CONVERSATIONS WITH BILL KRISTOL

A Conversation with STEPHEN ROSEN

In this conversation, Stephen Rosen, a professor of government at Harvard, details the current geopolitical environment and challenges to the United States from the chaos in the Middle East, European retrenchment, Russian aggression, and the rise of China. Rosen explains how and why the United States must play a leadership role in the world, and outlines the potential consequences of American disengagement. Kristol and Rosen also discuss classic and recent books that can help us think about foreign policy.

On the importance of American global engagement, Rosen says: We can't play the same kind of dominant role [today that we played in the past]. But we can and should play a role in creating a new world order in which people in those regions take more responsibility for defending themselves. If we don't do that we are more at risk of losing our republican liberties than if we undertake the tasks associated with this more forward posturing... You will not want your grandchildren to live in an America where you have all the internal national security controls that you will need to deal with [global threats]. In a world of cyber warfare, in a world of infiltration, in a world in which immigrants can be used to mask the movement of terrorists, you are going to have something that looks more like a police state than we've ever had before. And you don't want that.

On managing the rise of China, Rosen says: China is a real problem... The United States has to play enough of a role in Asia to constrain China while other countries [such as India] catch up. Japan is not economically backward, but militarily we kept it backward, and you can't snap your fingers and turn a military dependency into an independent military actor overnight. They have to develop the institutions. Our job is to keep the Chinese from exploiting this momentary decade-long period of opportunity for them.

On the need for a rejuvenated American nationalism, Rosen says: What you need now is a form of nationalism which is clearly and recognizably not chauvinistic. A form of American nationalism which buys into universal principles, but believes the best way to serve the world is to make America strong and capable of pursuing the interests of these universal ideals.

Chapters in STEPHEN ROSEN Conversation

A New Geopolitical Reality

The Challenge from China

Can America Still Lead?

What Should We Read?