

# FORGING A DOCTRINE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN A POST-UNILATERAL ENVIRONMENT

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## **Introduction**

There is no doubt that global power is diffused today in multiple ways, and it will be more diffused in future, but this does not mean that we have effectively entered a uni-polar era. However, at least the beginning of the end of post-Cold War unilateral period led by the United States is certainly visible with the emergence of new regional powers and influential non-state actors. Given that, the best we can do at this stage is to draw a hypothetical sketch of a workable doctrine of international community in a post-unilateral environment to be fully realized at sometime in future, which is what this paper essentially intends to do. My principal argument is that as power in the international system gets more diffused with the emergence of newer, potentially positivist state and non-state actors and forces, the existing institutions of global governance have to be reformed and consolidated, newer, more representative global governance entities must be created, and traditional, Western-dominated version of multilateralism must be replaced by fairer and more pluralistic form of multilateralism—all of this to accommodate the mutually compatible or competitive aspirations and interests of all the important old and new players and forces at the international stage in political, security, economic and political domains.

Foreseeing the future or pre-planning for an expected world order or disorder is a crucial scholarly undertaking, as policy planners must have indigenously-produced literature about future course of world politics beforehand to choose their options from in order to successfully adapt the country's foreign policy to a new international reality whenever it completely manifests itself. However, in any futuristic academic exercise, great care must be taken while discussing future outcomes of the changes currently under way in the international system. That is why I should make three clarifications at the outset. First, the reference in my paper's title to a post-unilateral environment does not imply that new

powers at the world, state or non-state, have risen enough to effectively end what Charles Krauthammer had described in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet demise as America's 'uni-polar moment.'<sup>1</sup> At this stage, we can only talk about probabilities not certainties. An ever greater diffusion of international power in both hierarchical and horizontal directions in the foreseeable future is, therefore, a probability, or, at best, a near certainty.

Second, the question whether the future trend in international relations will be cooperative, competitive or prone to conflict should also be seen in probable terms. For the avoidance of conflict, the sustenance of a healthy competition or a trend towards greater cooperation involves a number of ifs and buts during the ongoing transition beyond unilateralism. When scholars talk in certainties, they risk being proven wrong. Remember Paul Kennedy had predicted the fall of the United States in 1989, and instead the Soviet Union disappeared from the world within two years of the publication of his international best-seller, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*.<sup>2</sup> The same appears to be the case with another recent best-seller: Fareed Zakaria's *Post-American World*,<sup>3</sup> wherein the author highlights an interesting paradox in a world facing political turmoil and yet experiencing sustained economic growth, and makes an absolutist judgment, saying 'If America's economic system is its core strength, its political system is its core weakness.' Little did he know that, the same year, within months of the release of his book, America and the world would experience an economic crisis never seen since the Great Depression three-quarters of a century ago.

Third, I understand that rampant anti-Americanism across the world quite often leads non-Western scholars and or their liberal-leftist counterparts in the West to predict the decline of Western civilization, capitalist system and the American Empire. Of course, everyone is entitled to nurture such wishes, but this does not mean the global reality will also conform to such wishes. The current economic crisis has become a reference point to articulate such wishes, even though the fact is that the crisis is global, affecting China as much as America; that the democratic West may have greater resilience to overcome it, and also the fact that it is possible to reform unregulated capitalism and its social consequences through effective governmental regulation,

international cooperation and institutional reforms.

A cautious outlook on predicting the future course of events is important. However, this does not mean that we should not plan beforehand, however uncertain the future course of world politics may be. Even if we have not yet fully entered the post-unilateral era, we must appreciate the emergence of powerful new global forces, which may eventually lead us to an age of non-polarity,<sup>4</sup> to use Richard Haass's phrase, or to a multi-polar world. What sort of a future international political, security, economic and cultural order can we envision at this stage? Can we do anything at this stage to prevent the emergence of a global order based on the age-old balance of power politics, with all of its uncertain and potentially risky consequences? Zakaria, Haass, Zbigniew Brzezinski,<sup>5</sup> Jim Garrison,<sup>6</sup> Kishore Mahbubani,<sup>7</sup> James Skillen<sup>8</sup> and James Hoge,<sup>9</sup> Jr are among the leading scholars who have recently attempted to answer these questions, while underscoring the urgent need for the United States to speedily adapt to emerging realities of international politics. One major problem with all of these perspectives on the subject, some of which I shall cite briefly later, is that they aim to ensure American or Western leadership of the world in transition.

My argument is different: it is for the creation of a genuinely democratic and more pluralistic international governance model beyond unilateralism, which recognizes the multiplicity of global forces with all of their paradoxes and contradictions, an international order created with due American or Western help not as leaders but as partners, an international structure modeled on globalization from below rather than globalization from above, and one that facilitates the full realization of multiple social values, cultural norms, and religious aspirations of people and nations at the core as well as at the periphery of international system. For all of this to happen, it is important to go beyond traditional neo-realistic interpretations of the international reality, meant essentially to retain traditional Western monopoly over the global system. Even if social constructivist approaches in the past have been largely irrelevant, and even if liberal institutional arguments appeared a bit idealistic, if globalization and whatever it entails is a reality and newer powers have emerged effectively on the international scene, there is no

escape from not seriously considering the non-neo-realistic discourse on world politics in its moment of integration and transition. In fact, the good news is that even from within the Western neo-realist school of thought, credible new arguments in support of reforming the institutions of global governance are being increasingly articulated now.

As I stated before, for now, we can only talk about a doctrine of international community in a post-unilateral environment hypothetically. However, for the purpose, it is important to lay down a proper context for the purpose of understanding the nature and dynamics of the shift in global power underway currently and whether the existing international structure and its representative institutions are evolving in accordance with the shifts in global politics. Only then we can talk about a set of new principles facilitating and governing the conduct of international community at the world stage.

### **Shifting Strands of Global Politics**

As for the contextual backdrop of my main thesis in this paper, let me begin by arguing that international relations have never been a static phenomenon, as shifts in relative power of actors at the world stage continuously take place. Given that, it is important that our understanding of the world we live in should also evolve accordingly, and we are not stuck with a worldview that has no relevance with the evolving realities of a world in transition. Global politics is always characterized with three tendencies; namely, cooperation, competition and conflict. We live in a world where integrative and disintegrative processes are simultaneously at work. There are factors contributing to peace. There are issues leading to war. There is always hectic competition going on among major players of the world. Sometime, this competition causes conflict. Some time, it leads to peace. This was true before, and the same is applicable now, and will be in future. There is nothing wrong in competition as long as it does not lead to conflict. The prevention of conflict and the sustenance of a healthy competition at the international stage, however, require consolidation and creation of a network of representative international institutions, which can

effectively regulate competitive relationship among major world players as well as all other important forces at the core and periphery of international system in political, security, economic and cultural spheres.

There cannot be two opinions about the fact that the world we live in today is changing very fast. This change is visible in four different ways.<sup>10</sup> First, in recent decades, we are moving away from a Euro-centric world to an Asia-centric world. This is a gigantic shift taking place in our times, since Europe and the West had dominated global politics for several centuries. The economic rise of China and India in a continent where Japan and South-East Asian countries like Singapore and Malaysia had already made their mark underscores the global shift from the West to the East. Progress achieved by some Middle Eastern countries like the UAE and Qatar is also contributing to Asia's rise. The same can be said about the emergence of regionalism initiatives in resource-rich Central Asia such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Second, the Westphalian international system premised on the pivotal position of state in world politics and economy is in a state of crisis due to globalization., which has positively empowered a variety of non-state actors, including non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations. In a state-dominated international system, international relations generally revolve around great power politics, and developments in the periphery are also driven by it. In an age of speedy communication, peripheral actors, whether they are non-state or state actors, have gained political currency at the international stage. So is the case with international public opinion, whose significance even the United States as a dominant military power of the world cannot afford to ignore.

Third, another positive consequence of globalization is the emergence of various regionalism and regionalization networks around the world, which are either a by-product of globalization or a reaction to it. It is true that the evolution of European Union preceded the emergence of globalization as a truly international phenomenon, but its enlargement and consolidation in security, political, economic and foreign policy arenas has occurred during

this period. The same can be said about Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and, to some extent, North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA). For its part, SCO is a classical example of regionalization or regionalism as a response to globalization or globalization becoming a catalyst for its emergence. SCO serves a variety of mutually compatible interests of China, Russia and Central Asian states. As for the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Economic Cooperation Organization and the African Union, their political importance at the international stage is still limited due to a variety of reasons. However, if the reasons for their relative non-functionality as compared to ASEAN, for instance, are sufficiently addressed, all of them can become effective regionalism or regionalization entities with a corresponding international acknowledgement.

Finally, there is this one negative consequence of globalization: that of the emergence of international terrorist and criminal networks, which operate trans-nationally while benefiting enormously from the forces of globalization in communication, transportation and financial spheres. In the absence of globalization, terrorism and crime would have had only a peripheral or local significance. The emergence of international terrorism has, in fact, aggravated the crisis already facing the Westphalian state system from the positive attributes of globalization. Pre-empting terrorism threatens political sovereignty, the fundamental basis of state system as it has evolved since the middle of 17<sup>th</sup> century. Which law to apply to terrorists—who are neither criminals nor soldiers but whose actions can be potentially more catastrophic than both—is a question posing serious dilemma to international law, which has taken as many centuries as the state system to evolve at the current stage.

The world of the future may be Asia-centric as China and India rise economically with the consequent probability of their political and military prowess. Global power may be more diffused tomorrow due to the rise of not just Asian powers but also two other state actors constituting the so-called BRIC; namely, Brazil in south America and Russia in Eurasia (the two others being India and China). If globalization is an organic reality of the world, then surely

non-state actors, representing both positive and negative consequences of globalization, will have greater salience in world politics in the days to come. However, for now, and perhaps for some decades from now, the United States and the European Union will retain significant clout in world politics. The United States at present dominates the world in military, political, economic and cultural domains. The European Union is the most viable regionalism entity the world has produced thus far. It is true that the US and the EU have different conceptions of the world and contrasting preferences for how the world should be governed. But this is natural since the US is a state power and the EU is a regional bloc. Therefore, they can be expected to follow different policies and have competitive interests. However, the fact that the US and the EU together constitute the core of the West, along with other developed countries such as Australia and Canada as their partners, cannot be simply ruled out.

### **Adjusting to New Global Realities**

The United States may be a dominant international player, and the European Union may be a pivotal regional bloc. But the problem is that neither of them, as respective leaders of the Western world which has dominated international scene for several centuries, has fully acknowledged the great shifts underway in global politics, and therefore, not contributed to corresponding transformation of the existing international system and reformation of its governing institutions. The EU has been busy consolidating itself internally while enlarging in its neighborhood, and thereby failing to play a more proactive role in a global order transformation accommodative of emerging powers in institutions of global governance. The US at its moment of power has entangled itself in world affairs in a manner that has tarnished its reputation in global public opinion. Its neo-conservative policies practiced during two terms of the Bush Administration have hugely backfired, leaving no option for the Obama Administration to start reaching out to the world in ways that a fast globalizing era of greatly diffused international power requires.

While neo-conservatism, premised on the unilateral pursuit

of American power, even if it was largely exercised in the guise of fighting international terrorism, pushed the US in one direction; the world, characterized by the rise of newer regional powers and powerful forces of globalization in international society and business, was moving in another. That explains why the political and security crises facing the world since the Soviet demise a couple of decades ago have worsened. What if the United States at its moment of power and the world at its moment of integration, to borrow Garrison's description,<sup>11</sup> had moved in the same direction! What if the EU—as the world's most effective bloc and an entity whose experience with democracy, liberty and human rights and holistic external approach enjoys global recognition—had acted proactively in international domain during the shift in global politics that has been under way in recent decades! Most probably, we might have had entirely different, inherently positivist outcomes for an international order even during this transitional stage of world politics, instead of waiting for the age of uni-polarity to end effectively for such eventuality to be realized.

What this means is that American and European or Western conduct in world affairs at a time of visible power shifts in global politics will be extremely important in determining the direction of the future world. The American propensity of getting things done globally in their own way, quite often through coercive means—or, more precisely, pursuing narrow self-interests in the cover of lofty ideals—will most probably prevent the emergence of a more cooperative global order. The European tendency of not proactively sharing the benefits of their own pluralistic governance model with the rest of the world will have a similar effect. More broadly, if the West continues to jealously guard its traditional domination of the international system at a time when a host of new, powerful regional global actors and forces require reshaping of the present world order, then the ensuing great-power struggle for power may generate more conflicts, and conflicts, old and new, may conflagrate.

### **Emerging Scholarly Debate**

Western governmental policies, especially those of the United States, may not have yet started to adapt to and be supportive

of the changing power configurations of the world, but a blurring of the boundaries in Western scholarship of the left and the right, the liberal and the realist as well as that of critical perspectives on the issue is visibly noticeable in recent years. A number of leading scholars, including former top US officials, have not only acknowledged the depth and intensity of global power shifts but also come forward to articulate a critical discourse on the doctrine of international community in a future post-unilateral environment. That the demand of reshaping the world order and reforming international institutions accordingly is predominantly emanating coming from Western scholarship, and not merely from traditional non-Western critics of Western policies or their liberal-leftist compatriots in the West, constitutes the most critical scholarly discourse, a development which deserves our serious attention.

Let me start by citing a recent conversation I had with John Mearsheimer,<sup>12</sup> the leading proponent of Offensive Realism theory of International Relations. He would normally defend the exercise of American power to ensure US primacy in world affairs in a unilateral environment. But when I asked him whether he supports Obama Administration's policy of troops' surge in Afghanistan, his response was that the United States should, instead, have a dialogue with Taliban and then get out of Afghanistan. Remember also that together with Stephen Walt, Mearsheimer recently authored perhaps the most important work on the US policy towards Israel, titled *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*.<sup>13</sup> This is the first time that two leading American neo-realists purely on realistic and pragmatic grounds have exposed the extraordinary power of the Israeli lobby in US politics and how significantly it is damaging US strategic interests in the Middle East. Mearshiemer, however, does acknowledge that their new discourse on US-Israel ties has not yet been embraced by the policy makers, even though it has generated a critical debate within the American Jewish community.

This example may not directly relate to the subject matter in this paper; but some other scholars, who served on eminent government positions in the United States in the past or whose works are considered influential in US policy making circles, have, indeed, made serious recommendations for reshaping US policy in

response to recent global shifts, and reforming the existing world order accordingly.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, for instance, argues: “It is time to face the fact that the G-8 summit of ‘world leaders’ has become an anachronism. Contrary to claims, its membership represents neither the most advanced economies nor genuine democracies...A more representative body—even if still informal and outside the UN system—could address, in a way more in keeping with the spirit of the times, such basic issues as equity in nuclear proliferation, the proper division of burdens in alleviating global poverty, or the common need of rich and poor countries to face the implications of global warming. G-8 discussions of these issues today are conducted within historically anachronistic confines.”<sup>14</sup> He further writes: “Global leadership now must be accompanied by a social consciousness, a readiness to compromise regarding some aspects of one’s sovereignty, a cultural appeal with more than just hedonistic content, and a genuine respect for the diversity of human traditions.”<sup>15</sup>

Haass sums up his recent article in *Foreign Affairs* by suggesting that “multilateralism will be essential in dealing with a non-polar world. To succeed, though, it must be recast to include actors other than the great powers [which he identifies as representatives of UN agencies, NGOs, businesses, and other social sectors]. The UN Security Council and the G-8...need to be reconstituted to reflect the world of today and not the post-World War II era.” Hoge argued in the same journal some years ago that at “the international level, Asia’s rising powers must be given more representation in key institutions, starting with the UN Security Council. This important body should reflect the emerging configuration of global power, not just the victors of World War II.”<sup>16</sup> Skillen makes a broader argument by saying that the “unavoidable challenge to all states, and especially to the United States, at this point in history is to decide how to cooperate in governing themselves and in building the right kind of international and transnational institutions.”<sup>17</sup>

Mahbubani concludes his recent work by arguing:

“Ironically the best principles to apply in creating a new world order—or, in fact, restoring the old one—are the principles that America applies in creating its domestic order. First is the principle of equality: there should be one set of laws for all nations...Second is the principle of inequality: no international order can survive if special weight is not given to the interests and perspectives of the major powers...of the day, not the major powers of 1945...Third is the principle of equity: no social order or international order can survive if the needs and interests of the very poor are neglected...Fourth is the principle of even-handedness: both sides in any intractable dispute should feel that the international order treats them fairly...Fifth is the principle of free market economics,” for which, he argues, “there is no North-South or East-West divide.”<sup>18</sup>

Zakaria says there “is a fundamental tension in US foreign policy. Does the country want to push its own particular self-interests abroad, or does it want to create a structure of rules, practices, and values by which the world will be bound? In an age of rising powers, the United States’ overriding goal should be the latter—so that even as these countries get more powerful, they will continue to live within the framework of the current international system.” He further argues that the United States would have to abide by international rules if it expects other great powers to follow them. Then, like Brzezinski, Haass and Hoge, Zakaria builds a case for reforming existing international institutions, including adding more veto powers in the Security Council—even though, for the purpose, his portrayal of Hinduism as an inherently tolerant faith and India as a natural Western ally is questionable.

Finally, Garrison offers a powerful discourse rooted essentially in the neo-liberal, institutional creed. He urges the United States to act according to the requirements of an integrated world, and be the final empire or see its role as a transitional empire. “American leadership at this time in history is crucial,” he argues, “provided that America combines its light with its power in such a way that the integrating institutions and mechanisms needed for the effective management of the global system are infused with the same kind of radical democracy with which America itself was founded. A global system of governance, based on inclusive

democratic principles, would make impossible the emergence of any other nation-state with imperial ambitions, for the planet will have united as a single matrix of collaborative, self-regulating connections.” To highlight the ineffectiveness of existing international institutions in tackling global challenges, Garrison refers to Jean-Francois Rischard’s recent work explaining the limitations of the nation-state system in managing scores of issues affecting the planet, the humanity and the global commerce. He cites Rischard as saying, “The complexity of many global issues and their lack of boundaries do not sit well with the territorial and hierarchical institutions that are supposed to solve them: the nation-states.”<sup>19</sup>

Like Rischard, a few other specifically European perspectives on the subject are also worth-mentioning. According to David Held, in the “transformed world, institutions such as the UN and bodies such as the IMF are flawed in two crucial ways: Firstly, many have a system of representation that is anachronistic and too skewed to the old western powers that have had their own way for a long time. Their other flaw is that they depend for their finance on the goodwill of the powerful countries. Markets alone don't work and unrepresentative systems don't work so the challenge is: can we make our global governance institutions more representative and better funded? The world is facing crucial tests on climate change, on nuclear proliferation. Also, in light of the huge financial crisis, there is urgent need to create new financial institutions to transform the old Bretton Woods systems into an effective system of global regulation. In the absence of a truly representative world governance system, the post-1945 international order is in serious risk of fragmenting into regions, competitive geopolitical power situations and potentially into a much nastier world.”<sup>20</sup>

The neo-conservative, unilateral policies of the United States in an era of global integration and power shifts have damaged US credibility in playing a leading role for bringing about the requisite transformation in world order and governance even in post-Bush era. Given that, some European scholars have started to build a case for the EU acting as a catalyst for the evolution of new multilateral international governance, security and economic order, modeled on its own internationally-acknowledged achievements in all of these

spheres. Dirk Messner makes a convincing case for the purpose when he argues that “the transition from a quasi-unilateral, US-dominated power constellation to a multi-polar one can lead to a creeping erosion of multilateral institutions—as neither the old world power, the USA, nor the rising global powers in Asia, such as China and India, are investing in the stabilization or even the further development of the multilateral order. At present the European Union is the most important actor in world politics which is firmly pursuing a multilateral concept of the world order...If Europe managed to be effective in this demanding sphere the EU could assume a key role in the transition from the uni- to the multi-polar power constellation, and contribute to limiting conflict and ensuring stability in the international system.”<sup>21</sup>

According to Charles Grant, the EU may be better positioned as compared to the US to persuade rising Asian powers such as China to be part of a cooperative multi-polar system framed by international rules. He argues: “Of the major powers, he says, only the EU can be relied upon almost always to champion the United Nations, other international bodies and treaties. According to him, the EU should propose to China that they build a strategic partnership, focused on issues that cause tensions between them but which, if tackled in a serious dialogue, could help to strengthen global governance. The priorities should be climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, Africa and maintaining an open global trading system. If Europe can use such a partnership to draw China towards multilateralism, the whole international system will tilt away from balance of power politics.”<sup>22</sup>

### **Rethinking International Order**

It is, thus, absolutely clear from above discussion that while the actual process of transforming the international system may not have begun yet, creative new ideas are certainly being expressed increasingly to lay down the conceptual basis for such transformation in order to accommodate the interests and aspirations of new state actors and non-state social and business forces. Such a transformed international order should surely be grounded in much fairer form of multilateralism, not the Western version of

multilateralism that has remained in vogue since the Second World War. For the latter's moral basis is significantly eroded by recent neo-conservative unilateralism of the United States, and its legitimacy is seriously questioned by the rise of Asian powers such as China with a corresponding shift in global power constellations.

Several other factors necessitate the reinvention of multilateralism, including "the increasing significance of private actors (multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors), as well as the growing complexity of globalization, and which require a degree of political control beyond the nation state which is too much for the existing international organizations: the crises of the inclusive global governance arenas (such as the World Trade Organization, the United Nations, the Kyoto process) and the increasing significance of exclusive forms of global governance in clubs (trend towards bilateral trade agreements; alliances against the Kyoto process; upgrading of the G-7/8 instead of using the UN as the nucleus of global cooperation; the coalition of the willing in Iraq) are all indicators of the weaknesses of the established multilateral system."<sup>23</sup>

The above discussion seems to prove the point I made in the beginning: that growing diffusion in international power and the consequent multiplication of world power centers in post-unilateral global environment would require significant reordering and reshaping of the existing international order. The global institutions that regulated international conduct in political, economic and security spheres since the Second World War have lost much of their relevance in an era of globalization and regionalism. The global challenges in fast emerging post-unilateral era include issues affecting the health of the planet, crises impacting the humanity at large, and conflicts of interests involving global trade and commerce. Global civil society and international public opinion today enjoy as much political currency in the international structure as great powers or superpowers traditionally did. The emergence of international terrorism and growth in global inequality are indeed a negative consequence of globalization, but the same broader global integrative process underway in recent decades has produced positive outcomes in the form of several regionalism and

regionalization networks. Never before has the world been so much in need of an enhanced level of international cooperation as at present.

Given that, a doctrine of international community in post-unilateral environment must entail consolidating and revamping the existing international institutions, primarily the United Nations, and creating a network of new institutions incorporating global trends towards regionalization and regionalism, and meeting visible aspirations of the global civil society for greater human rights, democracy, equality and justice. Multiplicity of actors at the international stage—be they traditional great powers such as the United States or China, or regional blocs such as the European Union or Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or a host of non-state actors, including multi-national organizations and non-governmental organizations—requires a truly multilateral framework for international decision-making aimed at securing global common goods, rather than realizing their respective self-interests. The essence of an extra-national system is the creation of integrating governance mechanisms that bring nations and social sectors together at a higher level of synthesis and interdependence in issue areas in which they have common concern but which none of them, acting alone, can solve. Yet by acting together, they all attain their self-interest.<sup>24</sup>

We already have a network of international institutions, some of which like International Criminal Court (ICC) created recently. The problem is that they don't perform their functions properly. The expectation from the ICC that it will build upon the impressive performance of successive International War Crimes Tribunals at The Hague has been marred by its cumbersome decision making process, which may be an outcome of the fact that the very power that sponsored its creation in the 90s—namely, the United States under Clinton Administration—refused to join it under the Bush Administration. The latter's neo-conservative outlook also hugely damaged the international nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime, as the United States signed a controversial nuclear deal with India. On the other hand, the performance of the International Atomic Energy Agency remained satisfactory, as it continued to pursue a

relatively independent posture on the Iranian nuclear issue despite tremendous US pressure. Likewise, UN peacekeeping operations in several regional conflict zones, especially of the fourth-generation sort undertaken in East Timor and Kosovo have been quite successful. Therefore, not all is bad in terms of the functional output of existing international bodies tasked with managing or resolving conflicts, providing security to the world, helping to alleviate poverty and developing the under-developed world. There are many areas in which their performance is less than satisfactory, which obviously requires reformation matching the requirements of a globalizing era. In the last two decades, civil society groups and representatives of business enterprises have seen an ever-greater participation in institutions of global governance and development, even though an all-inclusive participation may still be lacking in this respect.

The World Bank and the IMF are relics of the Bretten Woods system, which, as argued by several scholars in their recent works, has become irrelevant due to the emergence of new, powerful actors at the international stage. One option having an important symbolic value could be to change the nomenclature of these organizations, terming them as International Reconstruction Fund (IRF) and Emergency Relief Fund (ERF), and expanding and diversifying their membership and democratizing their decision-making by including representatives of the new regional powers, private businesses, civil society organizations, regional blocs and developing countries. The G-20 can be further expanded so that the world at large can sit together and manage global crises such as the current economic crunch collectively—creating a new structure of international monetary, trade and commerce rules and procedures so that the world should never experience the sort of “market fundamentalism,” to use George Soros’s words,<sup>25</sup> it did in recent decades and the path of capitalist growth is corrected for greater societal health and fairer global economic order.

The UN system as a whole and its core body, the Security Council, also needs to be reformed and democratized in accordance with the new global realities, a constant theme in the largely Western scholarly perspectives cited above. However,

accomplishing this gigantic but absolutely necessary task will be easier said than done, if all the bids for the purpose made under former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan are kept in view. China would love to have greater share in global decision-making, but it might continue to oppose Japan's permanent membership of the Security Council, which should have been given to Japan decades ago when it emerged as an economic power to reckon with. One option is to let regional blocs, instead of great powers, have veto power status in the Security Council. The problem is that most of the regional blocs, including the OIC and SAARC, have not matured enough to represent their respective regions. The EU, ASEAN and NAFTA may qualify for such status. But can we imagine the US accepting such a proposal in the case of NAFTA? Or, would France or Britain be prepared to surrender their right to veto for the sake of EU's permanent membership of the Security Council? Or, would China and Russia be ready to exchange their privileged global status with SCO? Let's consider the case of India. With right comes responsibility. India's rising economic power may qualify it for a permanent seat at the Security Council, but can be legally or morally justified in the presence of Kashmir conflict?

Given that, it is easy to talk about democratizing the UN system, but the issue gets quite difficult when we start talking about actually doing it. Similar dilemmas emanate from threat terrorism or counter-terrorism poses to state sovereignty and international law. Enhanced international cooperation to combat terrorism may erode the necessity of pre-emption, but then what to do when pairs of potentially hostile states such as India and Pakistan facing a security dilemma are unable to cooperate in collectively managing a common terrorist threat? In this respect, India attempted to mimic American preemption in Iraq at least in theory as recent as in the aftermath of November 2008 Mumbai attacks. President Barack Obama may have disbanded Guantanamo Bay, but the dilemma that terrorists, as neither soldiers nor criminals, pose to international law still continues. One option suggested by Mary Robinson is to treat them as international war criminals<sup>26</sup> and try them in the ICC is, however, worth-considering. In retrospect, the fact that international order needs to be reshaped, international institutions need to be reformed and multilateralism needs to be re-invented in response to

all the global shifts identified before, the real question is how. And this is the question that needs to be addressed now rather than later.

The principal problem arises when we actually go about reforming the existing international order, as great powers and emerging powers tend to pursue their respective interests for retaining or enhancing relative power at the world stage. Consequently, much of the talk about reforming the existing system does not go beyond rhetoric and the ground reality favors neo-realism. Since the international system is anarchic, states, great or small, will pursue their interests and will seek relative power. It is, therefore, difficult to avoid the obvious contradiction, also visible in this paper, a narrative suggesting reforming of an international system, in which traditional and emerging key state players still base their perceptions and policies on essentially neo-realistic principles. That anarchic reality of the world system is still important for the policy planners and decision makers of major world state actors, however, does not mean that academic scholarship on the subject should not be suggestive in its argumentation.

Even if the international reality is anarchic today, and this may be the case in the foreseeable future, there is no harm in building a case for systemic reformation, especially in the wake of the current shifts in global power politics and the rising significance of non-state actors. For in the absence of that the crises we face today will aggravate tomorrow. Such crises can only be addressed fully if the US and the developed world are willing to accommodate the aspirations of the under-developed world in newer, more effective global institutions, if the Chinese are willing to let Japan play a greater role, if India perceives Kashmiri settlement as an essential part of its quest for enhanced international status commensurate with its growing economic clout—so on and so forth. Likewise, the gap between what great powers rhetorically preach and actually practice in world affairs has to erode.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, the international community is pluralistic in every respect, politically, economically, socially, cultural and religiously.

It is but natural, therefore, that institutions of global governance would have to reflect this pluralism. Democracy, free market economy and human rights are universal ideals, and the entire world must march to realize them. However, what we need to acknowledge is that the pace towards realizing such ideals can be different from nation to nation and culture to culture. And we have to simultaneously recognize that only by adhering to another universal principle of peaceful co-existence, one of the founding norms of the UN Charter, that nations of the world, however big or small they may be, can eventually get to this noble end together. No one civilization or power can self-assume the role of an international messiah, as American neo-conservatives did recently, to impose their version of international order on the rest of the world, thereby creating further disorder globally. The crises at hand, from terrorism to global warming, are truly transnational in character, so is the human quest for peace, freedom and prosperity. Addressing such crises and realizing such quest requires a pluralistic global governance model and fairer form of multilateralism, amid all the recent shifts in global politics.

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## Notes

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- <sup>2</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* (New York: Vintage, 1989).
- <sup>3</sup> Fareed Zakaria, *Post-American World* (New York: Allen Lane, 2008).
- <sup>4</sup> Richard N Haass, "The Age of Nonpolarity: What Will Follow US Dominance," *Foreign Affairs* (May-June 2008). Available from <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63397/richard-n-haass/the-age-of-nonpolarity>> Accessed on May 1, 2009.
- <sup>5</sup> Zbigniew Brezezinski, *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower* (New York: Basic Books, 2007).
- <sup>6</sup> Jim Garrison, *America as Empire: Global Leader or Rogue Power?* (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 2004).
- <sup>7</sup> Kishore Mahbubani, "The Impending Demise of the Postwar System," *Survival*, vol 47, no 4 (Winter 2005-06), pp 7-18.
- <sup>8</sup> James W Skillen, *With or Against the World? America's Role among Nations* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005).
- <sup>9</sup> James F Hoge, Jr, "A Global Power Shift in the Making: Is the United States Ready?" *Foreign Affairs* (July-August 2004), pp 2-7.
- <sup>10</sup> Among others, Joseph S Nye, Jr. has, perhaps, provided the most comprehensive description of the diffusion of power or the changing meaning of power in an era of globalization. Please see Joseph S Nye, Jr, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Get It Alone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); and *Soft Power: The Means of Success in the World* (New York, Public Affairs, 2005).
- <sup>11</sup> Garrison, op cit, p 22.
- <sup>12</sup> Conversation with John Mearsheimer at Annual International Studies Association Convention 2009, New York, February 26, 2009.
- <sup>13</sup> John Mearsheimer, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008).
- <sup>14</sup> Brezezinski, op cit, p 214.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, p 215.
- <sup>16</sup> Hoge, op cit, p 7.
- <sup>17</sup> Skillen, op cit, p 147.
- <sup>18</sup> Mahbubani, op cit, pp 17-18.
- <sup>19</sup> Jean-Francois Rischard, *High Noon: Twenty Global Problems, Twenty Years to Solve Them* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), p 157, cited in Garrison, op cit, p 37.
- <sup>20</sup> "New internationalism needed for new world order," *The Financial*, April 1, 2009. Available from <[http://www.finchannel.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=33501&Itemid=9](http://www.finchannel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33501&Itemid=9)> Accessed on May 4, 2009.
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<sup>22</sup> Charles Grant, “Europe, China and the Multilateral World Order,” *Global Times*, July 27, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Messner, op cit.

<sup>24</sup> Garrison, op cit, p 198.

<sup>25</sup> George Soros, *On Globalization* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> Mary Robinson, “The Rule of Law: Striking a Balance in an Era of Terrorism,” paper presented at ‘The International Rule of Law Symposium: A Plan for Action’, organized by the American Bar Association and the International Bar association, Chicago, USA, September 16, 2006.