

BOOK REVIEW

Ian Bremmer. *The Power of Crisis*. Simon & Schuster, 2022

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Ian Bremmer, is a well know political scientist and founder of the Eurasia group. It won't be wrong to say that he has established himself as a prominent voice in the global political risk analysis circle. His scholarly contribution majorly focuses on the connection of politics, economics, and security, often examining how states respond to major geopolitical risks. With a background in political science from Stanford University and an extensive career that includes academia, consulting, and advising policymakers, Bremmer has authored numerous books and articles on global political dynamics. His works, such as *The J Curve* and *Every Nation for Itself*, has established him as a thoughtful leader on global governance and international relations. In his book, *The Power of Crisis*, Ian Bremmer has tried to discuss global issues, focusing on how crises—whether health, environmental, or technological—can serve as turning points in global governance, creating both risks and opportunities for transformative change.

Bremmer's book, *The Power of Crisis* is built on the idea that crises often act as accelerants of historical change. Drawing on contemporary examples like the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and the rise of disruptive technologies, Bremmer highlights how crises often expose the fragility of the international system while at the same time offering opportunities for reconstruction and reform. His writing is aimed at not just political scientists and policymakers but also the general public, advising readers to think beyond the immediate impacts of crises and consider how they can drive positive, long-term change.

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In his book, Bremmer begins by addressing the weaknesses of the current global order, which, he argues, has become increasingly fragmented and dysfunctional. He points out how institutions like the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and even national governments have struggled to effectively respond to transnational threats, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bremmer uses the pandemic as a case study for how a global crisis can expose systemic weaknesses. The lack of coordinated international responses, political divisions, and insufficient global health infrastructures all reflect, in his view, a global system that is not equipped to handle complex challenges. The comparison of contemporary failure with historical examples, particularly the post-World War II period, where global institutions like the UN and NATO were established as part of an effort to ensure peace and security. These institutions were born out of a collective recognition that the previous international system had failed to prevent two catastrophic global conflicts. This historical comparison is central to his argument: like the aftermath of World War II which led towards the establishment of a new international order, today's crises could lead to a similar transformation, provided that global leaders recognize the necessity of reform.

One of the most compelling aspects of Bremmer's book is his exploration of how these crises are interconnected. He discusses that how climate change, for example, is not merely an environmental issue but one that will have profound economic, social, and political consequences. The destabilizing effects of climate change—ranging from mass migrations to food insecurity—will exacerbate existing global inequalities and political tensions. Similarly, Bremmer explains that the rapid development of disruptive technologies, such as artificial intelligence and biotechnology, could both solve and create problems. While these technologies hold the promise of great innovation and progress, they also present challenges related to governance, ethics, and economic inequality. Bremmer's analysis of these interconnected crises is particularly important while discussing the role of leadership. He is critical of the lack of effective global leadership, particularly from the United States and China, the two superpowers most capable of shaping the global response to these crises. Bremmer argues that both countries are more focused on their national interests and competition with each other than on fostering international cooperation. This geopolitical rivalry, he suggests, is a significant barrier to global crisis management. According to Bremmer, the United States, which historically played a leading

role in establishing global governance structures, has become more isolationist in recent years, while China, although increasingly influential, is primarily focused on expanding its own power rather than leading collective global efforts.

Yet, despite this critical view-point, Bremmer does not portray an entirely bleak future. In fact, one of the strengths of his book *The Power of Crisis* is his optimism about the potential for positive change. He believes that these crises, if properly addressed, can be catalysts for necessary reforms and innovations. He points to the European Union's response to the COVID-19 pandemic as an example of how a crisis can lead to greater integration and cooperation. The EU's collective response to the economic fallout from the pandemic, including the creation of a recovery fund, showed that even in times of crisis, there are opportunities for unity and progress. Bremmer also highlights how technology could be harnessed to address global challenges. For example, he discusses how artificial intelligence could revolutionize sectors like healthcare, making treatments more accessible and efficient. However, he emphasizes that technological progress must be accompanied by strong governance structures to ensure that it benefits society as a whole rather than exacerbating inequalities. In this regard, Bremmer calls for the creation of new global institutions and regulations that can manage the ethical and social implications of disruptive technologies.

However, where Bremmer's optimism is quite refreshing, some of his proposals for global reform may seem overly idealistic as if he is presenting a Utopian concept. His call for stronger global institutions, assumes that major powers like the U.S. and China are willing to cooperate in meaningful ways. Given the current geopolitical climate, with increasing tensions between these two countries and a growing trend towards nationalism and protectionism, it is unclear whether such cooperation is feasible in the near future or not. His argument that crises will naturally lead to greater cooperation also shows overlook on his part that the fact that crises can just as easily deepen divisions and fuel isolationism, as evidenced by the varying responses to COVID-19 around the world.

Second potential limitation of the book is its Western perspective. While Bremmer discusses global crises, his solutions are often framed in terms of Western institutions and values. The focus on reforming institutions like the UN and WHO, while important, may not fully account for the perspectives

and needs of non-Western countries, particularly those in the Global South. These regions, which are often the most affected by crises like climate change and pandemics, are likely to play an increasingly important role in global governance. A more inclusive approach that considers the role of emerging powers and regional organizations could have strengthened Bremmer's analysis.

But, one fact cannot be ignored, and that is; *The Power of Crisis* offers a timely and thought-provoking examination of the challenges faced by the world today. Bremmer's writing is pretty clear and accessible, making complex issues understandable for a wide-ranging audience. His ability to connect current events with historical examples provides valuable context for understanding the significance of today's crises. Moreover, his emphasis on the potential for positive change is a welcome counterpoint to the often pessimistic narratives surrounding global challenges. In conclusion, it can be said that, Ian Bremmer's book, *The Power of Crisis* is a valuable contribution to the ongoing discussion about how the world can navigate the multiple, overlapping crises it faces. While some of his proposals may seem optimistic or Western-centric, Bremmer's core argument—that crises are opportunities for transformation—echoes quite strongly. His analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and disruptive technologies provides a comprehensive and insightful look at the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. For policymakers, academics, and general readers alike, this book, *The Power of Crisis* serves as both a warning and a call to action. According to Bremmer, the future might be uncertain, but with the right leadership and cooperation, crises can be turned into opportunities for a better world.