

America and a Changed World

A Question of Leadership

Edited by Robin Niblett



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America and a Changed World

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Editorial Offices

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
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The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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Preface and acknowledgments

The idea for this book arose from the desire to offer a non-American perspective on the United States' current and future role in the world at the outset of President Barack Obama's presidency – at a period of considerable turmoil for US international relations with allies and adversaries alike. The objective has been to feed back to American audiences, as well as to the many people beyond US shores who are interested in US foreign policy, a sense of how America's power and policies resonate in what Barack Obama called 'a changed world' in his inauguration address. For this reason the contributors to this book do not recap the main international milestones of the Obama administration's first year. Instead, they seek to present a dynamic picture of the international context within which those policies are playing out and to offer ideas on how US actions might be adjusted for the new context. The underlying question each seeks to answer is whether the United States will be able to reassert aspects of its past global leadership at a time when antibodies to this leadership have strengthened across the world.

This and other questions were initially addressed in the Chatham House report *Ready to Lead? Rethinking America's Role in a Changed World*, published shortly after President Obama took office. The report drew on a series of analyses prepared by Chatham House Programme Heads, Senior Fellows and Associate Fellows that assessed the world confronting America in early 2009. A central theme of the report was the extent to which the United States needed to adapt its policies and its leadership style to a world undergoing profound structural change in terms of its balance of political and economic power. In this book, the same Chatham House analysts assess in more detail the international response to President Obama's strategy of international engagement. They seek to highlight the mindset of the different publics and policy-makers that are the targets of US policy. They also point to policy adjustments that might offer the United States the best chance to play a positive role in priority areas for its current administration.

Preface and acknowledgments

I must offer my thanks first, therefore, to my Chatham House colleagues for persevering with this project over the past eighteen months and for revising, adapting and redrafting their contributions as the first dramatic year of the Obama presidency unfolded. Placing the impact of US policy at the heart of their regional or thematic areas of expertise has been a valuable intellectual and institutional exercise, and we all hope we have offered in return one or two valuable insights to the US policy-makers who must carry the burden of America's international responsibilities.

Second, I would like to thank the two people who have done most to pull together the chapters of this book and increase their level of substantive coherence and stylistic consistency. Margaret May works tirelessly to keep the published output from Chatham House on track and to their deadlines, and played a central role in the completion of this book, as she does for all of the Institute's major publications. Nicolas Bouchet offered invaluable support at a critical moment in the book's production, drawing together the disparate chapters, providing commentary on early drafts and helping to bring the publication to fruition.

I must also recognize the great support of Anna Dorant-Hayes, my Executive Assistant, whose managerial skills ensured that I found the time to focus on the book at the necessary moments. She also provided important research assistance for earlier drafts of my own chapter, along with Mark Leventhal, who interned in my office in the second half of 2009.

Finally, this book would not have made it from concept to publication without the forbearance and encouragement of Trisha, Marina and Saskia, with whom I am fortunate to share my life.

Robin Niblett
*Director,
Chatham House*

Notes on contributors

Annette Bohr is an Associate Fellow of the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House. She is the author or co-author of two monographs and numerous articles and book chapters on Central Asian domestic and international politics, contemporary history, and ethnic and language policies. She has worked as a Fellow of Sidney Sussex College at the University of Cambridge, and as a research analyst on Central Asian affairs at the University of Manchester and at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Munich.

Kerry Brown is Senior Fellow on the Asia Programme at Chatham House. He served as First Secretary at the British embassy in Beijing from 2000 to 2003. He is a research associate of the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy at SOAS, University of London, and author of *Struggling Giant: China in the 21st Century* (2007) and *Friends and Enemies: The Past, Present and Future of the Communist Party of China* (2009).

Victor Bulmer-Thomas CMG, OBE is Visiting Professor at Florida International University. He is also an Associate Fellow of Chatham House, where he was Director from 2001 to 2006, and a Senior Distinguished Fellow of the School of Advanced Study, University of London. From 1992 to 1998 he was Director of the University's Institute of Latin American Studies and Editor of the *Journal of Latin American Studies* from 1986 to 1997. The author or editor of 20 books on Latin America, he is currently researching an economic history of the Caribbean since the Napoleonic Wars.

Tom Cargill is Assistant Head of the Africa Programme at Chatham House. His expertise covers aspects of the role of African states in international relations, particularly in UK and US policy. He has co-authored several chapters and journal articles with Alex Vines, including on UK policy to Africa under Labour, and the role of sanctions in Sierra Leone. He formerly worked as a freelance writer in East Africa.

Paul Cornish is Carrington Professor of International Security and Head of the International Security Programme at Chatham House. He was educated at the University of St Andrews, the London School of Economics and the University of Cambridge. He has served in the British Army and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has taught at the UK Joint Staff College and at the University of Cambridge, and was previously Director of the Centre for Defence Studies at King's College London. His research interests include the politics of the use of armed force, domestic security, counterterrorism and resilience, cybersecurity, arms control and non-proliferation, and European security and defence policies.

Michael Grubb is Chair of the international research organization Climate Strategies, headquartered at Cambridge University, where he is also a Senior Research Associate at the Faculty of Economics. He is currently writing a book integrating the lessons from 20 years of experience with climate change policy. His former positions include Chief Economist at the Carbon Trust, Professor of Climate Change and Energy Policy at Imperial College London, and Head of the Energy and Environment Programme at Chatham House, and he continues to be associated with these institutions. He has held numerous advisory positions with governments, companies and international studies on climate change and energy policy, and has published widely, including as a lead author on mitigation for several major IPCC reports.

Devika Hovell is an Associate Fellow in International Law at Chatham House. She has worked previously as a Lecturer in International Law and Director of the International Law Project at the Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales (2002–06), and as a judicial clerk to judges on the International Court of Justice (2001–02) and the High Court of Australia (1999–2000). She is currently completing a doctorate at the University of Oxford on Security Council sanctions and due process.

Bernice Lee is Research Director for Energy, Environment and Resource Governance at Chatham House and oversees all of Chatham House's work in the area of energy, climate and resource security. She has led innovative initiatives on piloting low carbon transition in China and speeding up technological diffusion of climate-friendly technologies. She has previously worked at the Aga Khan Foundation, the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, the Rockefeller Foundation, the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Strategic Planning Unit of the United Nations Secretary-General's office. She holds degrees from the London School of Economics and Oxford University.

Robin Niblett has been Director of Chatham House since January 2007. His principal substantive interests are European integration and transatlantic relations, and he is currently leading a Chatham House project on *Rethinking the UK's International Ambitions and Choices*. He was previously the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, where he also served as Director of the Europe Program and its Initiative for a Renewed Transatlantic Partnership. A frequent panellist at conferences on transatlantic relations, he has testified on a number of occasions to US Senate and House Committees on European Affairs and has given evidence to the UK Commons Select Committee on Defence. He regularly provides commentary to the media in the UK, US and internationally. His publications include the Chatham House Report *Ready to Lead? Rethinking America's Role in a Changed World* (2009) and (as co-editor with William Wallace) *Rethinking European Order: West European Responses 1989–97* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). Dr Niblett has degrees from Oxford University.

James Nixey is Programme Manager and Research Analyst on the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House. His principal expertise concerns the domestic and international politics of the post-Soviet South Caucasus and Central Asia and he has published papers and articles in journals, and commented extensively in the national and international media. He holds degrees in modern languages and international relations and has experience working in journalism (as a reporter in Moscow in the late 1990s) and the banking sector.

Felix Preston joined Chatham House as a Research Fellow in July 2008, initially focusing on two major projects in China – one developing a roadmap for low carbon development in Jilin City, the country's first official 'pilot research area' in this field, and the other supporting the Low Carbon Economy Task Force of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development. Previously, he was a senior consultant at the environmental and energy consultancy AEA Technology, where he worked in the policy and international team. He has an MSc in Environmental Technology.

Gareth Price is Head of the Asia Programme at Chatham House. He gained his PhD, examining ethnic conflict in northeast India, from the University of Bristol. He subsequently worked for a political risk consultancy, Control Risks Group, for the Economist Intelligence Unit and as a consultant for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. His research interests include the political economy of South Asia, the emerging global role of India and militancy in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

James Sherr is Head of the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House. Between 1986 and 2008 he was a Fellow of the Advanced Research Assessment Group of the UK Defence Academy and Lecturer in International Relations at Lincoln College, Oxford. He has previously served as a Specialist Adviser to the House of Commons Defence Committee and as a consultant to NATO and other official bodies on Russia and Ukraine.

Claire Spencer is Head of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House, and has written and commented widely on US and EU policy towards Iran, Israel–Palestine and the broader Middle East, in addition to her core research interest, North African and Mediterranean issues, with particular emphasis on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the security dimensions of the EU's relations with North Africa and the Middle East. She was previously Deputy Director of the Centre for Defence Studies, King's College London (1995–2001), Head of Policy for the Middle East and Central Asia for the development agency Christian Aid, and Senior Research Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. She has a BSc in Politics from the University of Bristol and a PhD in Political Science from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Paola Subacchi is Director of International Economics Research at Chatham House. Her main research interest is in the functioning and governance of the international financial and monetary system, with a particular focus on post-crisis policy and institutional change. She is a frequent contributor to peer-reviewed journals and current affairs publications and a regular commentator for the major UK, US and other international media. Her recent (co-edited) publications from Chatham House include *New Ideas for the London Summit: Recommendations to the G20 Leaders* (2009) and *The Gulf Region: A New Hub of Global Financial Power* (2008). An Italian national, Dr Subacchi studied at Bocconi University in Milan and at the University of Oxford.

John Swenson-Wright is the Fuji Bank Senior University Lecturer in Modern Japanese Studies and a Fellow of Darwin College, Cambridge, and an Associate Fellow with the Asia Programme at Chatham House. He writes and comments regularly on the international relations of East Asia. His current interest focuses on contemporary political and security interests in Northeast Asia, with particular reference to Japan and the Korean peninsula, as well as a longer collaborative project exploring the Cold War in East Asia. A graduate of Oxford University and the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, he has a DPhil in International Relations from St Antony's College, Oxford.

Alex Vines OBE is Director of Regional and Security Studies and Head of the Africa Programme at Chatham House. His expertise is in the politics and foreign policies of sub-Saharan Africa, light weapons proliferation, sanctions and extractive industries in Africa, as well as many aspects of the relations of various countries with Africa, including China, India and the UK. He has lived and worked in a number of different African countries, including as a member and a chair of several UN Panels of Experts. He serves on a number of editorial boards, is a part-time lecturer at the Department of International Studies and Social Science at Coventry University and previously worked as a senior researcher for Human Rights Watch and Africa Analyst for Control Risks.

Benjamin Zala is Programme Manager of the Sustainable Security Programme at the Oxford Research Group and a PhD candidate at the University of Birmingham. He has previously worked with the Energy, Environment and Development Programme at Chatham House and has published on nuclear proliferation, multilateralism and International Relations theory.

Introduction

Robin Niblett

A TRANSITION IN US GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

The election of Barack Obama as the 44th president of the United States on 4 November 2008 constituted an important hinge point in the history of America's relations with the rest of the world. It closed a tumultuous chapter during which the administration of President George W. Bush had initially set the United States on a confrontational course in its international relations with both allies and opponents. While periods of heightened tension in these relations had occurred during the Cold War, the geopolitical framework of that period imposed constraints on the likely outcomes – the United States needed its allies and they in turn could not separate themselves from the guarantor of their ultimate security. Meanwhile, powers such as China or India manoeuvred and aligned themselves according to the prevailing balance in the bipolar competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. What was shocking to many US allies during the first term of the Bush administration was the sense that the United States felt it could operate without international constraints, whether posed by countervailing powers or by its commitment to the very institutions that it had created and championed during the Cold War.

That the Bush administration recognized the constraints on its margin for manoeuvre during its second term did not do much to alter the impressions caused by its first. It was only with a change in administration that change in America's foreign policies, as much as in its domestic policies, could really be possible. President Obama offered the prospect of opening a new and distinct chapter in America's international relations, one seemingly better suited to a post-Cold War world. His speeches during the presidential campaign of 2008 and immediately following his election victory acknowledged America's fundamental interdependence with the rest of the world. He spoke of strengthening alliances and international institutions, tackling common global challenges – from climate change to nuclear proliferation – on a multilateral basis within existing institutions, engaging America's opponents where possible, and tightening the bond between the United States' internal values and its external policies. These commitments signalled a United States that was willing to adapt the style and

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the substance of its foreign policy to the emergence of a more interconnected and more multipolar world.

But even before Obama's inauguration on 20 January 2009, contradictions were apparent between the notion of a more multilaterally-minded United States and one whose leaders believed their country remained predestined to lead the world. The President's own inaugural address reminded his audience at home and abroad that 'we are ready to lead once more',¹ and Hillary Clinton, in her confirmation hearing as Secretary of State a week earlier, on 13 January, stated that 'we must strengthen America's position of global leadership' in order to ensure the United States remains 'a positive force in the world'.² This belief in the continuing need for American global leadership was echoed in a raft of reports and books by leading US academics and analysts in the lead-up to the presidential transition (many of their authors were former Democratic administration officials, including some who subsequently took up positions in the Obama administration).³ President Obama entered the White House, therefore, with the desire to adapt the style and substance of America's external relations in ways that better reflected the fact that 'the world has changed', but also with the intention 'to renew American leadership in the world' in ways that implied it had not.

This book delves into the seeming contradiction between these two impulses. It examines America's engagement with a broad range of countries, regions and global issues over President Obama's first year in office in order to explore the following essential question: has the arrival of his administration and the policies it has launched enabled the United States to reclaim a position of global leadership; or has the world, at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, indeed changed in such a way that, despite their best efforts, President Obama and his administration must accommodate themselves to a continued waning of US international power and influence that is driven by structural factors beyond their control?

This overarching question gives rise to a number of subsidiary questions that inform each of the book's chapters. What was the legacy that President Obama and his administration inherited at the start of 2009 in terms of America's influence and leverage across countries, regions and issues in a rapidly changing world? What efforts did they undertake to adapt US policies to take account of the changed environment? How have governments and peoples around the world reacted to President Obama's international initiatives? Did these initiatives and the response to them demonstrate that the United States had retained much of its influence and underlying capacity for leadership, or that these had been eroded? Are new patterns and habits of international coordination emerging in place of deference to US leadership? And, given the experience of this past year, what steps could President Obama and his team take to pursue their goals as well as to strengthen US influence and its capacity for international leadership?

A second aim of the book is to examine how the quest to sustain US leadership appears from an external, non-US perspective. The chapters in Part I explore these questions principally from the perspective of countries within the regions

of the world that form a central focus of the Obama administration's foreign policies. The chapters in Part II take a similar approach to US relations with three of the principal actors on the world stage – China, Russia and the EU – whose support or opposition will have a central bearing on the success of the Obama administration's international priorities. Part III assesses the administration's engagement with four of the world's principal global challenges – the UN and the international legal system, non-proliferation, climate change and the management of the global economy – and considers whether the United States is proving capable of adapting its style of leadership to help not only itself but also other countries and societies to deal with these challenges in a more effective manner.

Three sets of conclusions can be drawn from the chapters that follow. The first concerns the structural nature of some of the important obstacles that the Obama administration would need to overcome in order to renew America's global leadership role. The second concerns the growing limits of US influence over the decisions taken not only by the world's new emerging powers but also, increasingly, by smaller actors operating within deepening patterns of regional political and economic coordination that exclude the United States. The third conclusion, which compensates somewhat for the first two, concerns the pivotal and leading role that the United States will play in the development of effective common solutions to transnational challenges.

OBAMA'S INTERNATIONAL INHERITANCE

Far from ushering in an era of renewed US global leadership, the first year of the Obama administration appears to have confirmed many of its limits. This is not for lack of effort on the part of the President and his team, as all the chapters of this book make clear. In just its first six months President Obama announced his intention to close the Guantánamo Bay detention facility and approved the US joining the UN's Human Rights Council; he travelled to Cairo and Ankara to open a fresh US dialogue with the Muslim world; he reached out to the people of Iran in a personal televised message and to their government bilaterally through diplomatic channels; he appointed Senator George Mitchell as his Special Envoy for Middle East Peace, sending him on a series of missions to that region; he announced a firm date for the withdrawal of all US combat troops from Iraq, the end of 2011, and a thorough revision of the US strategy for Afghanistan; and he committed his administration to a 'reset' of America's relations with Russia and to a series of strategic arms reduction negotiations with its government. In his first year, President Obama also travelled to Latin America and to Africa to meet leaders there; he underscored to European governments the importance of the Atlantic Alliance at NATO's 60th anniversary summit in Strasbourg and in a series of bilateral meetings; he sent Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on a first visit to Southeast Asia and China, and followed this up in November 2009 with his own trip to four Asian countries, including China where he played down areas of bilateral disagreement and focused on the two countries' shared commit-

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ments to international economic stability and regional security; he welcomed the Indian Prime Minister to Washington and pledged to implement the various provisions of the US–Indian deal on civilian nuclear cooperation; he engaged the United States actively in the G20 summit meeting convened in London to confront the global financial crisis and, having pressed for a US cap-and-trade bill to control US carbon emissions ahead of the Copenhagen climate change summit in December 2009, passed an executive order making carbon dioxide emissions a polluting substance, thereby allowing it to be regulated directly by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Nevertheless, as the contributors to this volume also note, the results of this blitzkrieg of diplomatic engagement have been disappointing. The Israeli–Palestinian negotiations remain in deadlock; the Iranian government has rejected a series of compromises on its nuclear enrichment programme; the situation in Afghanistan has yet to improve; Russia–US relations remain ambiguous; neither China nor India has been particularly supportive of US international priorities; improved transatlantic relations at a leadership level have not borne fruit in terms of joint actions; and the Copenhagen summit ended with a disappointing declaration, partly as a result of a disagreement between China and the United States. As individual chapters indicate, there were multiple specific political reasons for the lack of major breakthroughs in President Obama's first year. In the Middle East, for example, these included Binyamin Netanyahu's electoral victory in Israel, the continuing weakness of the Palestinian Authority and the crack-down following Iran's own presidential election. Moreover, a policy of engagement is by its very nature likely to take time to bear its fruits. In cases where this does not happen, it can still change the diplomatic and political context for future action, making a subsequent policy revision to a more confrontational approach that much easier.

Drawing longer-term insights for US global leadership from the Obama administration's first year, therefore, is a difficult process. But the chapters in this book demonstrate that this first year has confirmed certain patterns about US international influence that preceded his arrival in the White House and that are likely to continue at least throughout his term in office. Three of these lie beyond President Obama's near-term control; they are structural and constitute part of his international inheritance.

First, leaders in many countries around the world see the United States as being one of the principal sources of the problems they must deal with. Rather than reacting to new US diplomatic pressure and initiatives by changing their policy course, therefore, they are waiting for the United States to change course first. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in Europe, where US frustration with the lack of European movement on some of the Obama administration's main policy priorities (for example, committing new resources to Afghanistan; helping to house former Guantánamo Bay inmates; or being more aggressive in stimulating domestic economic demand to counter the effects of the global financial crisis) has grown over the past year. For their part, European leaders have rejected the argument that they need to adapt their policies until they are

confident that the United States has successfully tackled its own problems in these areas.

This sense of the United States now being ‘the source of the problem’ rather than of its solution permeates a number of other chapters – whether it be those concerning US relations with China and East Asia, where US global and regional economic leadership is now being called into question, or with the Middle East, where the US invasion of Iraq has undercut US strategic credibility by replacing one source of instability (Saddam Hussein) with another (a more strategically secure Iran and a strengthened Shia presence north of the Gulf); or with countries in South Asia, which are sceptical of the Obama administration’s new policies largely out of frustration with the failures of past US efforts. Overall, the result of earlier US policy failures is that international leaders are now unwilling to give the Obama administration the benefit of the doubt as it markets its new initiatives. US credibility first needs to be rebuilt – a process that is likely to take longer than President Obama’s four-year presidential term.

Second, several of the chapters point to the increasingly complex political environment within which the Obama administration’s international counterparts must now operate when dealing or negotiating with the United States. Both Claire Spencer’s chapter on the Middle East and Kerry Brown’s chapter on China highlight the rapid and massive growth of communications technologies in recent years, whether these are the satellite and cable TV channels that now span the Middle East and North Africa or the online blogging sites that have proliferated in China. Both chapters note how these technologies are increasing the internal political pressures on domestic leaders who operate in authoritarian political systems.

The trend towards more open popular means of communication and political debate could be seen as a positive development from the US perspective in terms of helping promote over time more representative forms of governance. However, what has been termed the new ‘global political awakening’ is also constraining the room for manoeuvre of authoritarian leaders in their dealings with the United States.⁴ Much of the pressure on the Chinese government to cut back its support for America’s indebted economy is coming from the ‘blogosphere’, which would react furiously should the Chinese leadership cave in to US pressure to revalue its currency as a way of trying to reduce the bilateral trade deficit. Similarly, authoritarian governments across the Middle East would see their already fragile credibility further eroded by a new media onslaught should they succumb to US pressure to improve their relations with Israel. The ability of the United States, under the Obama administration or any future US administration, to strike pragmatic ‘Kissinger-style’ back-room deals with their counterparts is now severely constrained. The United States must factor into its negotiations with almost all world leaders the sorts of multiplicity of active views and interests – linked by instantaneous communications – that are already the hallmark of politics in the United States and other Western countries.

Several of the chapters note a third and related structural constraint on America’s future international influence and leverage – the growing internal and

external pressure for it to shift from its recent emphasis on supporting individual, 'pro-US' leaders in strategically pivotal countries, such as Mikheil Saakashvili in Georgia, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt or Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan, to supporting the development of the political institutions and legal norms which will offer each country greater long-term political stability. The conclusion of many of these chapters is that the Obama administration will need to change its style of leadership to one that supports and enables local actors and institutions to bring about political and economic change rather seeing its role as being a leading instigator of that change. But, as Gareth Price notes in his chapter on South Asia, with regard to Pakistan and Afghanistan, US support for the rule of law, a free press, parliamentary accountability and other institutional reforms that combine to bring about 'good governance' can have the unintended effect of reducing US political influence in the country concerned. A similar potential trade-off between US influence and improving levels of local governance is highlighted by Claire Spencer, who notes that, in the Middle East, democracy and security are widely seen to be 'separate and largely contradictory objectives'.

A MORE COMPETITIVE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The contributors to the book also make clear that the Obama administration inherited a world in which US power had been in relative decline for a number of years, with the inevitable effect of America's diminishing influence and capacity to lead. The decline is relative because in 2009 the United States remained the most powerful nation in the world – and it will remain so for at least the next decade. This is confirmed by the fact it was a key player in political developments within each of the regions covered in Part I, the principal external interlocutor for the three actors covered in Part II, and a central protagonist in attempts to confront the four global challenges addressed in Part III. But being a central protagonist is not the same as being able to lead or to wield sufficient influence to determine outcomes.

The chapters by James Sherr on Russia, Kerry Brown on China, Gareth Price on South Asia and Victor Bulmer-Thomas on Latin America, where Brazil is playing not only a regionally but more globally assertive role, all highlight the increased confidence that above-average economic growth over the past decade has given to these countries and to their strategic ambitions. None of them – not even India or Brazil, two of the world's largest democracies – has appeared interested in supporting a Western, US-led international agenda, whether on controlling the proliferation of nuclear technology or making a meaningful contribution to an international agreement to reduce carbon emissions. They have continued through 2009 to consolidate their positions as the most influential actors in their respective regions, without overtly seeking to acquire the sort of global strategic reach that only the United States currently possesses. Instead, they have deepened forms of institutional coordination that exclude the United States – such as the annual BRICs summit and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization – while securing the elevation of the G20 summit meetings to become the

world's 'premier forum for [...] international economic cooperation' in place of the US-dominated G8.⁵

US global leadership also faces increased competition from a deepening of cooperation between states in most regions of the world that necessarily reduces the scope for US bilateral leverage. In the case of Europe, this process has been ongoing for over 50 years; it is driven at least in part by a belief that European nations can better protect their collective economic and political interests by pooling aspects of their sovereignty within the European Union than they can simply by relying upon being close allies of the United States. But the process of regional cooperation intensified immediately before and during President Obama's first year in office in a number of other areas, including Latin America (as noted by Victor Bulmer-Thomas), the Caucasus (as discussed by James Nixey), sub-Saharan Africa (as noted by Alex Vines and Tom Cargill), East Asia (as noted by John Swenson-Wright) and even the Middle East (as Claire Spencer makes clear).

In many of these cases, the desire to play off the attention of the world's new rising powers against longer-standing US interests ('multi-vectoring', as Annette Bohr describes it in her chapter on Central Asia) has served as a further catalyst to the process of growing regional consultation and cooperation. The effect is that there has been little if any increase in US leverage or influence in key regions of the world even following the arrival of the Obama administration with its more proactive and engaged approach to its allies as well as to its opponents. Instead, allies and non-allies alike, from Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa to Central Asia and East Asia, have taken advantage of the growing competition between the United States and the world's rising powers for access to their resources and markets to strike a more independent strategic stance than in the past.

Drawing on many of the insights from the regional and country-specific chapters of this book, it is possible to make a negative prognosis for the reassertion of US global leadership in the world. The narrowing of the relative levels of economic and political power between the United States and its rivals for international influence have created a more level playing field for America's competitors. And, even setting aside the impact of the world's rising powers, there are fewer avenues for the exercise of US power and influence as a result of the deepening of regional cooperation, the spread of international communications and media and the greater dispersion and institutionalization of power even in authoritarian states.

But it is also clear from these chapters that the United States remains indispensable for many countries as a regional balancer and protector during a period of rapid and unsettling change in the global distribution of power. This is as true for traditional US allies such as Japan and South Korea, facing the rise of China, as it is for Ukraine, Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan, looking to manage Russian influence. As James Sherr notes, America's allies might wish that the United States were sometimes wiser but, especially today, they have rarely wished that it be weaker.

America and a Changed World

Moreover, in an echo of the vital role that the United States played in enabling European integration to take root in the second half of the twentieth century, several of the contributors observe that the Obama administration now has the opportunity to serve as an enabler of the process of deeper cooperation in a number of other parts of the world where the process is still in its infancy, from Southeast Asia to Latin America. Although such cooperation can restrict the number of direct avenues for US influence and global leadership, it opens up, in their place, a promising channel for the countries concerned to pursue their further economic and political development in a sustainable manner.

TACKLING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Whatever the limits of US power and influence in a world of new rising powers, emerging regionalization and growing ambivalence about the value of US intervention in promoting political and economic reform, it appears from Part III that there is one broad area of international affairs where the United States will continue to play a leading role. Its active involvement and leadership will be indispensable if the world is to tackle successfully some of the major global challenges to international prosperity and security, especially in the areas of nuclear proliferation, climate change and financial stability.

Paul Cornish notes in his chapter on arms control that the United States remains the world's pre-eminent military power at both the conventional and strategic levels. However, the increasing availability of the materials, technology and expertise needed to make nuclear weapons is leading inexorably to a world of weapons proliferation, arms races and, very possibly, nuclear use. Given America's pre-eminent military position, the Obama administration will need to use all its diplomatic and intellectual resources not only to meet the immediate arms control and proliferation challenges of today but also to breathe life back into the idea that 'multilateral arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament ... are all essential pillars of the global order' (p. 235). Under any circumstances, therefore, the United States will find itself at the very centre of the international debate on how to square the circle of nuclear deterrence and disarmament over the coming years – a conclusion which the Obama administration appears to have reached from the outset.

In the case of this and other, newer global challenges, however, the Obama administration will again have to recalibrate its style of leadership, serving more as a key enabler of coordinated international policies than as their initiator. Being an enabler of change in the way that the world confronts global challenges will also require the United States to lead as much through the force of its own example as by diplomatic skill or the application of its power.

As Bernice Lee and Michael Grubb observe in their chapter on the challenge of climate change, US leadership would be immensely powerful if correctly applied to tackling this new type of global challenge which cuts across sovereign borders and departmental policy jurisdictions and involves a multiplicity of public and private stakeholders. Given the size of its economy and the extent of its past

and continuing contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, the United States will need to be at the centre of any global climate change agreement. However, in a world of more dispersed political power than in the mid-1990s, when the Kyoto Protocol was formulated (largely, it should be noted, to US design, even if the US Senate then refused to ratify it), the United States cannot hope to design unilaterally global treaty blueprints that other countries will simply accept, as was made abundantly clear at the Copenhagen climate summit. Nevertheless, the Obama administration could make the transition to being an enabler of an effective global response. As the authors of this chapter argue, perhaps the most promising avenue for US leadership in this context will be at the domestic level. The administration's ability to marry the power and imagination of US inventors and entrepreneurs with an effective domestic legislative, funding and regulatory environment could then drive the global effort to the next stage through the power of competition.

In her chapter on the global economy, Paola Subacchi points to a similar tension between the limits and potential of US leadership in addressing global challenges, in this case on effective global financial management. The global economic crisis of 2008–09 has undercut the potential for the United States to provide moral and political leadership in this domain for the near term at least, and the elevation of the G20 over the G8 stands as confirmation of this fact. For much of the twentieth century, the United States served as the principal designer and leader of the Bretton Woods institutions and as the dominant player in the G7. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the United States will have to prove that it is prepared to help manage international economic affairs 'from a position of equality, as *primus inter pares* – rather than that of a hegemon'. In other words, given the still enormous size and wealth of the US economy, aspects of past US global economic leadership might yet be regained if the Obama administration could lead by its domestic example. This would require demonstrating the ability to deal with the United States' very significant domestic economic weaknesses (from its growing indebtedness to its near-bankrupt social security system) while still retaining its commitment to a liberal and open international economic outlook. Given the United States' unique economic attributes – including its large, open, financially liquid domestic markets, openness to immigration and top-class institutions of further education that drive technological innovation – the US economy is still well poised structurally to emerge strong from the current economic crisis and, as a result, to continue to underpin America's long-term potential for global financial leadership.

TOWARDS A NEW STYLE OF US LEADERSHIP

James Sherr suggests that US policy still needs to take greater account of the changed political environment in and around Russia. In fact, this observation could be applied to most dimensions of the United States' current international relations. US influence and leverage upon the world's rising powers and within its most important regions have continued to decline, despite the many policy

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adjustments and new initiatives undertaken in the Obama administration's very busy first year in office. The United States must now find new ways to interact with allies and other countries that are experimenting with forms of cooperation that do not include it as a founder or as a member. It is also being forced to respond to or even to join international structures and initiatives designed by others. America will need to accept that it will not always be at the heart of new regional arrangements, even if these are in regions of strategic interest, such as Latin America or East Asia, nor will it necessarily be the leading protagonist in the evolution of new international institutional developments (such as the G20). Yet each of these initiatives may have a systemically beneficial effect over the long term and would benefit greatly from US support.

US leadership in the future, therefore, will need to be exercised more in partnership with other countries than through autonomous design and political willpower. And yet credible partners are also likely to be hard to work with. Certainly, the rising powers, whether democratic or authoritarian, are likely to continue to be cautious about tying themselves to a US-conceived global agenda at the same time as they are trying to draw closer or even level with the United States in terms of political and economic power. Managing complex bilateral relations with these countries rather than trying to draw them into systems of cooperative global leadership could consume the bulk of US policy attention. And US allies that find themselves in the orbit of these rising powers – Turkey, Japan, South Korea, even EU members, for example – are likely to take a more self-interested approach when deciding whether to follow the US lead on a policy question that touches directly on their bilateral relations with China, Russia or India.

Nonetheless, a recurring theme in the book is that the United States should not hold back from trying to recruit partners in the pursuit of its international interests, even if the necessary alliances have to be constructed and reconstructed on an individual basis. The United States remains the only country capable of and interested in counterbalancing the rise of new powers across the world. And, although it will not be able to reassert at a global level the sort of leadership associated with its role in the Western alliance during the Cold War, it remains the 'indispensable nation', as former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright liked to proclaim, without which effective international agreements and solutions to global problems will not be possible. As noted in the chapter on EU–US relations, European governments are well aware of the risks that they would face should the United States retreat into being a free agent on the world scene rather than a committed member of the Western team. There are good prospects for building common approaches across the Atlantic to global problems, whatever the likely differences in perspective the two sides may bring towards their nearer-term security concerns.

Ultimately, therefore, setting aside those specific areas where the United States brings unique forms of leverage (over the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Iran's quest for a nuclear capability, or strategic arms control, for example), the emerging challenge for the Obama administration and future US leaders will

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