of Eastern Europe and the Balkans? These and many other questions are answered in the book, which brings to its readers the relative historical and geopolitical context.

An undoubtedly very interesting part of the book, is the one where the author deviates a bit from the past 100 years that he is mainly referring to, and he focuses more to the future of Europe, comparing somehow the way Europe used to be with the way it is today. As he very well states, Europe has always proclaimed itself as the land of compromise between capital and labour, the land where cheap labour does not have a place and the protection of the environment is always one of the first in line mandates. However, who cannot see clearly today that this approach has changed? Who cannot see that Europe has adopted a policy that favours overseas investments and has accepted services and goods from the extremely low waged Chinese workers? It is true that Europe has lost its initial left position, as well as its compassionate spirit. At the same time, as the author very well notices, although nowadays the EU is enjoying its best educated workforce ever, it does not enjoy the high standard of living that he would expect. For instance, extremism is currently see-

ing a sharp increase all over the continent, while Europe is trying to face its financial issues by cutting down its education and science budget, which, according to the author, is the one that, in the long term, guarantees the high level of life that Europeans enjoy. This is why it does not come as a surprise to Bajrektarević that the current situation, combined with Europe's current apathetic youth, may be giving ground to those looking forward to power concentration, a dangerous phenomenon that has been already witnessed in the past in times of similar crises. And after having said all this, the author makes an extraordinary turnover, and tries to show that the crisis is not only economic or political. As he very successfully mentions, even though Europe's budget is mostly spent to refinance the banks, neglecting public services and the protection of the labour, the society still has a lot of power that lies within it. Thus, what matters most to him is that we do not lose ourselves in this era, that we do not take this situation as something that characterises the old continent, but, on the contrary, we face this as an opportunity to turn Europe towards what it used to be. After all, as the author very precisely quotes from Monnet, "Crises are the great unifier".

Towards the end of the book, reference is made to the phenomenon of climate change, with the author concluding that the crisis we face is indeed deriving from many different

policies and practices, which can be financial, environmental and politico-economic. After all, as he states, the Climate Change (CC) Report is more of an analysis of human “CC”, which stands for competition and confrontation, instead of the ideal “CC” that should dominate the world, that of cooperation and consensus.

Thus, from an experienced diplomat or politician to a specialist in

geopolitics or international law, and from a history enthusiastic to a student of geo-economics, everyone can expect to be thrived by *From WWI to www: Geopolitics 100 years later*. If learning in-depth about history and today’s global issues is what you have been aiming for, then you just have to pick up the book and start reading.