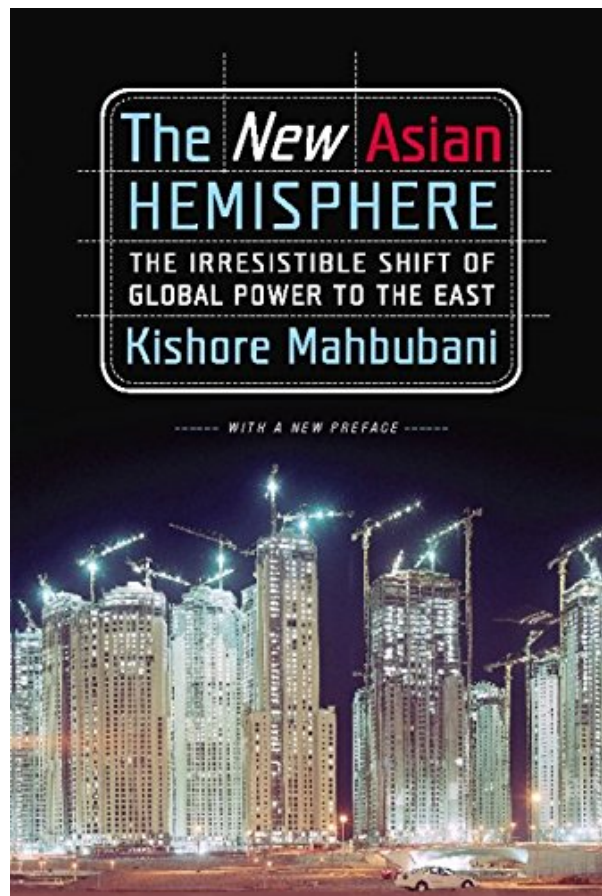
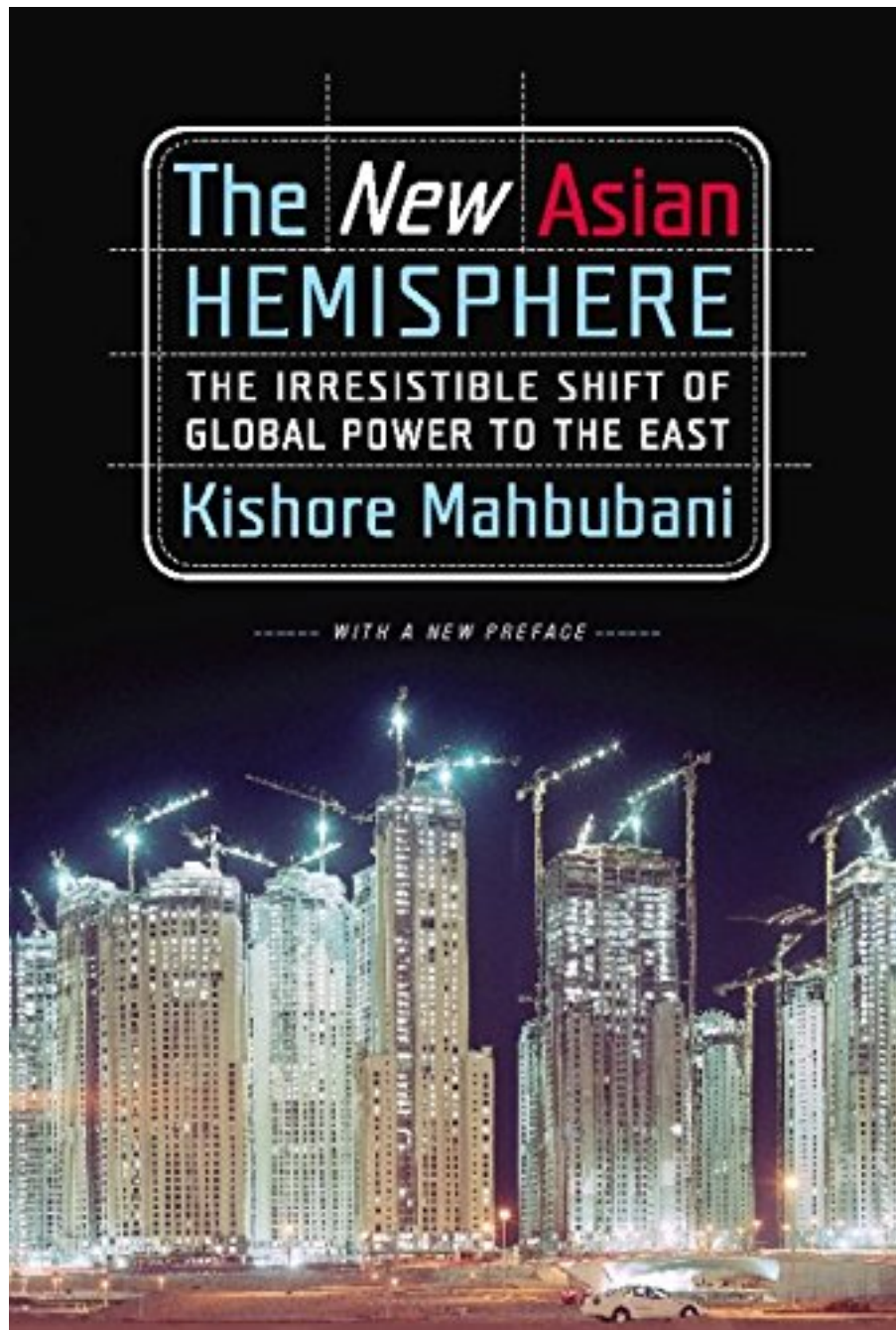


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Review

"[Mahbubani] makes powerful arguments that will be at the center of global politics and economics well into this century." -- Newsweek International, February 23, 2008

About the Author

Professor Kishore Mahbubani, of the National University of Singapore, has had a distinguished career in diplomacy and writing. He is the author of *Can Asians Think?* and *Beyond the Age of Innocence*. In 2005, *Foreign Policy* magazine ranked him as one of the top 100 public intellectuals in the world.

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For two centuries Asians have been bystanders in world history, reacting defenselessly to the surges of Western commerce, thought, and power. That era is over. Asia is returning to the center stage it occupied for eighteen centuries before the rise of the West.

By 2050, three of the world's largest economies will be Asian: China, India, and Japan. In *The New Asian Hemisphere*, Kishore Mahbubani argues that Western minds need to step outside their "comfort zone" and prepare new mental maps to understand the rise of Asia. The West, he says, must gracefully share power with Asia by giving up its automatic domination of global institutions from the IMF to the World Bank, from the G7 to the UN Security Council. Only then will the new Asian powers reciprocate by becoming responsible stakeholders in a stable world order.

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2 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

New voice needed in international order

By J. C. BAE

Although some parts of the book is not comfortable with me, this book is generally insightful and fun to read. I gave four star because there are some lacking in details for many European & Asian countries, hard evidence, sometimes biased Singaporean view and only focusing on American readers.

It is no longer new that China and India has been rising regardless of the US and EU's economic conditions as evidenced by their steady growth during global financial crisis. According to IMF's *World Economic Outlook* in April 2009, China and India would grow by 6.5% and 4.5%, respectively in 2009 when the US and the Euro Area suffers from the negative growth. It is remarkable since it proved its strength against so-called coupling view of their dependence on the US and Western Europe.

Considering their proportion of 16.2% in 2008 over World economy, which is larger than combined portion of four Euro area countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain), I think it is obvious that they should have more voice in international organizations like UNSC, IMF & IBRD, etc while shrinking Europe in terms of economic size should recede as recent G20 summit suggested. Moreover, I agree with the author's view of western incompetence in managing international order, specifically on foreign aid. Hypocrisy dominates here. They announced many commitments on global issues, which have not fulfilled and even the multilateral institutions like World Bank did not look really caring about the poor. Why? The governance matters. I expect that once the new voice comes in the governance of the int'l organizations, the thinking and behaviour inside those organizations will start to change: from rhetoric to results.

11 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

An excellent set of observations concerning global change

By E. W. Lewis

This is an excellent book with a considerable set of observations concerning the shifts occurring in the global power equation. It is both complementary of and critical of Western Civilization. It gives credit where credit is due: Western Civilization established a set of cultural principles which are generally applicable to all of humankind: democracy, the rule of law, the intellectual gift of the Enlightenment.

Western Civilization is, however, in the process of weakening itself. It errs significantly when it deviates from those principals. The United States is particularly prone to embrace ideology (be it political or moralistic) when operating on the world stage. This approach was doomed to failure in the past and is doomed to failure in the present. One does not force democracy down the throats of people at the barrel of a gun. One does not torture people in hidden prisons. One does not make friends and influence people in a global village by playing the bully.

Essentially the world is filled with highly intelligent and hardworking people. They may not want to be fully Westernized but they certainly want to be "Modernized." How much they adopt the principles of democracy should be up to them. Not all societies are developed to a level where they can easily embrace Western views of democracy. They will, however, become more progressive.

There are some weaknesses in the book. The author is extremely concerned about the rise of protectionism particularly in America. This makes sense since the US provides the rest of the world with 100s of billions of dollars a year of its wealth. This is ultimately hurtful to the American form of Western Civilization. Diminishing the wealth base of the United States cannot continue to be the sole source of growth for Asian economies. The author does not present any recommendations as to how to deal with this form of unsustainable economics.

9 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Asia's March to Modernity

By Izaak VanGalen

Kishore Mahbubani, former diplomat and currently dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore, was one of the leading exponents of "Asian values" in the 1980s. Although they were in vogue for a time, the merits of those values were lost on many during the Asian financial crises of the 1990s. But since then Asian countries have made a remarkable recovery, and now Mahbubani is back taking his argument to a new level.

With 7-10% annual economic growth rates, Mahbubani sees global power shifting from West to East. He attributes this success not only to Asian values, but also to what he calls "the seven pillars of Western wisdom." Those pillars are free-market economics; science and technology; meritocracy; pragmatism; a culture of peace; rule of law; and education. Modernization in Asia began in the late 19th century with Japan

opening to the West, then followed by the 4 tigers, and finally China and India. This march to modernity, as he calls it, has not only raised living standards but also Asian expectations in global power-sharing.

Mahbubani's grudge against the West is that the West is not playing by the rules which it created. The West, which he sees as Europe and North America, has only 15% of the world's population and 48% of global GDP; whereas the East - which is everyone else - has 85% of the world's population and 52% of GDP. The West is still dominating the world through outdated institutions such as the UN Security Council, the IMF, and the World Bank. Under a system of meritocracy or democracy the East should have a much larger role in global affairs.

Mahbubani makes many suggestions that would rectify this situation such as making India and China members of the G8, and opening up some of the top jobs at the IMF and World Bank to Asians. I couldn't agree more. His criticisms of the West have, for the most part, been correct. America's botched operation in Iraq is an easy target. Nuclear proliferation issues and the West's failure to stop genocide the Balkans and Rwanda are also given as examples of the West's incompetence. True again. This should not, however, be construed as being anti-Western, it is only constructive criticism.

Unfortunately Mahbubani is as uncritical of Asia's shortcomings as he critical of the West's. When he says that the Chinese are freer today than they have been at any time in their history, one would have to agree. (This is also the view of Parag Khanna in *The Second World*.) But what about the rights of Tibetans and other minorities in China? What about legal and political rights in general? Autocracies only allow economic freedom. He also conveniently overlooks the violence in Kashmir, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. And why blame only the West when nuclear proliferation in North Korea, Pakistan, and now Iran is mostly a result of China's neglect? Asian ascendancy has not been without its own fiascoes.

Parag Khanna argued that there will be three global leaders in the new century: the US, the EU, and China. Mahbubani would like to add India, for he sees India as a bridge between the East and the West. This is a valid point since many Indian intellectuals are at home in both the East and the West. He claims there is still a resistance among public intellectuals and journalists in the West to accept the East on equal terms, but I myself have not seen this resistance. I see a greater recognition of the East almost on a daily basis. With Asia's growing economic power, political power will follow no matter how much real or imagined resistance there is.

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