

# Welcome to Geopolitical Futures

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**December 2, 2015**

A message from Geopolitical Futures Chairman and Founder George Friedman:

I founded Geopolitical Futures because it is time to turn my attention and focus to what I am passionately concerned with. The quality of discourse around the world has declined dramatically, along with civility. We all have more information than ever before, but we seem to know less about the world than ever, and in some ways we care less. A loudly voiced opinion is valued far more than a painstakingly crafted understanding. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the area of international relations and nowhere is it more dangerous. Democracy depends on an informed public. It is not only that the informed public appears to be dissolving. It is that fewer people seem to believe that having an opinion obligates the speaker or writer to actually know something about the subject.

I founded Geopolitical Futures not because I can solve the problem but because I hope to be part of the solution. I am convinced there continues to exist a class of people who might be called "the learned public." By learned I don't mean credentialed. They are people who have chosen to educate themselves on the affairs of the day. These are not people who earn their living practicing foreign policy, but people who care, as individuals and as citizens, about relations between nations. Any resurrection of knowledgeable and civil discourse will be built on this learned public. I left Stratfor, a company I founded 20 years ago, because in spite of all the pride I take in Stratfor's success, I feel that pursuing this mission requires a new and separate company focused solely on publishing foreign policy analysis for this group of people, around the world. That company is Geopolitical Futures.

The first step in providing this service is to demand of our staff rigorous awareness of their own opinions and ideologies and ask that they check these at the door. There is a belief that complete objectivity is impossible. That is likely true but that does not free anyone from an obligation to try. Perfect love may be impossible too, but that does not mean that imperfect love isn't preferable to none at all. In the end, I ask of our analysts simply this: the ability to change their minds. If this is lacking, the analyst doesn't belong at Geopolitical Futures. Geopolitical Futures is not an arena for ideology.

Our second step is to prove that our work isn't random. We build a model consisting of our forecasts and net assessments. We use intelligence not to build those models but to prove them wrong. Our understanding of the world evolves this way and it's a method that has allowed me in my various books to do things such as predict conflict in Ukraine or crisis in the European Union. I am proud of this method, particularly its commitment to admitting when it is wrong and

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fixing it. I should add that we do not write articles, or pieces, or reports. We update our file on Ukraine or the United States or anywhere with one update building on another, all visible and hopefully useful to you.

It is essential that our writing be accessible. This has two parts. The first is that our language has to be penetrable, with jargon and acronyms banished. Foreign affairs is hard to follow. Language should not make it harder. Second, we need to avoid producing a fire hose of stories that overwhelm you. Our job is to distinguish the important from the unimportant. We will write as little or as often each day as is necessary. What I promise you is that we will write no more than what you need to understand the world.

In a long life, I have done many things. Geopolitical Futures is the summation of what I have learned about how to think about the world. My outstanding staff both use and challenge my way of doing things.

I am told by my marketing people that this letter is too long and complex. Perhaps, but I know two things. The first is that the only customers we will have welcome the chance to read long and complex things if they are of value. Second, and this is most important, there are no writers without readers. That said, I hope you will see the value in subscribing to Geopolitical Futures. If you do, I promise our best efforts to make you an informed citizen, no matter what country you call home.

George Friedman  
Chairman  
Geopolitical Futures