

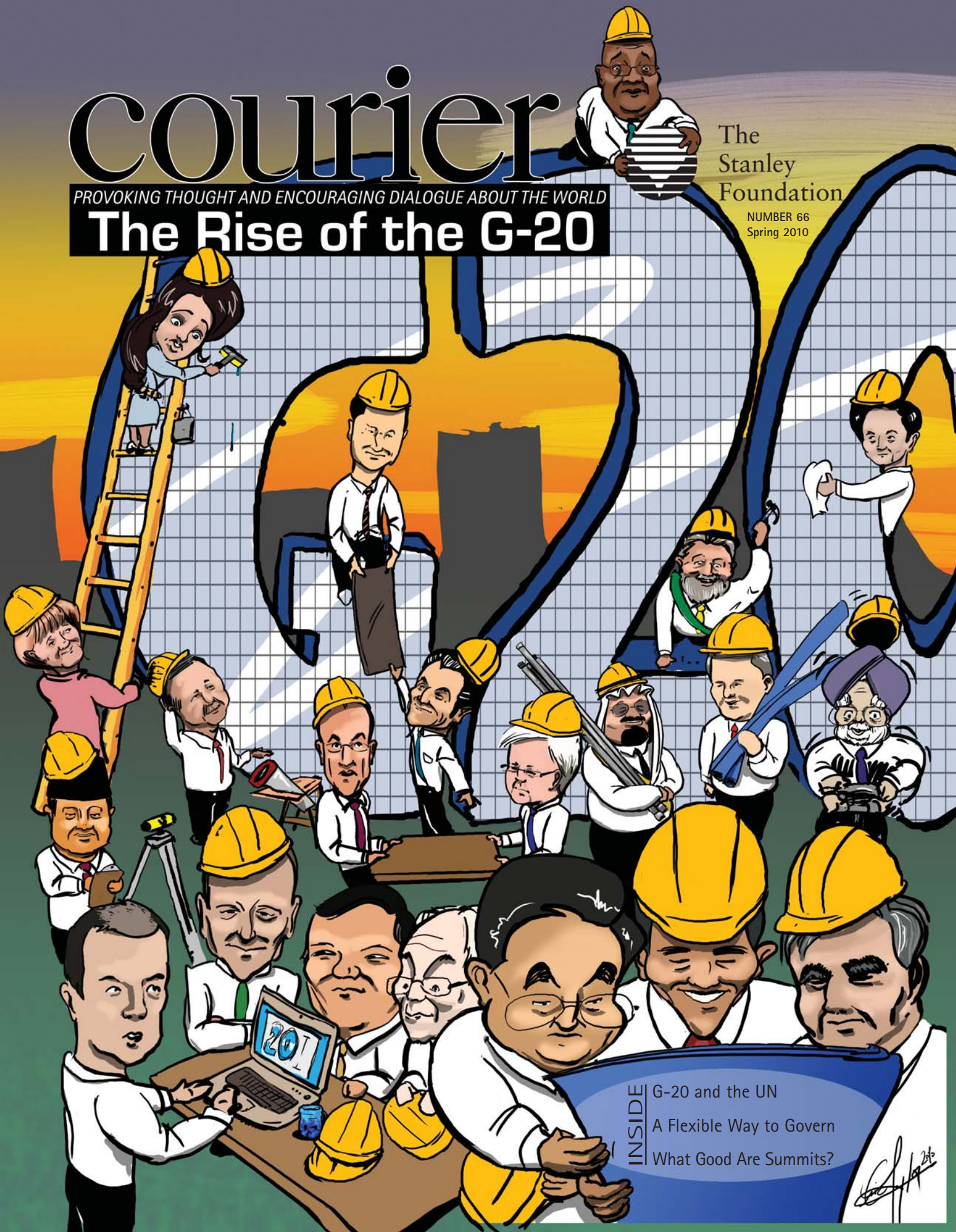
# courier

PROVOKING THOUGHT AND ENCOURAGING DIALOGUE ABOUT THE WORLD

## The Rise of the G-20

The  
Stanley  
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Spring 2010



INSIDE

G-20 and the UN

A Flexible Way to Govern

What Good Are Summits?

*[Signature]*



# The Gs Are Redefined, But Same Challenges Remain

*Will the new venues lead to greater cooperation?*

The formal practice of international cooperation is undergoing a transformation right before our eyes. Less than a year ago, *Courier* addressed the Stanley Foundation's interest in the international leaders' summits known as the "Gs"—the G-8, the G-20, and others. At that point the powerful and elite G-8 was losing some of its spotlight to the upstart G-20. Heads of states and governments used the G-20 as the prime vehicle for addressing the global economic crisis through a rush of three summits in less than a year.

Back then I wrote:

The Stanley Foundation is actively encouraging the evolution of the Gs toward a mechanism we are calling "G-x." We want the G-x to include more of the world's newly powerful nations, particularly those with no voice in the UN Security Council or the current G-8. In fact, our work on rising powers over the last few years prompted us to think about global governance in new ways. We also want this group to move beyond economic discussions and more deliberately address the most pressing global peace and security issues of our time.

As world leaders from dozens of countries trudged into the Pittsburgh G-20 session in September of 2009, the phrase "summit fatigue" was being whispered by a number of officials. We knew the evolution of the Gs seemed more and more inevitable. But even we were surprised by the changes President Obama announced at the conclusion of the Pittsburgh event:

Finally, we agreed to reform our system of global economic cooperation and governance. We can no longer meet the challenges of the 21st-century economy with 20th-century approaches. And



that's why the G-20 will take the lead in building a new approach to cooperation.

Aides clarified that the G-8 would still exist as a forum to discuss security matters, even though the practical distinction between the G-8 and G-20 will likely vary based on the interests of host nations and the winds of current events. While this permanent enlargement seems like a move in the right direction, many of the same G-x questions we raised earlier still linger:

- Will more seats at the table make consensus building too difficult?
- Will those nations left out of the G-20 have a voice in the summit deliberations? And will those excluded work to implement G-20 intentions or undermine them?
- According to some, the G-20 lacks the authority of treaty-based organizations like the United Nations. How will the G-20 and bodies such as the United Nations complement and coordinate with each other to address pressing global challenges?



**Bigger Club.** World leaders gather around the table at the G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh, where President Obama announced the summit would become the premiere venue for global cooperation, eclipsing the G-8. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

Last year our *Courier* cover showed six leaders of powerful rising countries waiting outside the door of the G-8. Those leaders (and more) are now inside the club and, as our new issue's cover shows, they are being asked to cooperate in new and creative ways. The G-8 featured democratic, capitalist, and largely like-minded members. But the mix of political and economic systems represented in the G-20 means this unique forum could mark the beginning of a new, multilateral understanding of how global and national interests intersect. Or not.

In this issue of *Courier*, Bruce Jones, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and director of New York University's Center on International Cooperation, looks squarely at the question of how the G-20 can best complement the work of formal organizations such as the United Nations. While the official global institutions can marshal broad collective responses, Jones says the G-20 can and should help spur those organizations to do their jobs better.

Stewart Patrick, senior fellow and director of the Council on Foreign Relations' Program on International Institutions and Global Governance, examines the rise of a "multipolar" world and how the United States is adapting to its challenges. And,

he asks, will powers embrace the concept of "sovereignty as responsibility"?

And finally, Alan Alexandroff, co-director of the G-20 Research Group at the University of Toronto's Munk Centre and a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation, looks at the dramatic possibilities represented by these leader summits and the associated ministerial-level meetings. In the end, however, he concludes the ultimate test of the Gs is how they contribute to international problem solving.

A sentiment many of us share.

—Keith Porter  
Director of Policy and Outreach, The Stanley Foundation

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**courier**

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# THE MILLION DANISH VOICES FOR A STRONG CLIMATE DEAL



Rise of the G-20

## World Leaders Can Galvanize Action

*The G-20 won't replace the United Nations, but it can help global institutions do their job better*

Our world confronts a growing range of problems either global or transnational in nature. It is also strewn with institutions and organizations, global and regional, political and financial, technical and sectoral. Yet the multilateral instruments have not matched up to the task of solving the problems.

In part, this is because many of the literally thousands of international and regional organizations that constitute the multilateral system were designed for a different age. There are also myriad overlaps and redundancies in international capacity such as the mushrooming network of agencies and departments involved in post-conflict stabilization and peacebuilding, to say nothing of NGOs. And there are yet other areas with gaps in capacity: managing resource scarcity or building defenses against biological threats for example.

The reasons to repair the multilateral system are compelling. First, many transnational problems are interconnected and mutually reinforcing and must therefore be addressed in tandem. Unfortunately, potential collaboration often devolves into turf wars between different multilateral bodies. Second, tackling global problems is expensive and the fledgling effort to estimate the costs of the financial crisis, fragile states, or the transition to a low-carbon world has been hampered by duplication and anachronistic approaches to problems. Finally, and most importantly, there is a growing backlash against globalization and a loss of faith in the multilateral system, with the conspicuous letdown in Copenhagen merely the latest example.

One important source of help is the G-20. This may seem surprising because the G-20 is usually cast as a rival to the United Nations, the global

*It's Not All Black and White. At the Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen demonstrators declare their loss of faith in the multi-lateral system as they demand that world leaders declare war on greenhouse gases that threaten future generations with hunger, poverty, and homelessness. (Sipa via AP Images)*

bastion of multilateralism. But this perceived competition misreads the nature of the G-20, the purposes and strengths of the United Nations, and the potential relationship between the two.

### Where Global Deals Take Shape

Because the G-20 meets at the heads of state level, it has the ability to tackle a range of different issues. These high-level leaders don't face the same constraints of institutional prerogative and can override turf defenses. Indeed, their job is to make trade-offs among priorities, see connections, and galvanize bureaucratic action—all things the lower-level leaders of formal institutions are rather bad at. The G-20 can also induce cross-institutional collaboration and fill critical gaps, hopefully building on rather than duplicating existing competencies.

This is not as farfetched as it may seem. Already G-20 decisions have spurred IMF and World Bank governance reforms that were long discussed and long delayed. It now appears that the major “emerging” economies (specifically China, India, and Brazil) will gain significant voice in the management of the international financial system. One credit to the old G-7 was the way it sometimes filled gaps to make up for the slowness of formal organizations—whether in tackling terrorist financing or proliferation through shipping lanes. That said, even at its most effective, the G-7 compounded coordination problems by failing to forge proper links to other institutions—an area of potential improvement for the G-20.

Indeed, there is reason to expect that emerging powers within the G-20 may press for a strong complementary relationship between the G-20 and the United Nations. On climate change, China and India have both resisted efforts by some to shift some of the diplomatic action from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to the Major Economies Forum (a G-20 like body). Two key countries, Brazil and India, have long been active in the United Nations. Their longtime profile and policy emphasizing the world body—and their aspirations to permanent Security Council membership—may dampen competitive pressures from the G-20.

It's also important to note that decisions by the informal G-20 impose no automatic obligations for formal organizations. At a political level, though, a shared approach by the G-20 nations would inevitably carry a great deal of weight—making it a potential policy “green room” where global deals can take shape. The key will be to take advantage of formal institutions' comparative strengths, rather than usurping or sidelining them.

### Growing Legitimacy

One reason for the G-20 to be sensitive to these issues is the summit's perceived lack of legitimacy. While this deficit may be true in an international legal sense, the whole story isn't so cut and dried. The frank fact of the 2008 financial crisis, for instance, is that no formal institution could have mounted a collective global response the way the G-20 did, and there's a certain legitimacy that comes from preventing a dire crisis. Legitimacy, or at least relevance, also comes from the G-20's aggregate heft: It represents 80 percent of the world's population and 90 percent of the global economy.

The main argument for why the G-20 should focus on its connection to other global institutions is not legitimacy (or its lack thereof), but the agenda of problems that demand multipronged action and maximum cooperation. The G-20 nations may possess the bulk of the financial resources that can be devoted to fragile states, for example, but Africa is the continent providing most troops for peace-keeping in those states. Even in the finance realm, the G-20 should spare a thought for the basic structure of the state system and its principal sovereign equality. Odd though it is that a tiny nation has the same vote in the United Nations as China, that's the rule on which international order is built, and we abuse it at some risk.

For truly transnational problems, only global institutions can marshal the broad collective responses needed. The G-20 won't replace the United Nations or other global institutions—but it can and should help spur those organizations to do their jobs better.

—Bruce Jones  
Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution,  
and Director, Center on International  
Cooperation, New York University







Securing the Seas. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea protects fishing industries like this one in the Philippines. US ratification of the treaty would serve as a symbolic step to return the United States to multilateral engagement. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

The Rise of the G-20

## Flexible Global Governance

*Competition between great powers will give way to collective management of global problems*

President Barack Obama has trumpeted a “new era of engagement” for the United States. The strategy aims for a world order characterized by peaceful accommodation between established and rising powers; the collective management of transnational problems; and the overhaul of international institutions to reflect these shifting power dynamics and the new global agenda.

Placing less emphasis than his predecessor on the pursuit of American primacy, Obama envisions—indeed, insists—that other global powers assume new responsibilities. Notwithstanding its multilateral instincts, though, the Obama administration is limited in its practical ability to promote sweeping reforms to global governance. Therefore, rather than casting its lot entirely with universal organizations like the United Nations, the United States will adopt a pragmatic approach to international cooperation that combines formal institutions with more flexible partnerships.

The balance sheet for Obama’s first year in office underscores both the opportunities for and the constraints on global governance reform in the current geopolitical environment. The United States

helped replace the Group of Eight (G-8) with the Group of Twenty (G-20) as the apex steering group for the world economy—while leaving an opening for a continued role for the G-8, particularly in political and security matters. Yet the United States has been notably reticent when it comes to any expansion of the United Nations Security Council to accommodate rising nations. Finally, the Obama administration has offered new US leadership on both nuclear proliferation and climate change, but without significant governance breakthroughs in the associated multilateral regimes.

Ultimately, prospects for effective global governance reform (and the sustainability of US multilateral engagement) will depend heavily on bilateral relations between the United States and the world’s most prominent emerging power: China. Success will ultimately hinge on China’s own willingness to embrace existing global rules, provide an appropriate share of global public goods, and reassure the United States and its East Asian neighbors that its own rise will not come at their expense. If handled delicately, a Sino-American pact on the emerging world order can be a force for global stability.

## A Return to Multilateralism

President Obama's first year included a series of symbolic steps to return the United States to multilateral engagement. He rededicated the United States to the international rule of law by shutting secret CIA prisons and pledging to close the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay. He engineered US election to the UN Human Rights Council; moved the United States from a "bystander to a leader" on climate change; cemented the G-20 as an ongoing, summit-level forum; proposed improvements to the nuclear nonproliferation regime; and signaled his intent to seek ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and other long-languishing treaties.

At the same time, Obama has emphasized the need for other countries to share global burdens. As he said to the United Nations in September 2009: "This cannot be solely America's endeavor. Those who used to chastise America for acting alone in the world cannot now stand by and wait for America to solve the world's problems alone.... Now is the time for all of us to take our share of responsibility for a global response to global challenges."

The Obama administration has calculated that working within international institutions is preferable to marginalizing them. Notwithstanding their weaknesses, institutions provide useful focal points for nations to: modulate their differences and pursue mutual benefits, "socialize" rising powers to existing international norms and rules, use standing technical capacities to confront complex problems, share the burdens of international action. From a US perspective, they help legitimize American leadership while discouraging any potential challenges to the operative world order.

## A Recognition of Security Interdependence

The administration's new era of engagement is premised on the notion that we live in a world of security interdependence. For much of history, the main geopolitical game has been a competition among states for relative power. According to the president, that era is drawing to a close. "In an era when our destiny is shared, power is no longer a zero-sum game," he told the General Assembly.

To be sure, this narrative exaggerates the changes in the world, and oversimplifies the United States'

actual strategy. For the foreseeable future, the management of great-power relations and the promotion of regional stability will remain critical American concerns. Relations between the United States and China, for instance, will continue to combine elements of both cooperation and rivalry. Even so, all of today's pivotal powers have a shared stake in preserving the mainly peaceful current international order, reducing the salience of the security dilemma, and breaking the historical pattern of a conflict-prone international system.

Since the collapse of the bipolar confrontation with the Soviet Union, American national security analysts have debated whether the international system is "unipolar"—with strong US hegemony—or increasingly "multipolar." The Obama administration perceives a long-term diffusion of global influence toward multiple power centers and recognizes the growing constraints on an overextended United States.

## Sovereignty as Responsibility

Like preceding presidents, Obama has stressed that all countries must join in upholding and enforcing international norms (or expectations of state behavior) in realms ranging from nuclear nonproliferation to human rights. What is distinctive in the Obama approach has been its explicit articulation of the concept of "sovereignty as responsibility." In other words, all countries must follow the rules and shoulder the burdens of providing global collective goods, from controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction to stemming the emission of greenhouse gases, rather than "free-riding."

There is continuity here with the George W. Bush administration's well-known call for China to become a "responsible stakeholder"—that is, one that embraces existing international norms and institutions. What the Obama administration has done, in all but name, is to extend this concept to all major emerging powers. We must now wait to see if this concept is embraced by the world's pivotal powers, including China, India, Russia, Brazil, Turkey, Indonesia and South Africa.

—Stewart Patrick,  
Director of the International Institutions and Global  
Governance Program, Council on Foreign Relations



# What Good Is a G-20 Anyway?

*Leader summits can focus a unique level of attention on particular policy challenges*

As the first decade of the 21st century drew to a close, a new global governance institution was born. World leaders at the G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh declared that the G-20 would now replace the G-8 as the “premier forum for our international economic cooperation.” This development, among other signs of an evolving international political order, has left the world with a jumble of multilateral institutions.

Contemporary global governance has indeed become more chaotic, unstructured, and fragmented, certainly since the end of the Cold War. More to the point, many of today’s multilateral instruments are much more informal, with little or no solid structure, than their predecessor UN and Bretton Woods institutions. The summits and other meetings of the G groupings (or G-x process) is the prime example.

This begs the question of whether the drift toward informality should be viewed as a positive or negative trend. Does a system of global governance giving more prominence to the G-x process world offer the prospect for greater deliberation and collaboration among nations, particularly in the face of a growing set of challenges?

Critics have portrayed the Gs as problematic, or even detrimental. Some have argued that the G-20 membership, being less than universal, fails any test of representativeness and legitimacy. Questions have also been raised about accountability in the G-x process and its ability to reach critical decisions. On the other hand, enthusiasts remain strongly positive, viewing the contrast with the formal treaty-based, staff-filled UN and Bretton Woods institutions as a virtue. Under this perspective, the informal, club-like will help facilitate global multilateral decision making.

## A Way to Steer Formal Institutions?

An analysis of the history of the G-x process shows that it has much to contribute to global governance.

While most of the attention garnered by the G-x has focused on its summit meetings—which are indeed a distinguishing feature—this loses sight of the wider consultations that take place under its aegis. Over their history, for instance, the Gs have convened meetings among cabinet minister colleagues (or other senior-most officials) with seven different portfolios: trade, foreign affairs, finance, environment, employment, information, and terrorism.

And beyond these ministerial networks, the Gs have organized regular and ad hoc task forces and working groups to deal with particular policy challenges. One of the main initiatives of the G-x on the threat of nuclear terrorism, the Global Initiative to Counter Nuclear Terrorism, works in this mode of coordination among expert-level officials. Under this initiative, government experts identify and foster best practices to: safeguard nuclear material, strengthen governmental capacities for detection and disruption of nuclear materials trafficking, enhance information sharing and law enforcement cooperation, establish legal and regulatory frameworks, deny terrorists the safe haven and financial resources they need, and prepare responses to a terrorist attack.

Such efforts do not resemble classic multilateralism—in which high-level policymakers represent governmental positions carefully honed to reflect distinct national interests, political cultures, or diplomatic styles. These consultations are more like public administration guilds, based on specialized expertise and professional standards. In her landmark 2004 study, *A New World Order*, Anne-Marie Slaughter coined the term *transgovernmental* (as opposed to *intergovernmental*) to highlight this form of multilateralism and its importance for the development of certain types of international norms and cooperation.

When the Gs do work at higher levels in more traditional multilateral modes, the informal clubs depend on formal institutions to help achieve their



policy aims. In their response to the global financial crisis, for instance, the G-20 leaders tasked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to carry out a number of leaders' commitments. The heads of a number of the key institutions such as the United Nations, the IMF, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the World Bank take part in the G-20 summits.

### Time to Show It Can Work

Scholarly research on the record of the G groupings across their 35 years of existence, particularly by Robert Putnam and Nicholas Bayne, offers a framework to understand how the Gs work, and how they can be most effective. Their work assessed how political leaders reconciled the tensions between their positions (and the associated domestic pressures), their degree of commitment to the resulting policy, the effect of that policy on the given problem, and its palatability to the rest of the world community.

Now that a more inclusive G grouping—yet with still limited membership—assumes greater prominence in international politics, the question of the relative roles of formal and informal bodies will be very important for the future of multilateralism. Analysts and practitioners have diverse views on how the G-x and traditional institutions relate to one another. Some see their work as separate or even in rivalry. For others, the G-7/8 and now the G-20 serve as a kind of “inner cabinet” and the international organizations provide a civil service that can be tasked to implement commitments made at the G-x summit or at the ministerial level.

The ultimate test for any multilateral forum is its contribution to solving international problems.

Given the current overloaded agenda, they all have plenty of opportunity to prove their worth.

—Alan S. Alexandroff,  
Co-Director of the G-20  
Research Group at the  
University of Toronto's  
Munk Centre and a Senior  
Fellow at the Centre for  
International Governance  
Innovation



**Make a Deal.** President Barack Obama talks with China's President Hu Jintao at the start of the G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh in September 2009. The annual summits serve as a venue for world leaders to gather and broker agreements on pressing global issues. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

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### **Making Multilateralism Work: How the G-20 Can Help the UN**

by Bruce Jones

Our world confronts a growing range of global and transnational problems. It is also home to a diverse ecosystem of multilateral institutions. Yet the instruments of international cooperation have not matched up to the task of solving the problems. One place to look for help is the G-20. This may seem surprising, since the G-20 is usually cast as a rival to the United Nations. But this perceived competition misreads the nature of the G-20, the purposes and strengths of the United Nations, and the potential relationship between the two. April 2010 analysis brief.

## EVOLVING GLOBAL SYSTEM

### **Global Governance Reform: An American View of US Leadership**

Notwithstanding its multilateral instincts, the Obama administration is limited in its practical ability to promote and embrace sweeping reforms to global governance. Rather than casting its lot entirely with universal organizations like the United Nations, the United States will adopt a pragmatic approach to international cooperation that combines formal institutions with more flexible partnerships to achieve US national interests.

Stewart Patrick, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, examines the balance sheet for Obama's first year in office. He underscores both the opportunities for, and the constraints on, global governance reform in the current geopolitical environment. February 2010 analysis brief.

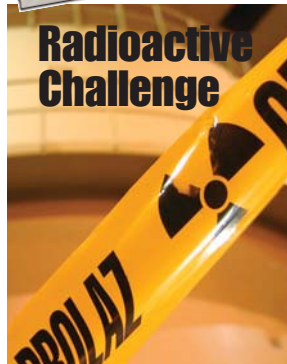
### **Challenges in Global Governance: Opportunities for G-x Leadership**

Contemporary global governance has grown more fragmented since the end of the Cold War. More to the point, many of today's multilateral instruments are much more informal than traditional bodies like the UN. The summits and other meetings of the G groupings (or G-x process) are prime examples. Alan Alexandroff, senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation examines whether the drift toward informality is a positive or negative trend in terms of achieving greater collaboration among nations on the international challenges of our times, and how the G-summit process may help facilitate global decision making. April 2009 analysis brief.

## NUCLEAR SECURITY

### **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 at the Crossroads: The Challenges of Implementation**

Last fall, the foundation convened a major panel conference, "Resolution 1540: At a Crossroads" at the United Nations, involving US and international experts and former officials to discuss the future implementation of Resolution 1540. The conference made clear that nongovernmental groups need, and have the potential, to be more involved in national, regional, and global efforts to implement Resolution 1540. December 2009 report.



### **Now Showing: Radioactive Challenge**

The video in this event-in-a-box toolkit helps viewers examine the challenge of securing all vulnerable nuclear materials globally. It aims to encourage discussion of the complexities of the "world's greatest security challenge," keeping nuclear material out of the hands of terrorists.

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### **Securing Vulnerable Nuclear Materials: Meeting the Global Challenge**

Noted specialist and former senior Energy Department official Kenneth N. Luongo explains the complicated context of existing international commitments, sovereignty concerns, current initiatives, and major trends by region. He highlights the need for a greater global consensus if there is to be any hope of meeting—or approaching—the president's four-year goal. In this brief, Luongo offers a specific policy agenda and road map to meet this critical global security objective. November 2009, analysis brief.

### **Talking about Nuclear Weapons with the Persuadable Middle, by the U.S. in the World Initiative**

The recommendations in this report build upon research projects, insights from leaders of the peace and security community, and other research projects undertaken on behalf of USITW, as well as upon recommendations from U.S. in the World:



Talking Global Issues With Americans. The communication advice offered in the report is designed to reach the mainstream American. It is an excellent tool for anyone interested in engaging the public on nuclear issues and having their message be heard. Online at [www.stanleyfoundation.org/nuclearsecurity](http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/nuclearsecurity).

HUMAN PROTECTION

The Challenges of State Fragility for US and Global Security in an Interdependent World

The 50th Strategy for Peace Conference addressed the major (often implicit) political/conceptual hurdles still blocking structural changes in US policies and toolkits toward the most fragile, weak, and failing states in the international system.

Participants were asked to assess the core question, “What does it mean for the United States to treat state fragility, in all its forms and guises, as a strategic security challenge on the same order as nuclear proliferation or competition with rising powers such as China?” February 2010 report.

Sudan and the Implications for Responsibility to Protect

In this brief, Ambassador Richard W. Williamson stresses that, to be consequential, Responsibility to Protect (R2P) must be more than another development program and must give meaning to the rhetoric of “Never Again!” He stresses that collective action to stop genocide and mass atrocities remains an enormous challenge for the 21st century. R2P should become an effective instrument to protect the innocent. October 2009 analysis brief.

Peacebuilding Following Conflict

The Stanley Foundation sponsored this conference to provide a forum for United Nations member states, officials from UN departments and programmes, and experts from leading US think tanks to assess efforts to date on peacebuilding and to discuss the secretary-general’s landmark report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict. August 2009 conference report.

The Responsibility to Protect and Foreign Policy in the Next Administration

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework offers conceptual, legal, and practical answers to the prevention and mitigation of mass atrocities. In an effort to contribute to the continuing debates around prevention of mass atrocities such as genocide, the Stanley Foundation convened a dialogue among leading US, intergovernmental organization, and civil society experts and officials to explore R2P-related issues, including new civilian and military capabilities required to implement the overall framework. January 2009 dialogue brief.

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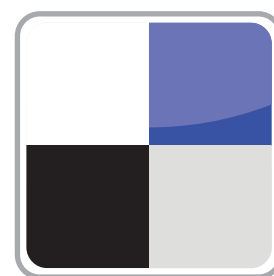
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