

**Graeme P. Herd, *What Kind of World Order in the 21st Century?***

How can the United States maintain its primacy in an age of shifting power balances and interdependence? Changes in the distribution of power have given rise to new powers that, after establishing dominance in their own geopolitical zones, have gone on to challenge the leadership of the United States on certain strategic international agendas, resulting in an increasingly tangible deterioration in the latter's primacy. Conversely, growing interdependence has led to a generalized recognition that all countries face structural and systemic threats that none—not even the United States—are equipped to deal with on their own. Paradoxically, the outcome is the same: if the United States wants to maintain its primacy, it must assume leadership by addressing the challenges posed by interdependence. Notwithstanding, for this leadership to be effective, efficient and legitimate, it must share power and cede its status as the “leading actor”. Can the United States escape this strategic dilemma? The Obama administration has implicitly redefined the meaning of primacy, saying that the United States acts as *primus inter pares*, as the “indispensable partner” in a “world of multiple partners”. In other words, “primacy based on coalitions” has replaced the primacy of the “unipolar moment”. We can therefore assume the hegemonic transition will be neither violent nor rapid, and that common threats that call for collective action will translate into joint policies. In this article, Graeme P. Herd suggests that the sum of these two opposing forces, rather than undermining the power of the United States, will help underpin its primacy. In light of changes in the

balance of power, compounded by the perception and prospects of a relative decline, strategically speaking, the United States would be well advised to veer on the side of caution, as this will reduce the risk of making hasty decisions and prevent it from coming over as arrogant. The country also has the potential to become a “point of geopolitical inflexion” in the maintenance of the global balance of power. Greater interdependence calls for mechanisms of “network governing”, cooperation and alliances that, in turn, require guidance and coordination. And since it wields power in all spheres, the United States could not be better positioned to continue calling the shots by assuming leadership and proposing solutions to strategic security threats. According to Herd, the primacy of the United States will be opportunist, pragmatic, *ad hoc*, flexible, adaptable and, above all, sustainable, because it has both the power and the strategic context to maintain it. The question is will it be able to muster up the political will and ingenuity?

### **Daniel W. Drezner, *On Economic Power in the 21st Century***

In this paper, Daniel W. Drezner looks at changes in the distribution of economic power under the current world scenario. After analyzing the concept of economic power, its various facets and political consequences, he makes a clear distinction between structural power; relational power; the power to dissuade or avert pressure from others; and the power to compel others using instruments of economic diplomacy. These distinctions form the basis of an interesting analytical model, in which Drezner classifies economic power as autonomous, autocratic, hegemonic or market-based—four categories that are useful when attempting to gauge the magnitude of shifts in the distribution of global economic power and single out the actors

that have the ability to either champion or obstruct world economic governance. In this context, perception as to who holds power and how it is distributed takes on even greater importance for, as Drezner points out, a misguided interpretation of reality grounded on false views could cause difficulties in the running of the global economy and paralyze the implementation of macroeconomic policies. If changes in the distribution of economic power are truly structural, he concludes, rising powers will have more leeway to act autonomously.

**T. V. Paul, *Rising Powers and Balance of Power in the 21st Century***

The sudden contraction of the U. S. economy, coupled with the rise of China, India, Brazil and other emerging nations as economic powers, shook up the prevailing post-Cold War world order dominated by the United States. Unlike in the past, there is a distinct absence of traditional power-balancing policies between these countries, yet the question arises, will they remain passive in the face of changes within the international system and what strategies have these rising powers and the United States—as a hegemonic power—adopted in contemporary world politics? In this essay, T. V. Paul notes that both emerging powers and the United States have redefined their security strategies in an attempt to adapt to changing circumstances. This has led them to adopt limited power-balancing policies, i.e. “soft balancing” strategies that provide for intense diplomatic interaction as part of a more general hedging strategy, thereby avoiding confrontation and “hard balancing” tactics that could lead to an escalation of the arms race and the forming of alliances. According to Paul, these changes in the grand strategy of rising powers are, to a

certain extent, unprecedented. Not only are they shrouded in a sense of general uncertainty *vis-à-vis* the nature of power transitions in today's international system, but because they are not yet complete, it is hard for academics, diplomats and politicians to predict the shape the emerging international system will take in the end or how easy it will be for consolidated powers to assimilate these new ones.

### **Christian Wagner, *Emerging Powers in Regional Architecture***

Based on evidence of the participation of emerging powers in the major regional forums and institutions, Christian Wagner makes a comparative analysis of the degree of power or influence Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa (BRICS) wield in their respective regions and asks just how important regional architecture is to them in terms of their global aspirations. Wagner believes BRICS can, for all intents and purposes, be deemed powers in their respective regions, but it is not clear that this has contributed to their rise or their global objectives. It is easy to identify material inequalities in the economic and military prowess of these five countries and their neighbors, and draw conclusions as to the power and influence of each, but on the political arena, which would presuppose recognition of their regional leadership, it is not evident how much power they can actually harness. With the exception of Russia and China, which are permanent members of the UN Security Council, emerging powers are continually subject to opposition in their respective regions. In any case, concludes Wagner, the participation of rising powers in the regional architecture remains vital when it comes to addressing transnational prob-

lems such as migration, terrorism, the trafficking of drugs and people and environmental issues, regardless of the discernible economic benefits.

**Andrew F. Cooper, *Emerging Powers and the New Multilateralism***

In his article, Andrew F. Cooper refers to the special relationship between emerging powers and the new multilateralism of the early 21st century. Taking into account historic differences between current times and the international accords of the past, he analyzes the status, response and institutional performance of emerging powers as a group, over and beyond their individual circumstances as adversaries. The process of rise and transition does not imply any far-reaching geopolitical rupture, but a complex process of institutional shoring up, which Cooper believes favors not only the size and relative clout of emerging powers, but the way in which they practice multilateral diplomacy at new forums like the G20. The author then goes on to outline the characteristics of this new strain of multilateral cooperation: formal equality between all members; transversal coalitions between nations that belong to the G8 and the Global South, and the use of traditional methods of exercising power combined with joint decision-making based on criteria that put functionality first. Interestingly enough, the catalyst for this new international accord between established powers and emerging countries was not a great war or extreme geopolitical instability, but the 2008-2009 financial crisis, whose repercussions indubitably raised the G20 to the level of leaders, affording a substantial number of emerging countries the chance to play a more visible role.

**John J. Kirton, *The G20, the G8, the G5 and the Role of Ascending Powers***

As the 21st century progresses, emerging powers are playing an increasingly active and influential role at the heart of world governance. Since 2003, they have been participating in forums such as the summits held by the G8 (which groups together the major free-market democracies) and, since 2005, in expanded dialogue between the G8 and the G5 (China, India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa). They have also had a presence at meetings of countries of systemic importance to the G20, on a ministerial level since 1999 and among heads of state as of 2008. According to John J. Kirton, rising powers are no longer second-class participants occasionally invited to the meetings of the G8, but have become fully fledged members of the G20, with a degree of influence practically on a par of that of the more developed, established powers. The institutional leadership assumed by the G20 in the form of agreements to undertake an overhaul of international financial institutions and on macroeconomic, trade and development policies is a recent example of this. Kirton believes this move toward greater equality was prompted, on the one hand, by the reluctance of the established powers of the G8 to view emerging democratic powers willing and able to help them address new vulnerabilities as their equals and, on the other, the decision to elevate the G20 to a forum of heads of state capable of addressing the severe financial and economic crisis that hit the United States and then spread to the rest of the world in 2007-2010 —a decision that was to turn the G20 into the world's leading forum for economic collaboration and cooperation. In 2012, emerging powers will be able to claim another victory in institutional and thematic leadership when Mexico becomes the first G5 member to host and preside over a G20 summit.