

GLOBAL INSIGHTS

Emerging Powers in an Age of Disorder



Randall Schweller

THE DRAMATIC RISE OF CHINA AND INDIA AMONG OTHERS HAS SET THE STAGE for a fundamental rethinking of world politics in an age of the waning dominance of US power as a force for remaking the world in its own image. While Pax Americana is not yet teetering on the edge of collapse, the consensus opinion is that the relative decline of the United States is probably irreversible and its unipolar moment will soon give way to something new. A “return to multipolarity” is one way of describing this shift. It tells us that several great powers will emerge to challenge US primacy. That is all. The more important question is: What sort of global order will emerge on the other side of the transition from unipolarity to multipolarity? Will it be one of peace and plenty or conflict and scarcity? On this issue, experts are divided into two camps, pessimists and optimists.

Pessimists believe that the coming multipolar world—like the one that held sway over international politics from 1648 to 1945—will be permeated by problems of insecurity, rivalry, arms races, nationalism, and fierce competition for scarce resources.¹ Embedding their arguments in examinations of historical power shifts, such as those provoked by the rise of Napoleonic France or the unification of Germany in 1871, they predict that the United States and China will soon engage in an intense security competition with considerable potential for war. This “great-power conflict” forecast is grounded in the assumption that history unfolds in repeating cycles of global war that destroy the old international order and replace it with a new one. Consistent with the “time’s cycle” metaphor of history, time has no direction; apparent motions are merely stages of ever-present and never-changing cycles. The future, therefore, will resemble the past.

In contrast, optimists see a smooth evolutionary transition from unipolarity to multipolarity, as the great powers, old and new, find ways to build and jointly manage a new global architecture that preserves the essential features of the existing liberal order.² For them, multipolarity implies multilateralism. Embracing principles and practices of restraint, accommodation, reciprocity, and cooperation, the great powers will work in concert to establish mutually acknowledged roles and responsibilities to comanage an evolving but stable international order that benefits all of them. The return of multipolarity will

usher in a new age of liberal peace, prosperity, and progress built on the rule of law. Swords will be beaten into ploughshares, and a harmony of interests will reign among the states and peoples of the world. It is a vision of “great-power concert,” grounded in the assumption that history moves forward in a progressive direction—one consistent with the “time’s arrow” metaphor of historical direction.³

I argue that the prediction of great-power conflict is overly pessimistic, whereas the expectation of a great-power concert is too hopeful. Fears that China’s rise will incite war with the United States are unwarranted. The destructiveness of nuclear weapons and the benefits of economic globalization have made war among the great powers unthinkable. The cycle of hegemonic war and change has been replaced by a perpetual peace, just as liberals claim. Ironically, this is precisely why optimists are too sanguine about the future. International order—particularly one that is legitimate, efficient, and dynamic—requires periodic global wars, roughly every 100 years or so. Otherwise, inertia and decay set in. Hegel pointed this out in 1821: “War is not to be regarded as an absolute evil. Just as the blowing of the winds preserves the sea from foulness which would be the result of a long calm, so also corruption in nations would be the result of prolonged, let alone ‘perpetual,’ peace.”⁴ Whether domestic or international, political systems undisturbed by war cannot cleanse and renew themselves; like still seas, they become foul.

This is the essential logic of the second law of thermodynamics or entropy, which asserts that a closed system’s total energy consists of two separate parts: energy that is available for work (useful or free energy) and energy that is unavailable for work (useless or bound energy). Thermodynamic entropy measures the disorganization in a system. Over time, the energy contained in a closed system becomes distributed in the most probable pattern with all individual particles engaged in random, disordered motion. As collisions cause bodies to exchange heat, this “most probable pattern” is a state of equal energy among particles. Taken to its logical extreme, entropy is a one-way path to destruction, for the second law dooms the earth to thermodynamic “heat-death.”

Outside the domain of physics, entropy appears as a commonsense statistical law of probability, positing that events with a high frequency occur more often than events with low frequency. Closed systems proceed from initial states of low probability (order) to end states of highest probability (disorder). Once maximum entropy is reached, the system stays there forever, never returning to its initial state. The law of increasing entropy means that order in the universe is being relentlessly replaced by increasing disorder. This general formulation of the concept is known as information entropy.

Using information entropy as a metaphor of historical movement, the world is neither going to hell nor being delivered to the promised land. It is, instead, heading for a place akin to a perpetual state of purgatory—a chaotic

realm of unknowable complexity and increasing disorder. We are entering what might be called an “age of entropy,” an apt metaphor (but just a metaphor, nonetheless) because it captures the flattening and chaotic nature of the world as well as the rise of bounded power, similar to useless energy. Succumbing to the unstemmable tide of increasing entropy, world politics is being subsumed by the forces of randomness and enervation, wearing away its order, variety, and dynamism. Let us call this “time’s entropy.”⁵

World Politics in the Age of Entropy

All three models—great-power conflict, great-power concert, and time’s entropy—expect concentrated power to diffuse over time. They disagree, however, about the likely consequences of deconcentrated power. The great-power conflict model sees it triggering a systemwide war among the great powers. The great-power concert scenario expects the current order to be preserved by means of multilateral bargains and common understandings among the great powers. In contrast, time’s entropy predicts a dysfunctional world muddling through on automatic pilot; its old architecture becoming creakier and more resistant to change. New rules and arrangements will be simply piled on top of old ones. And because there will be no locus of international authority to adjudicate among competing claims or to decide which rules, norms, and principles should predominate, international order will become increasingly scarce.

The Roles of Emerging Powers: Spoilers, Supporters, or Shirkers

The reason why the models disagree over the consequences of power diffusion is that they make very different assumptions about the interests and roles of emerging powers. Great-power conflict assumes that emerging powers will be spoilers; great-power concert sees them as supporters; and time’s entropy assumes that emerging powers are conflicted states that may play all three roles—spoiler, supporter, or shirker—depending on the issue and the audience.

Great-power Conflict: Emerging Powers as Spoilers

According to the great-power conflict model, rising powers are invariably spoilers, hell-bent on revising the international order. It is an assumption rooted in power transition theory, the core logic behind “hegemonic-war cycle” notions of system change.⁶ In brief, the theory goes as follows. Given the law of uneven growth among states, a gap emerges over time between the actual distribution of power in the system and its distribution of prestige (or reputation for power), throwing the system into disequilibrium and causing

persistent instability. To peacefully restore system equilibrium, the waning hegemon must cede influence to the rising challenger to the point where the latter's prestige matches its actual power.⁷ In theory, this process of appeasement should solve the problem without resort to war. In practice, it rarely works because: (1) satisfying a rising power's legitimate demands often means compromising the stability of the existing international order as well as the security and vital interests of the declining hegemon and its allies; (2) the rising power advances illegitimate grievances; (3) concessions increase the rising challenger's actual power, which encourages it to demand more concessions. For the declining hegemon, such a process of granting one concession after another to its rival and peer competitor amounts to little more than death on the installment plan.

When bargaining fails to resolve the system crisis, hegemonic war breaks out because either: (1) the rising challenger perceives that its demands have not been met and, given its newfound relative power, the benefits of war now outweigh the costs; or (2) the declining hegemon believes that war is inevitable and better fought now than later so it initiates a preventive war against the rising challenger. Regardless of who initiates it, the war will be one of unlimited means and scope to decide who designs and controls the postwar order.⁸

The main driver of the theory is the emergence of a rising challenger—one dissatisfied not only with its place in the established order, but with the legitimacy of the order itself. The insatiable revisionism of the rising challenger triggers persistent crises that eventually ignite a hegemonic war. Yet the logic behind this “spoiler” assumption is quite murky and, frankly, somewhat illogical. By definition, rising powers are doing better than everyone else under the current order. It is not obvious, therefore, why they (of all states) would seek to spoil the established order; why they would choose an enormously costly global war of uncertain outcome to overthrow an order that has demonstrably worked for them, only to replace it with an untested one that they (and no one else) must pay the costs to start up and manage. What are they so dissatisfied about that they are willing to risk all the gains that they have made to this point and will make in the future? The theory attributes their revisionist aims and general dissatisfaction with the status quo to the disjuncture between actual power and prestige. But prestige matters most when powerful states have serious material conflicts of interests, disagreements over the rules of the game, and expectations that their differences will be settled by fighting. Such conflicts and expectations are largely absent today and do not appear fated to emerge in the future.

Moreover, with prestige comes international responsibilities and obligations. Yet the great-power conflict model does not recognize this trade-off. Consequently, it expects all rising powers to demand prestige commensurate with their relative growth in capabilities. After all, if gains in prestige come

without a price, as the model assumes, rising powers have nothing to lose by demanding more of it.

Consider the last time that hegemonic leadership changed hands. A declining Britain—one gravely imperiled by threats in Europe and elsewhere and too weak to both defend its interests and manage the international system—grudgingly decided that it was time to pass the baton of global leadership to the United States. The handoff was dropped, however, because the United States demanded unparalleled prestige, but was unwilling to pay the price of increased global responsibilities and obligations associated with an exalted position in the international pecking order. It took the attack by Japan at Pearl Harbor to bring the United States out of its isolationist shell. In the immediate postwar period (1945–1952), the United States emerged as a reluctant hegemon, grudgingly assuming leadership because it was the only victor able to construct a new global order. Even then, the United States dreamed of creating a third pole in Europe so it could return to the womb of the Western Hemisphere. It was the failure of this plan and the emergence of a powerful nonliberal enemy, not an appetite for prestige, that finally drove the United States to manage its half of the international order.

Roughly the same problem exists today. The United States complains that China wants the privileges of power, but not the responsibilities that top dogs are obligated to perform. To many Western observers, China appears as a shirker that must be coerced into taking appropriate actions when global crises arise. But the United States only assumed global responsibilities many years after it became the most powerful state on Earth, when it produced almost one-half of the world's total economic output—a relative power position that China is not even close to achieving at this stage in its development. Why, then, should Washington, DC, or anyone else expect China, which produces roughly 8 percent of the world's total economic output, to make substantial contributions to global governance?

Great-power Concert: Emerging Powers as Supporters

Liberals believe that the transition from unipolarity to multipolarity will unfold smoothly because the world is primed for peace: great-power security is plentiful, territory is devalued, and a robust liberal consensus exists among the established powers—one ensconced in a thick ensemble of global institutions that put strict limits on the returns to power. Operating within this benign international setting, the emerging poles will be driven more by the prospect of maximizing their own absolute gains than by fear of relative losses or the temptation to make gains at each other's expense. A restored global balance will arise, therefore, without traditional "hard" balancing in the system's core. Consistent with these propositions, the great-power concert model assumes that emerging powers will be supporters—so-called responsible stakeholders—of the Western liberal order. There are two problems with this assumption.

First, integrating new powers within existing international institutions is trickier than the model assumes. Rising non-Western powers do not always share the US view on global governance; it is unreasonable to expect them to adopt wholesale the principles, norms, and rules of an inherited Western order. And even when the basic interests of the established and emerging powers align, their priorities may differ. For example, both China and the United States would like to see North Korea's nuclear program dismantled. But Washington places a high priority on this objective whereas Beijing desires first and foremost to maintain good relations with Pyongyang. The bottom line is that principled differences and mismatched priorities between established and emerging powers, and between emerging powers themselves, suggest that multipolarity does not necessarily imply cooperative and successful multilateralism.⁹

Second, "catching up" requires the rising state to focus most of its energies on internal matters such as promoting sustainable economic and social development, redressing the domestic imbalances caused by dramatic and sudden economic growth, and managing the often dangerous socioeconomic dislocations associated with rapid urbanization of the population. Because accepting costly international commitments can jeopardize these domestic plans and demands, rising powers are reluctant to actively support the established order. They would prefer, instead, that the declining hegemon pay the costs of order while they ride free. To the extent that free-riding incentives prevail, the established and emerging powers are less likely to comanage the international system than to clash over the questions: Who has responsibilities for what? What is a fair contribution to the collective good? Who decides whether a global initiative is a collective good? Tensions can be expected to mount in the system's core, as the declining hegemon cajoles rising powers to accept more of the responsibilities for meeting global challenges while they, in turn, demand greater voice and representation but shirk their fair share of global burdens. Meanwhile, the process of power diffusion will continue to flatten the world, producing a more balanced multipolarity with no single dominant power capable of providing global order. Frustrated by the shirking of its peer competitors and seeking to arrest its own decline, the hegemon will eventually retrench from its global commitments, leaving no state or group of states in charge of the international order or whatever remains of it. The system will then be on automatic pilot.

Time's Entropy: Emerging Powers as Conflicted States

Unlike the other models, time's entropy does not assume one dominant role for emerging powers. Rather, it sees rising powers as conflicted states with multiple identities, variously adopting all three roles—supporters, spoilers, and shirkers—depending on the particular issue and the targeted audience (e.g., domestic, regional, South-South, or global).

Consider China and the issue of what it means to become a “responsible” international stakeholder. Many Chinese analysts argue (consistent with the shirker role) that it is still a developing country and does not have the capabilities to become fully engaged in global governance. Others are downright suspicious of global governance, viewing it as a trap laid by the West to retard and restrain China’s growth by tying it down with overseas commitments and bleeding it white with foreign entanglements unrelated to its national interests. If this view gains ascendance, it means we will soon see a different Chinese policy—one signaling that China is starting to embrace the role of spoiler. The official view, delivered by Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi in a 2010 speech before 300 leading diplomats and several senior US officials, is that:

A more developed China will undertake more international responsibilities and will never pursue interests at the expense of others. We know full well that in this interdependent world, China’s future is closely linked to that of the world. Our own interests and those of others are best served when we work together to expand common interests, share responsibilities, and seek win-win outcomes. This is why focusing on its own development, China is undertaking more and more international responsibilities commensurate with its strength and status.¹⁰

Here, China sounds comfortable with the role of supporter and happy to contribute to global governance, which serves its own interests as well as those of the international community. In the same speech, however, Yang assertively declares—in terms more consistent with a spoiler than a supporter—that China is getting stronger on the international stage; that the United States was violating international law by a proposed \$6.4 billion arms sale to Taiwan, calling it a “violation of the code of conduct among nations” and threatening for the first time retaliatory sanctions on US firms that supply arms; that China’s television and radio news service contains “more solid” and reliable news than Western media; and that China is not ready to address sanctions on Iran’s nuclear program.¹¹

The truth is that China, like the other emerging powers, does not yet have a fixed role or identity, which may explain why there is no official Chinese Communist Party (CCP) document that lays out a grand strategy for China’s future. China, like most of the emerging powers, is a conflicted state with a political discourse grounded in several ideological strands: (1) *conservative pragmatism*—the dominant ideology among China’s ruling elites, but one that lacks programmatic ideas to guide policy and political action; (2) *nationalism*—fueled by the media and growing tensions between China and the West over human rights and China’s rising power, nationalism has become the dominant ideology among the Chinese masses; (3) *the new left*—a minor ideological force championed by neo-Marxist and neo-Maoist academics; and (4)

liberalism—a marginalized ideology, but one that remains, over the long run, the most serious threat to the CCP regime because it is the most coherent and programmatic of all the competing ideologies in China.

Moreover, China's continued rise, like those of the other emerging powers, is not a given. Without fundamental political reforms, China may succumb to the limits of developmental autocracy—what Minxin Pei calls a “trapped transition” wherein the neoauthoritarian regime exhausts its political and economic vitality, undermining state capacity, heightening social tension, and threatening regime collapse. Unless it breaks with its authoritarian past, it is quite possible that “China may not only fail to fully realize its potential, but also descend into a long-term stagnation.”¹²

India: The Likely Supporter

Like China, India has several competing visions of its role in the international system: (1) *moralists*—a Nehruvian vision that sees India serving as a moral exemplar of principled action in world politics, striving to make the international order more egalitarian in both distributive and political terms; (2) *Hindu nationalists*—who want to resurrect the glory of India by cultivating national strength, which, they believe, is rooted not only in military and economic development but ultimately in the noble and heroic virtues of Hindu society; (3) *realists*—who want India to develop its military and economic capabilities, especially a credible second-strike nuclear capability and conventional forces with the capacity to project force beyond the subcontinent; and (4) *liberals*—who, desiring India to become a great commercial power once again, emphasize interdependence fostered by globalization as the key to a prosperous India, which should model itself more on postwar Europe than contemporary China or the United States.¹³

These four visions have strikingly different views of the existing international order. Only the liberal vision, which seeks reform but not wholesale revision of the inherited Western order, is entirely consistent with a supporter or stakeholder role. The moralist vision represents the most revisionist critique of the existing order, which it views as fundamentally unjust in terms of its principles and means (its reliance on military power rather than peaceful moral suasion). That said, there is a growing consensus in India that the moralist vision has failed. Conversely, the Hindu nationalists and realists want India to do whatever it takes to become a leading great power. With respect to the existing international order, they are only contingently revisionist, finding themselves at odds with just the aspects of the current order that complicate India's rise (e.g., nuclear nonproliferation).¹⁴ While these visions will wax and wane with circumstances, India appears as the most likely junior partner of the United States and strongest candidate to play a supporter role within an emerging multipolar, but still liberal, international order.

Brazil: The Rising Spoiler

Brazil accounts for over 50 percent of South America's wealth, population, territory, and military budgets, making it more relatively powerful in its region than China, India, and Germany are in theirs. Over the past fifteen years, Brazil has moved from the fourteenth to the seventh position in the world economy. Though it is thriving within the current international order, Brazil is nonetheless the most revisionist of all the emerging powers.

Consider Brazil's foreign policies over the past decade. In 2001, it turned down George W. Bush's offer of a position in an extended Group of 7, claiming that the price for a seat at the top table was too high. Since 2000, Brazil's foreign minister has visited the Middle East twenty-four times, arguing that the United States is no longer the "indispensable nation" in the region. With respect to nuclear proliferation, Brazil sees the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) regime as a "politically driven tool in the hands of the United States to selectively 'lay down the law' on weaker states."¹⁵ Brasilia asks: Why should Iran be punished for its civilian enrichment technology whereas Israel, which has bombs in the basement, and India, which has chosen to critique and remain outside the NPT regime, get big rewards from Washington, DC? Indeed, Brazilian elites do not describe the Western global order in terms of multilateralism and inclusion, but rather as an imposed order ruled by powerful Anglo-Saxon states, which use international institutions and arbitrarily enforced rules to control weaker, non-Western states. Global hierarchy, in their eyes, is less a function of material power than of race. Little wonder, at the height of the 2008 global financial crisis, Brazilian president, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva declared: "This crisis was created by white men with blue eyes." He went on to say that he had never met a black banker.¹⁶

In March 2010, US secretary of state Hillary Clinton, concerned over the budding relationship between Brazil and Iran, visited Brasilia, seeking support for stronger sanctions on Iran's nuclear program in what was billed as an effort to forge ties with a country that is increasingly emerging as a recognized global power and fellow democracy. The rhetoric of partnership came easier than the reality, however. Brazil's foreign minister Celso Amorim and President Lula refused to condemn activities that they believe any rising power has the right to engage in.

Few were surprised by the outcome. Brazil has consistently preferred a diplomatic approach to sanctions (which it sees as a step toward military force) and has demanded proof that Iran is constructing a weapon and not simply working on mastering peaceful nuclear technologies. More generally, relations between Washington and Brasilia have been strained in recent years. In addition to tensions over Iran, especially after Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was warmly welcomed in Brasilia in November 2009, the US-Brazil relationship has fallen victim to disagreements over Honduras, military bases in Colombia, and the World Trade Organization cotton dispute, col-

oring Washington's perceptions of Brazil as more of an emerging rival than a true partner. The larger and more ominous message is that Brazil and the other leading democracies of the South and East—Mexico, South Africa, India, and Indonesia among them—are ready to flex their muscles and show the world that they will no longer routinely comply with US or European desires. “We will not simply bow down to the evolving consensus if we do not agree,” declared Brazil's foreign minister.¹⁷

The repercussions go well beyond support for sanctions against Iran in the Security Council. Two years ago, Washington was abuzz with the prospects for a “league of democracies” that would support US global leadership. In the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis that devastated Myanmar, however, a rift opened between the democracies of the advanced North and West, which supported intervention on humanitarian grounds, and the democracies of the South and East, which lined up behind China's call for defending state sovereignty. Indeed, political autonomy from the United States and Europe has become a common theme among the emerging countries of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC)—all of whom dream of becoming autonomous global players, which means cutting their umbilical cords to the West. Brazil's grand strategy consists of South-South alliances and agreements with nontraditional partners (e.g., China, the Asia Pacific, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East) to avoid asymmetric external relations with powerful countries—especially the United States, for which Brazil harbors the same resentments that many Latin Americans have for the exercise of US power in their region. This rebellious spirit was evident in the Doha Round of trade talks and in the ongoing climate change negotiations where Brazil and the other emerging democracies of the South and East have been more receptive to Beijing's than Washington's positions.

In a surprise agreement announced on 16 May 2010, Iran agreed to ship its low-enriched uranium to Turkey, complicating the Barack Obama administration's efforts to ratify international sanctions against Iran. Under the new deal, negotiated at a three-way meeting that included Brazilian president Lulu and Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Iran would ship 2,640 pounds of low-enriched uranium to Turkey for storage. In exchange, after one year, Iran would be eligible to receive 265 pounds of material enriched in France and Russia. An Iranian foreign ministry spokesman said that the country would continue to enrich uranium on its own. Iran's apparent cooperation with the new agreement makes it less likely that Russia and China will support tougher sanctions against Iran in the UN Security Council and puts President Obama in the awkward position of potentially rejecting a deal that is nearly identical to one he negotiated months earlier. Instead of showcasing the determination of the “international community,” the Obama administration's drive for sanctions against Iran has run into a BRIC wall precisely because it looks like a Euro-Atlantic initiative. Efforts for a new, stronger sanctions resolution

against Iran are hitting not only the expected resistance from China and Russia, but reluctance on the part of Turkey and India whose private sectors show little enthusiasm for severing commercial relations with Tehran.¹⁸

Conclusion

Let me end on a hopeful note. When India, China, Brazil, the European Union, Russia, Japan, and possibly Turkey join the United States as members of the great-power club, we will have entered the first truly global epoch of world politics. Past international systems that contained several great powers were merely regional European systems, not global ones. Europe was the core; everything else was considered the periphery. True, Japan and the United States eventually became poles, but they were minor players that arrived late in the game. Europe was center court, where the top players competed with each other.

Compared with past multipolar systems, the global nature of the coming world will afford the great powers more space to maneuver without stepping on each other's toes, making it relatively easy for them to carve out mutually exclusive spheres of influence. Colliding territorial interests will be a less frequent and intense problem than it was under old-style multipolarity.

Related to the unique global character of the coming world, future great powers will be much larger than past ones under European-style multipolarity. In terms of territory and population, India and China dwarf France, Prussia or Germany, Britain, Italy, and Austria-Hungary. Only Russia and the United States—the two continental-sized flank states—were comparable in size to India and China today, and they quickly outstripped their European counterparts to become superpowers after World War II.

The supersized nature of the coming great powers will produce a qualitative change in their expected behaviors. Unlike past great powers, they will not need more territory or population to compete with each other; there will be no imperial temptations for them to resist. Rather, the key to realizing their potential power will be internal growth and consolidation—processes best facilitated by a quiescent international setting. 🌐

Notes

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1. Pessimists are, for the most part, offensive realists. See John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 5–56; and John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).

2. Optimists are essentially neoliberal institutionalists or structural neoliberals who believe that liberal institutions, the spread of democracy, and globalization work together to promote cooperation and peace. See G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); and Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "The Myth of the Autocratic Revival: Why Liberal Democracy Will Prevail," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 1 (January/February 2009): 77–93.

3. See Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

4. George Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, translated by T. M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, [1821] 1967), p. 76.

5. See Randall L. Schweller, "Ennui Becomes Us," *The National Interest*, no. 105 (January/February 2010): 27–38; Randall L. Schweller, "Entropy and the Trajectory of World Politics: Why Polarity Has Become Less Meaningful," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23, no. 1 (March 2010): 145–163.

6. Power transition theory is a dyadic theory about a rising state that is on the verge of overtaking a stronger, but declining, one. The more systemic versions of this theory are called hegemonic-war cycle theory or power preponderance theory. These theories share an important feature: they do not consider alliances in their analyses of power and international politics, which makes for some strange historical interpretations. Most notably, "power transition" histories typically ignore Russia prior to 1945. Given that the Russian army defeated both Napoleonic France and Nazi Germany, this is a rather remarkable oversight. See, for instance, Charles F. Doran and Wes Parsons, "War and the Cycle of Relative Power," *American Political Science Review* 74, no. 4 (December 1980): 947–965; and George Modelski, "The Long Cycle of Global Politics and the Nation-State," *Comparative Studies in Security and History* 20 (April 1978): 214–238.

7. See Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

8. The theory assumes that the rising power is risk acceptant with respect to gains or the declining hegemon is risk acceptant to avoid losses or both.

9. See Steward Patrick, "Irresponsible Stakeholders? The Difficulty of Integrating Rising Powers," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 6 (November/December 2010): 46.

10. Yang Jiechi, "A Changing China in a Changing World," address at the Munich Security Conference, Munich, 5 February 2010.

11. Question and answer session with Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi, Munich Security Conference, Munich, Germany, 5 February 2010, <http://np.china-embassy.org/eng/zgwj/t656702.htm>.

12. Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 214.

13. Rahul Sagar, "State of Mind: What Kind of Power Will India Become?" *International Affairs* 85, no. 4 (July 2009): 801–816.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Matias Spektor, "Brazilian Visions of Global Order," Memorandum for Discussion, presented at the meeting of the US National Intelligence Council, Washington, DC, 12 November 2010, p. 2.

16. Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said: "This is a crisis that was caused by people, white with blue eyes. And before the crisis they looked as if they knew everything about economics. . . . Once again the great part of the poor in the

world that were still not yet [getting] their share of development that was caused by globalisation, they were the first ones to suffer. . . . Since I am not acquainted with any black bankers, I can only say that this part of humanity that is the major victim of the world crisis, these people should pay for the crisis? I cannot accept that. If the G20 becomes a meeting just to set another meeting, we'll be discredited and the crisis can deepen." Remarks by President Lula at a joint press conference with British foreign office minister Lord Malloch-Brown, Brasilia, Brazil, 25 March 2009.

17. Brazilian foreign minister Celso Amorim, quoted in Gus Lubin, "Brazil: Sorry Hillary, But We're Going to Side with Iran," *Business Insider*, 4 March 2010, www.businessinsider.com/brazil-sorry-but-were-going-to-keep-trading-with-iran-2010-3).

18. Nikolas K. Gvosdev, "BRIC Wall," *The National Interest*, 10 March 2010, <http://nationalinterest.org/article/bric-wall-3402>.