

Concert or Cacophony?

In Search of a New International Order

Report on the Trilateral Practitioners Workshop "Creative Destruction:
Toward an Effective International System", Berlin, July 7-8, 2011

Brad Glosserman, Peter Walkenhorst, Ting Xu



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1	Introduction	4
2	Key Findings	6
2.1	Global Governance Is Not Working	6
2.2	Incrementalism to the Rescue	8
2.3	Regional Perspectives	10
2.4	Agents of Change	16
3	Conclusions	20
4	The Way Forward	22
5	List of Participants	24
6	Agenda	26
	About the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Pacific Forum CSIS	30
	Imprint	31

1 Introduction

Managing interdependence through multilateral cooperation demands enlightened self-interest when established means of interaction are being undermined.

The global order has been in flux since the end of the Cold War. Two fundamental trends are reshaping the international system: Power shifts at the global level are creating a more diverse international order, in which emerging and resurgent players pursue and assert their own interests. While it is not clear whether Western economic, political, and cultural dominance is coming to an end, there is no mistaking the world's growing pluralism. At the same time, the emerging international concert – or cacophony – is characterized by deepening interdependence.

All major (and minor) powers are facing challenges of economic growth, energy security, and environmental sustainability, all of which are intimately interconnected and which no nation can successfully confront on its own. Moreover, the pace at which change is occurring is accelerating, requiring decision makers to move faster at the very time that problems are becoming more complex. This creates a fundamental dilemma as managing this interdependence through multilateral cooperation demands enlightened self-interest when established means of interaction are being undermined. Thus, the interaction of shifting power and increasing interdependence is transforming global politics, pushing it towards an unprecedented configuration of international relations.

Effective global governance is difficult, if not impossible, when a new international order is emerging. The emergence of powers such as China, India, and Brazil in conjunction with the resurgence of Russia and the seeming decline of the United States and Europe have increased the number of global and regional players (including regional organizations and arrangements), reducing the likelihood of effective policy coordination among them. Diverging interests as well as diverse perspectives on how to approach the growing number of emerging and longstanding issues on the international agenda have led to greater fragmentation of world politics. As a result, the prospects for effective global governance – broadly defined as the collective management of common problems at the international and transnational level – are deteriorating because challenges on the global agenda are increasing in number, scale, and complexity at the very time that international and national governments are being hobbled in their capacity to address them.

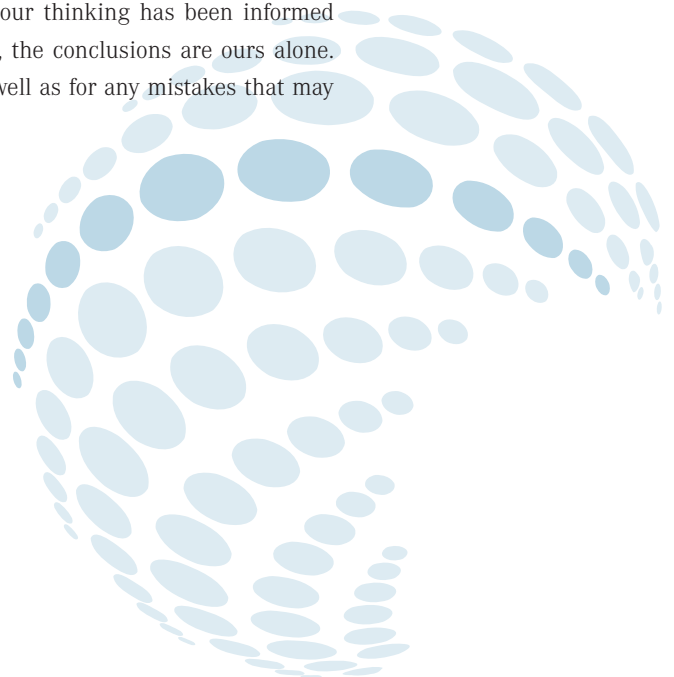
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Existing institutions and fora of global governance need to adjust quickly and effectively to the dynamic and evolving international system. Leaders dedicated to constructive changes have to address fundamental questions: What are the new realities of the international order? Who are the agents of change? How can national governments and international institutions remain relevant in a more dynamic and interdependent world? To address these issues, the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Pacific Forum CSIS jointly initiated the workshop “Creative Destruction: Toward an Effective International System.” The program inaugurated a “Trilateral Practitioners Workshop” in Berlin on July 7-8, 2011.

The gathering brought together two dozen foreign policy practitioners and observers from Europe, the United States, and Asia to discuss the challenges and future of the international system and the prospects for more effective forms of global governance. The workshop aimed to explore challenges, identify differences, find common ground, and see whether participants could identify and agree on forces changing the world, and outline a process that would allow narrowing of the discourse, reaching conclusions and creating an action plan. Participants represented next-generation leaders from a broad range of sectors including government, the media, business, and the non-profit community. In addition, Mr. Rodolfo C. Severino, Head of the ASEAN Studies Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore and former Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Mr. James F. Hoge, Chairman, Human Rights Watch and former Chair at the Council on Foreign Relations and editor of Foreign Affairs, Professor Dr. Eberhard Sandschneider, Otto Wolff-Director of the Research Institute of the German Council on Foreign Relations, Mr. Ralph Cossa, President, Pacific Forum CSIS, as well as Mr. Andreas Esche, Program Director with the Bertelsmann Stiftung joined as senior experts.

This report attempts to draw tentative conclusions from the rich discussion in Berlin. The paper is not a summary of these discussions. Instead, it offers a subjective reflection on the international system and ways to address some of its shortcomings. While our thinking has been informed by comments and written reflections of workshop participants, the conclusions are ours alone. Consequently, we are solely responsible for the ideas here, as well as for any mistakes that may have slipped through.



2 Key Findings

There was a consensus among participants that effective forms of global governance are needed more than ever to solve global challenges like climate change, poverty, food insecurity, nuclear proliferation, or economic crises. At the same time, however, there was a significant degree of uncertainty whether and how this could be accomplished, primarily because of a basic paradox: challenges are complex and interconnected while the international system appears increasingly fragmented. The prevailing notion was that we are living in times of radical uncertainty in international affairs and a potentially unstable global order with higher risks for states and individual citizens. Despite this sense of uncertainty, the following key findings emerged from the discussion:

There is a basic paradox: challenges are complex and interconnected while the international system appears increasingly fragmented.

2.1 Global Governance Is Not Working

The mere belief that the system of global governance is not working is contributing to the erosion of its effectiveness. A sense of foreboding about the future that defines opinion in many parts of the developed world, especially in the West, risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

There is a strong sense that the system of global governance is not working. It does not seem representative of the current (and future) distribution of wealth and power, nor is there confidence that it can respond to major global challenges, threats, and trends. This sense of discomfort, justified or not, is by itself dangerous, because the mere belief that the system of global governance is not working is contributing to the erosion of its effectiveness. A sense of foreboding about the future that defines opinion in many parts of the developed world, especially in the West, risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

There are signs that this process is already underway. The failure of the 2009 Copenhagen climate summit is probably the most prominent example. From a European perspective, the global summit was not only disappointing – it was a diplomatic disaster. Although Copenhagen was a rare case of the European Union showing signs of global leadership by having a meaningful common position, its voice was muted and its representatives marginalized on the final day of the conference. In essence, urgent problems were displaced and remain unsolved. Moreover, the Copenhagen Summit made clear that the emerging international order no longer revolves around European or even Western priorities. As a consequence, European trust in the ability of the international system to successfully cope with emergent and longstanding challenges diminished significantly. A European participant at our meeting argued this erosion of trust could be fatal: “The liberal order can survive marginalization of the United States, but not the marginalization of Europe. Europe provides the ideas that form the core of the international system.”

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Similar doubts surround the global free trade agenda and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Doha Round has been marking time for almost a decade; a successful conclusion to negotiations is nowhere in sight. This deadlock has spurred many states to pursue bilateral trade agreements as well as broader regional arrangements, anticipating that a global legally binding agreement will not be adopted any time soon (or ever). This fragmentation is suboptimal in terms of economic performance and even undermines global negotiations as governments devote limited time and resources to other priorities.

Two distinct criticisms of the system of global governance emerged from our discussions. The first is a somewhat prosaic criticism that the system is not working because its structure and procedures have not kept pace with a rapidly changing world. As one Asian participant argued, “international institutions are beset by scandals, lack effectiveness, cannot provide member countries a sense of security and the like. These are the reasons why a number of countries go for unilateral actions.” Another Asian speaker agreed, noting that smaller countries tend to focus on the UN system and “it has failed in the perspective of many smaller countries; they expect it to do more.” A European participant differentiated among these problems, separating those that leaders do not understand from those they lack the political will to address.

A second criticism argues that the problem is more fundamental and that the nature of the international order itself is a problem. It is not who is in charge, but the fundamental values and operating principles of the system. As an American participant explained, we are seeing “the emergence of alternative ideologies that threaten Western liberalism.” One US participant argued that the claim that disputes are really interest-based misses a more fundamental point: questions about the distribution of goods or power ultimately go to the heart of how the system works.

Our participants characterized this split in a variety of ways: one called it a clash of values vs. a clash of interests. Another suggested we distinguish between challenges *for* the system and challenges *to* the system.

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2.2 Incrementalism to the Rescue

Despite fears that the international system is not working, our group agreed that no radical alternative is conceivable or feasible. There are too many vested interests, and problems, while evident, are slow moving. There is no crisis on the horizon that can force action. Therefore, “creative destruction” is not an option; rather gradual reform of the existing system is the goal. A European participant agreed, arguing that, “there is no such thing as new global governance. We are not moving from one system to another. Rather, there is a continuity of global governance.” The challenge then is to identify and promote innovative approaches to global governance. Two possibilities have shown promise in recent years: ad hoc institutional arrangements such as the G20 or more formal regional arrangements such as the European Union or ASEAN.

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The G20 is the most important recent innovation in global governance. This group played a crucial role in dealing with the immediate challenges posed by the financial and economic crisis. Indeed, the final declaration of the September 2009 Pittsburgh G20 summit declared that it would become “the premier forum for our international economic cooperation.”¹ It is tempting to conclude that its initial success in managing this crisis resulted from a genuine fear among G20 members that a global financial breakdown was a very real possibility; as soon as the sense of urgency abated, diverging interests reasserted themselves to dominate discussions and frustrate action. Real solutions to the world’s financial problems remain beyond reach, and even the legitimacy of this new organization is being contested.

Nevertheless, creation of the G20 has signaled that the international system is trying to respond to new challenges and fix urgent problems through new initiatives based on a changed global order. It also reinforced the perception that global governance is in essence global crisis management; in other words, that a coordinated and coherent multilateral policy is only possible under the pressure of a global crisis that threatens to have immediate and severe impact on a multitude of domestic populations.

A second avenue for cooperation is regional institutions and arrangements. There is much to commend in these mechanisms. They are closer to problems they are trying to address, with a better understanding of local perspectives, challenges, resources, and dynamics. They can fashion solutions that better fit local needs and minimize negative impacts. Not surprisingly, they are often seen as more legitimate responses and can command more respect from individuals and

¹ Leaders’ Statement The Pittsburgh Summit, September 24-25 2009, p. 3; URL: <http://www.g20.org/images/stories/docs/eng/pittsburgh.pdf>.

organizations affected by their decisions. At the same time, they often lack resources and the “hard power” to enforce decisions. The lowest common denominator approach to decision making – which makes decisions more legitimate – can elevate national or regional perspectives above the “norms” they are ostensibly trying to support. In short, there can be (and often is) a tension between regional and global imperatives.

International institutions, in many cases, are mutating from organizations focused on solving problems into arenas for waging conflict as newly empowered states assert their particular national interests.

The growth of economic, environmental, and security interdependence is creating a demand for a rules-based international system that fosters multilateral cooperation and institutions. Yet international institutions, in many cases, are mutating from organizations focused on solving problems into arenas for waging conflict as newly empowered states assert their particular national interests. Despite a growing sense of interdependence, there is a lack of faith in the ability of the system to protect those interests, either because the institutions of governance are weak or because they are constitutionally flawed.

As a guiding principle, an effective international system must be capable of resolving (and preferably preventing) conflict among states. This requisite is always important, but it seems to be increasing in significance in a world of more assertive states with divergent interests. At present, there appear to be two competing perspectives on how to achieve that objective. The first is the “ASEAN way” of soft institutions and inclusive, non-coercive collaboration. A variant on this theme is China’s proclaimed concept of international relations – “harmony.” This provides member states with space to assert their own interests and makes national sovereignty an irreducible minimum. It draws upon a 19th-century model of statehood – ironically, a European model – that holds national borders inviolable and seems quaint (if not outdated) given 21st-century communications technologies and capabilities. The second option is the (more recent) European experience of mitigating conflicts through political integration and rule-based procedures. This requires member states to voluntarily relinquish part of their sovereignty and delegate it to supranational institutions. Most (if not all) emerging countries are unwilling to do so. And indeed, the European experience may not be a model as there are rising questions about how much sovereignty European countries are themselves willing to give up, particularly in the wake of the Eurozone’s sovereign debt crisis. Their flaws notwithstanding, these two options outline directions in which the international system can evolve.

2.3 Regional Perspectives

Western concerns about the future of the international system emanate from the “rise of the rest.”² The rise of East Asia and India and a rebalancing of global governance – with more power flowing to Asia – have created anxiety in the West about the future of that system. There are fears that “the rise of the rest” will result in new global norms, new operating principles for global institutions, and different outcomes in international decision-making that, even if “fair,” will disadvantage the current holders of power and privilege.

There is a sense – indeed a belief – that China, in particular, is (or will soon be) challenging international norms. China insists that is not true, but those assertions are not believed. As a result, mistrust and suspicion permeate China’s relations with the US and many other states, including the European Union and even some of China’s neighbors. Against this background, the idea of a world order dominated by a G2, i.e., an informal rather than formal joint US-Chinese leadership in global affairs, was dismissed as unrealistic by all. At the same time, however, the development of US-China relations, was widely considered a (if not the) determinant of how the international system will evolve.

A world order dominated by informal rather than formal joint US-Chinese leadership was dismissed as unrealistic by all. At the same time, however, the development of US-China relations, was widely considered a (if not the) determinant of how the international system will evolve.

The rise of China to the status of a global power is one of the most significant events of the early 21st century. There are, however, striking differences in how this rise is perceived. Many people in the US continue to see the world in realist terms and assume that China’s economic rise will make it a regional and global military power that challenges vital American strategic and security interests. Those strategists see “hegemonic ambitions” in almost any action that Beijing takes and demand moves to counter that plan. In recent months, Chinese behavior to deal with territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas seems to confirm these suspicions.³ While this is a simplified view of a (sometimes) more nuanced and sophisticated assessment of state trajectories, this thinking appears to be based upon notions of geostrategic interests and great power rivalries deriving from the 19th and 20th centuries. It treats international relations as a zero-sum game in which one participant’s gains are balanced by the losses of another. Applying this framework to China’s rise reinforces the notion that it is tantamount to a decline of the US and Europe. Since the US has been a primary architect and ‘supporter’ of the international order, China’s rise is perceived not just as a challenge to the status quo but as a threat to the system itself.⁴ Some uncertainty about Chinese intentions is understandable. One Chinese participant – like many other Chinese

² Fareed Zakaria, The Future of American Power. How America Can Survive the Rise of the Rest, in: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 82, No. 3, May/June 2008, pp. 18-43.

³ Of course, US views of China are not monolithic. And US policy, while ‘hedging’ against the possibility of conflict with China, is to engage Beijing and work with it to solve regional and global problems.

⁴ This view is not without precedent. As one of our Asian participants pointed out, there is a parallel between China today and Japan back in the 1980s.



scholars and professionals who work in these fields – insisted that China understands the stresses created by its rise, that its leaders have studied history and appreciate the tensions created by rising powers, and argued that China has benefited from the existing international order and needs peace and stability to continue to rise. At the same time, however, there is an unmistakable sense of disenfranchisement flowing from criticism of the rules of the existing international order when Chinese prerogatives are challenged. The call for a more democratic international system that is based on “the five principles of peaceful coexistence” suggests a demand for new operating principles in international relations.

In contrast to the US, Europe – the EU as well as its member states – has fewer geostrategic and security concerns in Asia. After the withdrawal of colonial powers from Asia after 1945, Europe has re-engaged Asian countries in an effort to strengthen economic and cultural ties. Some Europeans applaud the rise of China as a counterbalance to US dominance; some, including some of our most vocal participants, insist that the rise of Asia should give renewed vigor to trans-Atlantic relations to gird an international system that is under threat. Moreover, Europeans do not have the same security ties to Asia as do Americans (whose alliances with Asian partners are for many the foundation of regional security and stability). The US would be directly involved in any instability, crisis, or conflict and is therefore more sensitive to the impact of changes in the status quo. Europe’s distance affords it a more benign perspective and it is less inclined to see regional change in Asia as destabilizing.⁵

Asian perspectives embrace elements of both US and European views of the international system. Again generalizations are difficult, since Asia is too large and diverse to have a single perspective. Pick a dimension – size of state, population, GDP, GDP per capita, type of government, type of economy, religion, etc – and there is an Asian nation on every point on the spectrum. And when non-Asians mention “the rise of Asia,” Asian speakers insist that there is no single Asian perspective. Indeed, the rise of Asian countries and the rise of China are often used synonymously but should not be. The idea that a tripolar global order is emerging is based on the creation of an Asian pole that is much more than just China. Southeast Asia has some 560 million inhabitants, a “community” larger than that of Europe. Its economic development long predates that of China: Japan ‘rose’ in the ‘60s and ‘70s, the Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan) followed, which were in turn chased by the “Tiger Cub” economies in Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand). China’s rise is only the most recent phenomenon and it is being followed by growth in Vietnam and India. It is the broad-based nature of Asia’s growth and its potential for internally sustainable dynamism that distinguishes this moment from its predecessors.

⁵ Here too it must be noted that European views of China are not monolithic and there are hawks on the continent who can go toe to toe with their US counterparts when it comes to suspicion of Chinese motives.

This has two contradictory implications. The first is that discussions of global governance have to move beyond a facile and simplistic focus on China; China is part of a bigger story. No country, no matter how big, can undo the entire international system on its own; it must have allies or similarly inclined diplomatic partners. Asian intellectuals have suggested that such a mass exists. Concepts and visions of “Asia” as an entity or a shared “Asian identity” have a long tradition both within and outside the region. The last decade witnessed discussions of “Asian values” and “Asian capitalism.” Current debates about the role of China and India as emerging global powers substantiated claims of the 21st century as an “Asian century.”

Yet, the very term “Asia” is imprecise. Its meaning depends on context and who is using the term. Its geographic boundaries are uncertain, and thus its referents are unclear. Moreover, the duality of modern life, with its penetration of capitalist goods – many of which, while made in Asia, have Western origins – contributes to a sense of confusion. Western goods, values, and culture penetrate Asian societies effortlessly and countries and citizens must balance their worth with indigenous values and goods. As one Asian participant bemoaned, “Asians can’t tell their position in relation to the liberal order.” (In this report, we use “Asia” primarily to refer to East Asia (meaning the ASEAN Plus Three) without disregarding the great diversity of this region.)

A clear-eyed assessment of the anxiety triggered by the rise of Asia would note that “the problem” is not just the rise of China but the prospect of a world in which Western dominance has ended. It is “the rise of the rest” and the resulting loss of Western privilege that generates anxiousness.

When referring to the anxieties in the Western world caused by the “rise of Asia,” in our view, this distinction does not really matter, because these fears are as imprecise and elusive as the term “Asia.” Indeed, a clear-eyed assessment of the anxiety triggered by the rise of Asia would note that “the problem” is not just the rise of China but the prospect of a world in which Western dominance has ended. It is “the rise of the rest” and the resulting loss of Western privilege that generates anxiousness. (Nonetheless, our discussion did not include participants from emerging powers that are not in Asia, Europe, or North America.)

Asians themselves are divided about China. They understand the geographic reality of the Chinese state; unlike the US, it is physically situated in the region and cannot withdraw. They seek to exploit the economic opportunities afforded by Chinese growth and see it as a critical trade and investment partner. At the same time, they worry about China’s long-term intentions and fear that it may become a hegemonic power in the region. They are equally concerned about uncontrolled rivalry or confrontation between the US and China that would force them to take sides. They prefer a good relationship between the US and China, as long as it is not “too friendly”; a G2 is as worrisome to them as a world in which they are in conflict. Chinese participants insisted that all fears are unfounded, arguing that their country needs a stable regional environment so that it can improve living standards and that Beijing has domestic problems of its own and has no pretension to a G2 system that formally or informally shares power with the US. Thus, it is in China’s interest to contribute to and help maintain a peaceful and stable (“harmonious”) international environment.



There is no mistaking Chinese dissatisfactions with the existing system of global governance, however; our participants were quick to point out its flaws. And even if China's top priority is domestic stability, there are many ways that a government focused on such concerns can threaten the international system: it can deflect the anger of a dissatisfied citizenry onto outside forces, blaming them for setbacks or domestic problems. More concretely, the desire to promote growth has produced trade and currency policies that have been labeled 'mercantilist' or 'predatory.'

The distinction between China's rise and that of Asia as a whole matters in other ways. Looking at all of Asia dilutes China's role and status; it is merely one – albeit *big* – country among 13. A regional construct limits China's freedom of maneuver and capacity to influence the system. A similar logic can be applied to the US; for all the complaints of US unilateralism in recent years, Washington has been and continues to be restrained by alliances in Asia and Europe as well as by the international institutional order it helped create after World War II. Smaller powers have an important role to play, constraining partners, supporting norms, and providing the numbers that create majorities in institutions. (This cuts two ways: smaller nations can act as a bulwark for the existing international order, restraining revanchist states, or they can band with revisionists to demand change.) ASEAN is a perfect example of the smaller nations of Southeast Asia engaging and circumscribing the diplomacy of the larger states of Northeast Asia. They can also bring issues to the attention of larger nations (as they have with the South China Sea). Nor should it be forgotten that emerging middle powers such as Indonesia, are becoming more confident playing a role in regional and global governance. However, while insisting on more input in such matters, our Asian participants were skeptical that such changes would alter "the way the world works." Moreover, they conceded that many of the most pressing problems are too complex for them to tackle. Their role in a new world order, however it is structured, will of necessity be limited.

In the West, there is a sense that rising powers are not being held accountable nor are they ready to take responsibility for global governance. Once again, China is at the forefront of those criticized, although other countries are blamed as well. At the core of this criticism is the free rider problem: rising powers are blamed for taking advantage of the international system, playing an increasingly important role within it, but are unwilling to share the burdens of global governance. They often seek bilateral deals instead of trying to strengthen institutional capacity or playing by the rules of international institutions. In this view, the key issue is how emerging powers can be induced to take on more responsibilities in global governance. Regardless of the validity of allegations of free riding, they have deepened Western anxieties about the "Asian" challenge to the global order.

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Part of the problem is the understanding of the international system, especially when it is defined as a “liberal world order.” For many of our participants, this is a “Western” characterization, which raises several problems. First, if this is indeed a “Western” description, then it is implied that Asia’s rise will change the order to better reflect its new makeup and character. Second, there are questions whether Asians are “accepted” in this “Western order.” In other words, regardless of intent, there is a suspicion – sometimes grounded in fact – that Asian nations are not afforded equal status when they get a seat at the table.

Third, there are questions about what this order is – what values are present, what institutions are its backbone, and how it should operate. At the most fundamental level, there are at least two different notions or definitions: The first is the traditional Westphalian order based on the principle of state sovereignty and nonintervention. The second, more recent idea of a “liberal world order” gives much greater sway to individual human rights, institutionalized multilateral cooperation and the rule of law. This notion originated after World War II and was inspired by the European experience of political integration and pooling of sovereignty to deal with common problems. More recently, proponents of this notion have sought to legitimize armed humanitarian intervention under the concept of “the responsibility to protect”, thus weakening the norm of sovereignty by making it conditional on states’ conduct and protection of human rights. While Asian states, including China, have less difficulties subscribing to the first, more traditional Westphalian notion, they strongly reject the second, which is believed to reflect a Western agenda. They demand that norms better reflect their cultures and histories. This is not a rejection of some of those norms – human rights, for example – but their redefinition and conceptualization to reflect different circumstances. Without meaning to put a thumb on the scale, there can be a debate about the rightful balance between political and economic rights or freedom of speech and the need for social order.

Sovereignty is a key issue for any reform of the international system and effective global governance may be impossible without modifications of it.

While the state has served as the essential unit of international order, one of our European participants argued that globalization challenges traditional concepts of sovereignty. State borders are being rendered porous, making notions of absolute state power increasingly unrealistic. That process is complemented and accelerated by technologies that enable and empower new actors. New challenges and threats demand new forms of cooperation that undercut sovereignty as well. Many emerging powers in Asia, however, are relatively new states (and in most cases former Western colonies) with a strong sense of sovereignty. This is a natural outgrowth of the state-building project. They have little interest in giving up some national sovereignty for collective security or contributing to global public goods. This attitude is a powerful obstacle to efforts to promote and actively strengthen regional integration and global governance. As one of our Asian participants conceded, “the EU model is great, but Asia is not yet there, though modernity is definitely pushing Asia in that direction.” In other words, sovereignty is a key issue for any reform of the international system and effective global governance may be impossible without modifications of it.



European anxieties about the “rise of Asia” are fueled by the fear that Europe’s role in the international system is as contested as that of Asia. The shift in the balance of power from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean seems to come at Europe’s expense.

In addition to divergent attitudes toward sovereignty, European anxieties about the “rise of Asia” are fueled by the fear that Europe’s role in the international system is as contested as that of Asia. The shift in the balance of power from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean seems to come at Europe’s expense. Although the institutional provisions in the Lisbon treaty to strengthen EU foreign policy are ambitious, Europe’s future role in global governance is in question. The Eurozone’s sovereign debt crisis and the lack of political leadership in addressing its core problems are nurturing perceptions of decline within and outside Europe. As a result, the EU and its member states have lost credibility in terms of coherence and efficiency in policy making and they are, in the

words of one participant, “disappearing as reference points of global governance.” Europeans agree that the EU is underperforming as a global actor, although it has the capacity and resources to play a strong and influential role on the global stage, specifically in the sector of technology, environmental protection, and social development. They are, however, divided over whether the EU and its member states can mobilize the political will and leadership that is necessary to overcome internal divisions and to play such a role. While pessimists point to growing economic problems of the Eurozone and the related resurgence of nationalism in many European countries, which threaten the coherence and even the existence of the EU, optimists argue that European integration has always advanced through crises. In their view, the current sovereign debt crisis is no exception, and will serve as a catalyst for deeper political integration that in the long run will allow Europe to upgrade its role as a global actor.

There are fundamental questions about the value and prospects for greater integration that follows the classic European model. We had little discussion of the value of regionalism and its relationship to global governance. There is little understanding of how regional and global institutions interact. Regional governance could become a building block of global governance. There is, for example, an increasing convergence of norms among China and ASEAN. ASEAN has pressed its partner countries to sign the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) as a condition for joining the East Asia Summit; its key interlocutors have done so, helping promote TAC’s core value of peaceful resolution of disputes. Moreover, ASEAN has been instrumental in pushing China to adopt a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea; that has been a slow-moving process but it has picked up momentum in recent months. All these developments are in their early stages and it is too early to tell what impact they will have on global governance. There is hope, however, that they can play a larger and more significant role, at least in certain areas. An Asian participant underscored how regional institutions play a larger socialization role, pointing out that “China’s close interaction with ASEAN is not just about convergence of norms, but the fact that ASEAN is an important forum for China, Japan and South Korea to engage each other.”

Our discussion concluded that major innovations within the international system are unlikely in the short term. Blame established and emerging powers that have an interest in preserving the status quo and the fact that emerging regional institutions are too weak to change the way the international system works. If so, who will be agents of change?

2.4 Agents of Change

As international relations become more diverse and complex, power is not only shifting from established to emerging countries, but also toward individuals and non-state actors. Modern information and communication technologies have empowered individuals and social groups to an unprecedented degree. The internet and social media have extended the reach and influence of individuals and organizations and enabled them to directly engage in international affairs. Yet, while relations between the state and the individual are being rebalanced by information technology, the state remains the central actor in the international system. While states may not be as effective in implementing change as in the past, they are extremely effective in blocking reform or adaptation. Thus, the key to affecting change is identifying ways to move states (or their organs) to implement change.

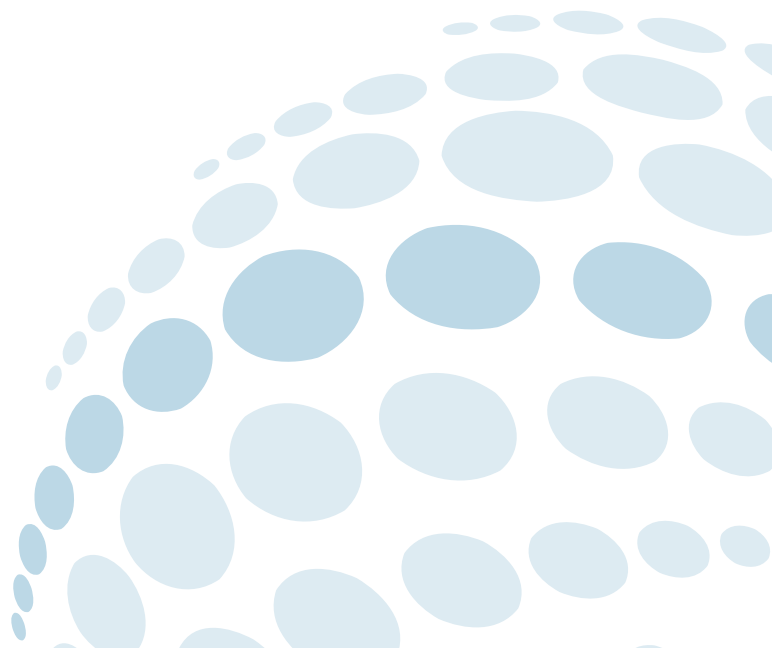
Plainly, more must be done to figure out how to utilize non-state actors as agents of positive change. The growing importance and impact of non-state actors in international politics is one distinctive political development. Transnational nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society groups, social entrepreneurs, faith-based organizations, multinational corporations and other business bodies, as well as trans-sectoral public policy networks are increasingly effective in framing issues, setting agendas, and mobilizing public opinion. At the same time, non-state actors such as criminal organizations and terrorist networks, also empowered by new information and communication technologies, pose serious threats to the international system. Although non-state actors usually have no formal decision-making power and do not necessarily alter the policy-making process, their impact on world politics is significant and likely to grow. Take your pick – as did one US participant – “Bill Gates. vs. Bin Laden. An individual can have a huge influence in an interconnected world.” (Of course, that influence can be limited; another US participant was quick to note that “non-state actors don’t necessarily alter the policy-making process. Wikileaks didn’t crack the US system and it only played a minor role in the Arab Spring.” Crudely put, power still matters.)

While relations between the state and the individual are being rebalanced ... the state remains the central actor in the international system. While states may not be as effective in implementing change as in the past, they are extremely effective in blocking reform or adaptation. Thus, the key to affecting change is identifying ways to move states (or their organs) to implement change.



Relations between states and non-state actors are not a zero-sum game. The key question, therefore is, how can they work together? The increased participation of transnationally engaged NGOs and other civil society organizations (CSOs) in international politics provides examples of effective collaboration with national governments and intergovernmental institutions. This is a mutual process: a strong international system reinforces the actions of NGOs and similar groups. The growing number and proliferation of CSOs and social entrepreneurs in the international policy arena reflects the steady increase in resources from governments, international institutions, corporations, and foundations, accompanied by greater reliance by state-based actors on the outsourcing of public services. Newly empowered, CSOs fill roles in global governance that can be broadly separated into categories of advocacy and operations but that more specifically include work in agenda-setting, negotiation of norms and agreements, implementation and monitoring, and reaction to non-compliance. As a participant from civil society noted, state and non-state actors have a mutual relationship, working together to achieve shared goals. Ideally, non-state actors help governments tackle difficult problems.

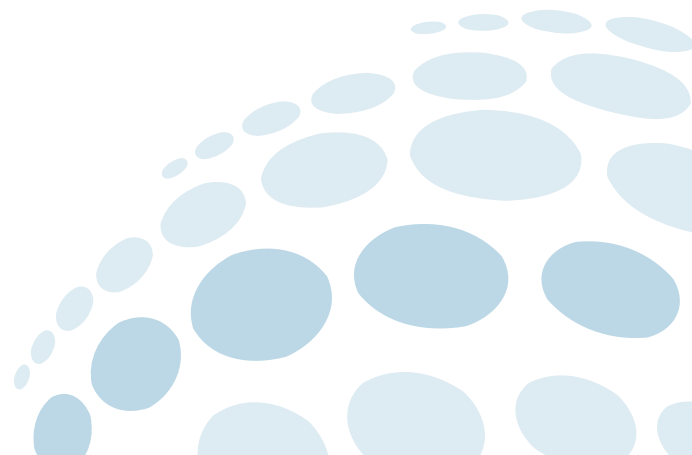
In the absence of an overarching approach to global governance, collaborative efforts among states and CSOs will increasingly provide the framework for addressing challenges of a globalized world. However, despite their growing importance, civil society is not a silver bullet because national governments and international institutions continue to be more powerful in many respects – and in some cases are opposed to actions of civil society. After all, one of the goals of these non-state efforts is to help or empower the disenfranchised or ignored; thus, they implicitly challenge the structure of power.



There was no agreement on how to define leadership, how to promote it, and how to distinguish it from power. Consequently, there was no consensus on how to overcome the alleged lack of leadership in international affairs.

Moreover, civil society is not monolithic, but a pluralist universe of values, opinions, and interests ranging across the political spectrum. All too often, this universe resembles the Tower of Babel, displaying a high degree of fragmentation that limits its effectiveness and undermines its legitimacy. In addition, CSOs are not exclusively norm-driven actors but organizations that pursue self-interested strategies to ensure their institutional survival, often competing with each other for influence and funding. In other words: lines of conflict among actors of global civil society are multiple and shifting. Given this diversity and political fragmentation, the only thing that can be stated with certainty is that CSOs contribute to the pluralization of global governance. They foster pluralism on the global level as they do on the local, regional, and national level by enabling multiple values, perspectives, and interests to be represented, different functions to be performed, and a range of capacities to be developed.

Thus, a central issue in the discussion of agents of change is leadership. Any government, international institution or individual political leader willing and capable of exercising genuine leadership could be an agent of change. Hence, it was no surprise that there was an almost unanimous agreement among workshop participants on the necessity for a new kind of leadership to foster a more effective international system – leadership that can address global issues and engage the necessary stakeholders long enough to produce sustainable solutions. Yet there was no agreement on how to define leadership, how to promote it, and how to distinguish it from power. Consequently, there was no consensus on how to overcome the alleged lack of leadership in international affairs. The fundamental problem is that leaders are accountable to domestic constituencies. Yet the solution of international problems requires power, authority, and influence beyond national borders. How do leaders engage individuals when their authority is so clearly defined? On what basis do they rally forces to tackle those pressing problems? How do they convince other leaders to make sacrifices for the public good? There need to be incentives and accountability structures that reward political leaders who act in support of global public goods; without them, global governance will fail.





In some cases, leadership is its own punishment. Sticking one's head above the parapet (so to speak), invites criticism and condemnation. Governments can be forced to bear costs they might not otherwise have to for merely being audacious enough to attempt to solve a problem. One Asian participant suggested that here the ASEAN example could help since "the key to ASEAN's success is that it leads without appearing as a leader."

In the absence of proactive political leadership on an international scale, in all likelihood, crises will continue to serve as the catalyst for change in global governance.

This raises the issue of US leadership. As long as emerging powers are not willing and Europe is not able to provide leadership at the international level, the US remains the only candidate, notwithstanding the many challenges it faces. Yet, its shrinking resources and domestic constraints have forced the US to rethink its traditional leadership role – or as some critics charge, to retrench or abandon that role altogether. However, there is as yet no substitute for US leadership. While the group did not address in-depth the US role in the international system and the

implications of diminished US international activism (nor did it tackle the question whether that was desirable), US participants argued that the US should try to lead by the power of example, not by the example of power. The only conclusion from the discussions was that in the absence of proactive political leadership on an international scale, in all likelihood, crises will continue to serve as the catalyst for change in global governance.



3 Conclusions

There is a growing sense that the system of global governance is not entirely suited to the 21st century. Existing institutions and mechanisms cannot solve the world's most urgent challenges. That should not be surprising since many of these problems are of a size and scale never before experienced. As one participant explained, "the management of global planetary problems is of a different nature and dimension than the problems of the past." Recent attempts by the international community to address problems like climate change, environmental pollution, financial regulatory reform, trade policy, nuclear non-proliferation, global free trade, and energy security have failed. This realization is intensified by the perception that time is running out. Problems are outpacing the capacity of the international system to cope. While we applaud the spread of wealth and prosperity, there is little indication that leaders and thinkers have anticipated the impact of the creation of a global middle class in a world of limited resources. As one participant suggested, perhaps it is time to start thinking in terms of "lose-lose" solutions.

There is little indication that leaders and thinkers have anticipated the impact of the creation of a global middle class in a world of limited resources. As one participant suggested, perhaps it is time to start thinking in terms of "lose-lose" solutions.

Global challenges are growing as the mechanisms of governance, the tools we use to tackle those problems, are being undermined. Unless there is a radical shift in the way the world's main actors approach global challenges, the situation will deteriorate. In the absence of global leadership, political leaders and other decision-makers will muddle through, reacting to challenges instead of preventing them. Until a crisis creates a sense of urgency, responses will address symptoms rather than root causes. In short, global governance will be limited to crisis management.

The new configuration of international relations is, by and large, inherently chaotic and ungovernable. Power is increasingly geographically dispersed and politically fragmented. It is shifting from established Western powers to emerging countries, but also, to some extent, to non-state actors who assume previously public responsibilities or pursue agendas of their own. This diffusion of power is creating a new international environment that defies clear definition. In our understanding, the new global order cannot be accurately described as a multipolar world, in which a few great powers are setting the rules of the game and disciplining those who violate them. We see little agreement on what those powers are, their willingness to work together, nor the efficacy of actions if and when they do. But this is not a world in which, as Ian Bremmer and Nouriel Roubini have argued, "no single country or block of countries has the political and economic leverage – or the will – to drive a truly international agenda."⁶ Their "G-Zero world" seems too state-centric to grasp contemporary global dynamics. Nor do we accept Richard N. Haass' notion of "nonpolarity: a world dominated not by one or two or even several states but rather by dozens of actors possessing and exercising various kinds of power."⁷ But while we do not envision a concert, cacophony may not be the only other option.

⁶ Ian Bremmer and Nouriel Roubini, A G-Zero World. The New Economic Club Will Produce Conflict, Not Cooperation, in: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 90, No. 2, March/April 2011, pp. 2-7 (quote: p. 2).

⁷ Richard N. Haass, The Age of Nonpolarity. What Will Follow U.S. Dominance, in: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 87, No. 3, May/June 2008, pp. 44-56 (quote: p. 44).



What does this mean? Are we on the road toward a world of anarchy without order and leadership? How can nonpolarity be managed? Optimists like Henry Kissinger believe functional necessities will eventually overcome a power vacuum in international relations: “It is said that nature abhors a vacuum; so does the international system. Chaos, if it occurs, will sooner or later settle down into a new order.”⁸ For pessimists like Neil Ferguson, “a world without power,” is very well conceivable, albeit as “the anarchic nightmare of a new Dark Age.”⁹

Our discussions suggest that neither scenario is ordained. Global governance will become more difficult, but not impossible. Even in a world without powerful organizing forces, there are magnetic pulls and tugs that can align nations and facilitate cooperation and collaborative efforts. Let’s call this “weak polarity.” A new international order will not emerge spontaneously, but there are many things that can and should be done to foster its creation. One defining characteristic of the emerging new age is that power, at least in the sense of traditional “hard” power, and leadership are less linked. In the absence of a comprehensive, unitary approach to global governance, new forms of leadership will emerge, not as enduring as traditional alliances or international institutions, but rather patchworks of overlapping, often ad hoc and fragmented efforts, involving shifting coalitions of state and non-state actors concentrating on specific issues. The leadership exercised by “coalitions of the willing” will be more fragmented, situational, and volatile than previous attempts. But they nevertheless might achieve concrete results.

Multi-stakeholder global action networks concentrating on specific issues are an appropriate organizational structure for today’s world. Non-state actors, especially NGOs, social entrepreneurs and civil society groups, can play an important role in creating these kinds of networks that span geographical, institutional, and sectoral boundaries. Establishing more such transformational networks, therefore, would be a step forward. Although this would not solve all challenges of the globalized world, it would help manage them and prevent the international system from collapsing under the weight of its collective failures.

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⁸ Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Keynote Address for the 8th IISS Global Strategic Review “Global Security Governance and the Emerging Distribution of Power,” Geneva, Friday 10 September 2010; URL: <http://www.iiss.org/conferences/global-strategic-review/global-strategic-review-2010/plenary-sessions-and-speeches-2010/keynote-address/henry-kissinger/>.

⁹ Niall Ferguson, A World Without Power, in: Foreign Policy, July/August 2004; URL: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/afp/vac.htm>.

4 The Way Forward

There is a thick layer of overlapping and competing authorities in the existing system of global governance and most emerging countries have no interest in upending this system; they prefer to make adjustments. But, the future international order will be no mere outgrowth of existing mechanisms. Planetary problems pose new challenges and require new problem-solving mechanisms as management of them is of a different nature and dimension than past challenges. The lowest common denominator is no longer a sufficient starting point for meaningful coordinated action on the global level. Whether this means the creation of new institutions is of secondary importance. Either existing intuitions may take up the challenges or new ones will be created.

There is a lack of vision about the future of the international system and the emerging global order. To facilitate the creation of such a vision, the following questions need to be explored in greater depth: who is rising and what sort of institutional structures and values do these nations support? How can the EU and US adapt the international system to accommodate the views and preferences of rising countries without sacrificing fundamental interests and values? How can rising countries contribute to global public goods without sacrificing their fundamental interests in sovereignty and domestic development? What are the mutual interests and shared challenges that the EU, the US, and rising countries can jointly address? How do the regional and global levels interact? Finally, how can the contributions of non-state actors be enhanced and leveraged? Future iterations of the Berlin workshop will focus on these questions.

Concrete measures to overcome the lack of trust among the EU and US and emerging countries are essential. This applies not only to the US and China – although this bilateral relationship will be pivotal for the entire world – but also to Europe and Asia. As the discussions in Berlin crystallized, there is an urgent need for a more dynamic dialogue between Europe and Asia. While there is a strong trans-Atlantic policy community that joins the US and Europe, a similar policy community between Europe and Asia beyond the formal Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is needed to keep pace with the agendas discussed in the myriad policy dialogues and track II forums in the Asia-Pacific community.

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The continuation of the trilateral dialogue initiated by the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Pacific Forum CSIS can contribute to the development of such an Asian-European-US policy community by creating a network of distinguished practitioners and experts. Moreover, it can and should focus on trilateral relations: What does “Asia” mean for the trans-Atlantic alliance and what does Europe mean for trans-Pacific relations? These questions are not yet sufficiently understood and debated. A trilateral dialogue can provide a forum for doing exactly that.

Thus, going forward, future meetings will pay greater attention and focus more deeply on these questions as well as on emerging issues that transcend traditional concerns. Of particular importance is the growing influence of innovative technologies, such as the internet and social media that have the capacity to destabilize and disrupt the international system. Likewise, the concept of global public goods and the sharing of the burdens to create and maintain them are of paramount importance.

At the core of these non-traditional issues are very often emergent non-state actors, agents of change, activists, and agitators that the Berlin workshop outlined, but did not explore in full detail and depth. There is a need for dialogue that focuses on the role of these non-state actors and their implications for the international system. The next set of discussions, therefore, should include these emerging actors as well.

It is especially important that we identify and reach out to the next generation of leaders and decision makers. We must get in front of the cycle of change, to hear the views of those who will be in positions of power and authority so that we understand their thinking and anticipate the future contours of our world. Equally important we need to facilitate a dialogue among these leaders that builds familiarity and confidence among them so that they begin building a community of thinkers and doers that is ready to address – and hopefully solve – future challenges.

5 List of Participants

This report has benefited tremendously from the contributions of all those who participated in the gathering “Creative Destruction: Toward an Effective International System. A Trilateral Practitioners Workshop” held in Berlin on July 7-8, 2011. We are deeply indebted to all participants and would like to express our gratitude for sharing their insights and suggestions:

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Senior Project Manager, Program Shaping the Global Future, Bertelsmann Foundation, Washington D. C.

6 Agenda

Creative Destruction: Toward an Effective International System

A Trilateral Practitioners Workshop – Berlin, July 7-8, 2011

At the Global Policy Council hosted by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in Berlin in 2009, Henry Kissinger declared that “We will be forced to - and we should anyway – think about a new international system”. As we think about creating a governance system for an increasingly dynamic and interdependent world, what must come next? This workshop looks for practical answers to this question and examines realistic solutions.

July 6 **Arrival of participants**

7:00 pm **Opening Dinner**

July 7 **The Three Step Process Toward Global Governance**

Conference venue: **Bertelsmann**
Unter den Linden 1
10117 Berlin

9:00 am – 9:20 am **Welcome Remarks**
Andreas Esche
Director, Program Shaping the Global Future, Bertelsmann Stiftung

Ralph Cossa
President, Pacific Forum CSIS

9:20 am – 12:00 pm **Identifying the top global risks**

Within a 10-year time frame, what are the 3-5 greatest challenges to international order and stability? Why and how are they threatening? How are these challenges evolving over time? Is the world addressing the challenges effectively? How do we prioritize these concerns?

Moderator: Brad Glosserman
Executive Director, Pacific Forum CSIS

Introductory Remarks: Mark Leonard (EU)
Ely Ratner (US)
Minh Tuan TA (Asia)



12:00 pm – 1:30 pm Working Lunch

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm Identifying Agents of Change

Who are the major actors in the international system? Is this still a state-centered world? Who are the key non-state actors? What is their impact and influence? What is changing in the way the world is governed and why? What forces are at work on the international system? What impact do these changes have on national security, international stability, on the ability of states to control their citizens, on the effectiveness of non-state actors?

Moderator: Brad Glosserman
Executive Director, Pacific Forum CSIS

Introductory Remarks: Axel Berkofsky (EU)
Daniel Drezner (US)
Fan LI (Asia)

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm Break

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm Identifying elements of new global governance

Are there or should there be universal norms? How can we create a sustainable balance between national political policies and global economic policies? How should we address the imbalance? Should some current institutions be terminated? Which institutions should be reformed and how? Is there a need for new international/multilateral Institutions? What kind of new system should be in place and who should be designing it?

Moderator: Ting XU
Senior Project Manager, Bertelsmann Foundation

Introductory Remarks: Joern Dosch (EU)
Amy Searight (US)
Andre Omer Siregar (Asia)

7:00 pm Dinner

July 8 **Three Regional Views of Global Governance**

Conference venue: **Bertelsmann**
Unter den Linden 1
10117 Berlin

9:00 am – 10:30 am Regional views of the International System

A senior expert from each region provides an assessment of international challenges and the role that his/her region plays in resolving them. (90 minutes)

Moderator: Ralph Cossa
President, Pacific Forum CSIS

Panelists: James F. Hoge Jr.
Chairman, Human Rights Watch; Former Editor, Foreign Affairs

Rodolfo C. Severino
Head, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

Prof. Dr. Eberhard Sandschneider
Otto Wolff-Director of the Research Institute of the German Council
on Foreign Relations, Berlin

10:30 am – 11:00 am Break

11:00 am – 1:00 pm Working Group discussion continued: reflection of the earlier presentation

What is the emerging global political order? What are the implications of the trends identified in Day 1? How do Asians view the US and EU and their role in global governance? How do Americans view the roles of Europeans and Asians in global governance? How do Europeans view the roles of Americans and Asian in global governance? What futures can we envision: is there a world without the West? Is the transatlantic concept relevant to the future? Where does Asia lie in the new global order? Was US global leadership ever real? What is its future? What is the meaning and significance of American exceptionalism? What role do “middle powers” play in the new international system?

Moderator: Ralph Cossa
President, Pacific Forum CSIS



1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Lunch

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm Assessments and wrap up

In the final session, next generation participants assess the views of the senior experts in light of the discussions of the first day. To what extent do those threat assessments correspond to the views expressed in session 1? Do the assessments of state roles match next generation views of the international system? Do generational differences yield significant differences in perspectives? Do regional perspectives differ? What are the key areas of divergence and agreement in our discussions? What are next steps for the group?

Moderator: Peter Walkenhorst
Senior Project Manager, Bertelsmann Stiftung

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm Concluding Remarks

Ralph Cossa
President, Pacific Forum CSIS

Andreas Esche
Director, Program Shaping the Global Future, Bertelsmann Stiftung



About the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Pacific Forum CSIS

The Germany-based **Bertelsmann Stiftung**, founded in 1977, is a private, independent and nonpartisan foundation that aims to identify societal challenges at an early stage and develop solutions to them. The foundation is both a think tank and an agent for social change. Its programs are geared towards improving education, strengthening a just and sustainable economic system, promoting preventative healthcare system, and enhancing civil society and greater international understanding. In the area of international politics the Bertelsmann Stiftung has gained experience in fields such as democracy, transformation, and migration, as well as European integration and global governance.

www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Based in Honolulu, the **Pacific Forum CSIS** operates as the autonomous Asia-Pacific arm of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. The Forum's programs encompass current and emerging political, security, economic, business, and oceans policy issues through analysis and dialogue undertaken with the region's leaders in the academic, government, and corporate areas. Founded in 1975, it collaborates with a broad network of research institutes from around the Pacific Rim, drawing on Asian perspectives and disseminating project findings and recommendations to opinion leaders, governments, and members of the public throughout the region.

www.pacforum.org

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