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RADU CARP. *Punctul de cotitură. Ruptură, continuitate și transformarea democrațiilor* [The Turning Point. Rupture, Continuity and the Transformation of Democracies]. Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun. 2024. 330 p.

The book opens with an artifice that stimulates the reader's curiosity: “at the same time and everywhere” is an attention grabber that reveals the meaning and role of the book: a chronicle of different perspectives on the seminal events for the last two years. What prefigures the reading of the book is also mentioned in the title, as a leitmotif and a *captatio benevolentiae*: the turning point recalls another important theme recurrently mentioned by the former President of the United States Joe Biden in his speeches: the “inflection point.” This inflection point is constituted, in fact, by successive transformations undergone by the contemporary world as an acceleration of History, with a capital letter, and to which we become both witnesses, and participants, in a deeply polarizing, radicalized environment, directly experiencing every action almost immediately. This inflection of history written before our eyes has different meanings, which can be discovered by observing some details or facts that the author proves he can understand with acuity, throughout this volume.

The overlapping crises of the contemporary world are part of this axis, in this logic of turning point –breaking point– inflection point, and

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the current role of political analysis becomes essential in understanding the landscape of transformations currently experienced, not only at the political level, but also at the social, economic and judicial level, because of the influence these aspects have on the life of the citizens.

But what is a turning point? A fundamental event that radically changes reality, facts, ideas which are considered a given. One such example of recent history is the speech of German chancellor Olaf Scholz, a turning point in the post-war history of Germany.

The book is structured on several chapters, which focus not only on recent events, but also a review of the state of political science today, Europe's identity crises and the rise of new world power pillars which rival the Euro-Atlantic world in a dichotomic landscape, in an extreme polarization of the world.

Another key to reading this book can be based on the contemporary transformations and events that the author analyzes: how the foundations of the world we know and with which we have been accustomed for several decades are changing before our eyes. *The Turning Point* is part of this landscape of the "inflection point" that emerges as a result of the "rules-based international order," a global arrangement which emerged after the Cold War ending by means of Pax Americana, establishing an international landscape based on rules, multilateralism, cooperation and diplomacy. Its cultural, military, political, economic and even social supremacy is challenged today by a polar rivalry coming from several areas of the globe.

One more reference in relation to this book can be made: Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*.² Of course many aspects mentioned by Fukuyama have been fulfilled, but only one can be questioned: the triumph of liberal democracy. The retreat of liberal democracy is evident not only in the Euro-Atlantic world, but across the global landscape. A revival of nationalist, populist and radical currents can be observed especially in Europe; the reader has the chance to discover these cases in the pages of the volume mentioned in the title.

Two key recent events have radically changed the contemporary world in the last two years, and these topics have been analyzed in the

² Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

volume of Professor Radu Carp due to their persistent character in diplomacy and international relations: the large-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and the Hamas attack on the State of Israel, on October 7, 2023. The author argues that these two regional events have categorically modified the fundamentals of the international rule-based global order. Of course, in this recent history there have been other conflicts with major impact, both in Europe (the wars in Yugoslavia, the annexation of Crimea in 2014), and in the Middle East (the first Gulf War, the invasion of Iraq), but all of these have been part of a rather unipolar landscape and a different register of history.

However, the invasion of Ukraine, and the ongoing conflict in the Middle East are changing the international landscape, the global order. This has the power to change even implacable post-war visions: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's *Zeitenwende* is a clear example.

In a speech presented at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in 2023, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken traces in a programmatic approach the main coordinates and transformations of the contemporary world from the perspective of a diplomat who is not only a witness, but also an involved participant:

"Decades of relative geopolitical stability have given way to an intensifying competition with authoritarian powers, revisionist powers. Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine is the most immediate, the most acute threat to the international order enshrined in the UN charter and its core principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence for nations, and universal indivisible human rights for individuals."³

The turning point of the world must be analyzed and observed with lucidity and, thus, we can have a much clearer understanding of the daily realities we live in.

³ Antony Blinken, "The Power and Purpose of American Diplomacy in a New Era," September 13, 2023, speech given at John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-remarks-to-the-johns-hopkins-school-of-advanced-international-studies-sais-the-power-and-purpose-of-american-diplomacy-in-a-new-era/> (web page removed by January 23, 2025).

Finally, the book circumscribes an analysis of political science today, a reflection on the state of affairs, but also of the future of this science, relevant for today's political scientists or for those who are in training: "The question we set out to answer is where the evolution of political science in Romania began, where it stands today, and what challenges we are certain to face in the future." (235)

This reading can inform a lucid conscience and a better orientation in the ever-changing contemporary landscape, but it can also raise related questions on which readers are invited to meditate and to keep an alert spirit on the events we live through.