

A thought-out future

History provides ample evidence that nothing makes the present so well as a well-thought-out future. Although bad tongues say that all you can be sure of forecasts is that they never come true, the importance of and the need for strategic thinking remain unquestionable. Preemptive reflection on the future helps optimize everyday decisions and actions, which always bodes well for the future. Even the proverb “Man plans and God laughs” does not deny it. And perhaps God is pleased?

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THE HIGHER UNCERTAINTY and risk of error, the more we need long-term strategies. When the world is unpredictable, the primary aim of strategic thinking is to early warn and identify potential development trends and, above all, to focus on the least predictable areas of risks and dangers. Such is the role of strategic research teams, strategic advisory bodies or strategic think-tanks. In Poland, however, their potential is still largely

untapped. In a way, it is because of the reluctance to plan ahead that can be blamed on the previous regime, but given the passage of time, this can also be associated with an uncritical faith in the reliability of the market. And since the market is assumed to be reliable, forecasts are unnecessary. However, the spectacular global financial crisis proved such an approach to be completely false.

The inalienable duty to take care of the future rests on politicians, MPs, governments and economists. As it was pointed out a few decades ago already by Henry Hazlitt of the Austrian School, “the art of economics consists of looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups”. There is, however, no shortage of evidence that the ruling elite often does not respect this, being subjected to the terror of the election cycle. The opinion is, therefore, not ungrounded that politicians are more concerned by the fate of future elections than by the fate of future generations.

The marginalization of strategic thinking is also an issue in certain EU countries and the Western world in general. By contrast, in Asia, and especially in China, a great deal of importance is attached to scientific forecasts and projections. Suffice it to mention “The New Asian Hemisphere”, a book by Kishore Mahbubani, an Asian top political thinker, forecasting a decline of the absolute domination of the West and a gradual taking over by Asia as the 21st century’s world leader. Similarly, the

Club of Rome has recently released a study by Jorgen Randers entitled “2052: A Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years”. The Polish Economic Society (PTE), recognizing the need for strategic thinking, established a few years ago the Forum of Strategic Thought to counteract the danger of the marginalization of strategic thinking. For this purpose, the PTE publishes papers dedicated to strategic thinking, authored i.a. by prof. Antoni Kukliński, the initiator and co-founder of the Forum of Strategic Thought.

Referring to the concept of invented tradition encountered in foreign literature, prof. Kukliński forged by analogy the notion of invented future. He argues that “the invented future of the region in 2020 or 2050 is a task as mad as it might seem at first sight. The invented future is the one with new structures and new driving forces behind development processes that are difficult to conceive or inconceivable here and now”. Similar opinions are being increasingly formulated, especially in the context of the recent crisis and its underlying causes. These are deemed to include economic and political short-sightedness and precisely the absence of strategic thinking in the Western world. This is evidenced in a number of publications issued by the PTE, also those advertised in this edition of “Polish Market”. I therefore encourage you to refer to them. ::

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