Foreword

Written several months after the book it presents, this foreword has the advantages and benefits of hindsight. It is thus able to point at recent events that support or modify its main arguments. Three events have struck me in this sense: first, the unfolding of the Bush administration's attitudes and policies; already before 11 September and even more afterwards; second, Argentina's crises and bail-out after much hesitation by the IMF; and finally, the judgement of the WTO in favour of the European Union in its conflict with the United States over the Foreign Sales Corporation Act. Each of these trends bears on the themes of this remarkable book, which itself offers a framework for understanding them. In turn, they help us to search for a way out of the dilemmas raised by these debates.

The main theme of the Bush administration seemed to be, before 11 September, in terms of ends, the primacy of America's national interest, narrowly conceived, and in terms of means, the primacy of unilateralism. It is the first administration since that of Theodore Roosevelt to have, at least in part, an openly imperialist ideology. Simultaneously, it lacks an integrating imperial ideology, which would give a stake in its success to the rest of the world. It oscillates between an imperialist and an isolationist tendency, combined with elements of pragmatism and, when it directly serves the interests of the US, elements of multilateralism, such as the FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas) project. In spite of ideological proclamations to the contrary, it seems to follow in the footsteps of the Clinton administration. This is both for the better (the aid to Brazil and the provisional bail-out of Argentina), and for the worse (the possibility of a military intervention in the fight against drugs in Colombia). The lesson seems to be that American hegemony currently takes such an aggressive and unpredictable form that even the most moderate advocates of multilateralism, or even of empire, are drawn or tempted to become resistant states (in Professor Jaguaribe's terminology) and to dream of multipolarity. After 11 September, the United States has found its 'mission', to use President Bush's expression: it is the war against terrorism. This legitimate cause has enabled it to gather a broad coalition for its intervention in Afghanistan, and to enter into a kind of loose concert with its past and potential enemies, Russia and China. But the imperialist ideology has been reinforced, the unilateralist method has reached new heights (with the coolness towards NATO's invocation of Article 5 after 11

September, or with the campaign against the International Penal Court) and the narrow conception of the national interest has been confirmed both in economic terms (with the farm tariffs and the help to the steel industry) and, even more strikingly, with the lack of legal guarantees for non-American prisoners.

The second element, from the point of view of Mercosul and the EU, shows how far this dream is from being attainable today. Neither Brazil, nor even less Argentina, is capable of dispensing with outside aid. This comes not from Mercosul or the EU, but rather from the IMF (a multilateral organisation controlled by the US). As Ricardo Lagos, the current Chilean president of the Rio Group, said at their meeting on 19 August: 'We are only the observers of what happens in our countries. But the effects of the system hit us in our most important spots.' Globalisation and interdependence certainly do not, by themselves, produce multipolarity

Yet the third event seems to lean in the opposite direction: the judgement of the WTO Commission, which American sources compare to a bombshell or to a nuclear attack, shows that multilateralism is not necessarily a way to, or an instrument of, hegemony. Together with the EU's earlier opposition of a merger between two American giants, it shows that, on the contrary, multilateral institutions can lead to multipolarity, or at least to the limitation of hegemony

As I see it, this dialectical relationship between multilateralism and multipolarity is precisely the most fascinating lesson of this book. Of course, it analyses with unprecedented precision and frankness the relations between Europe and South America, or, more precisely, between the EU and Mercosul. It therefore examines the needs and possibilities of regionalism, the resemblances and differences between the two enterprises of regional integration, and the modifications that their collaboration could bring about in the international system. However, precisely from the point of view of understanding the latter, in theoretical terms the real subject is the relation between multipolarity and multilateralism.

In reading the book, I was struck by the fact that most of the South American contributions greatly emphasised the goal of multipolarity, and the preferably collective (but if not, national) resistance to American hegemony. Interestingly, most of the European contributions emphasised multilateralism, and the goal of channelling and harnessing American hegemony into a system of rules and restraints, rather than attacking it frontally with the aim of replacing it with a multipolar balance.

There is a simple explanation for the difference: South America has a much more direct and brutal experience than Europe of North American hegemony. Furthermore, the experience is not mitigated, as in Europe, by the other even more brutal dominations (German and then Soviet) against which America has played the role of defender, liberator or protector, and of a much milder counter-hegemon. However, there is another explanation that emerges from the studies of this book, and from the events I have quoted at the beginning of this Foreword.

The South American writers show no complacency about the power relationships on their continent, or their economic strength or vulnerability. They also show no complacency about the political cohesion or division of their respective countries, the institutional advancement of Mercosul, or its current ability to protect its members from economic storms and political pressures.

By contrast, the European contributions—while quite lucid and even pessimistic about the EU's ability to act alone, or to become a genuine federation—demonstrate a quiet confidence in its achievements, and in the inevitability of multilateralism in the modern world. Paradoxically, this leads them to a much less antagonistic view towards the US and towards a more modest ambition concerning regional entities such as the EU and Mercosul. They would not be far from agreeing with another European— and a Frenchman to boot—Jean-Marie Guéhenno, when he declares:

> If power is only national power, if it becomes the *ultima ratio* of security which makes it possible for a country to go its own way, regardless of other countries' interests and concerns, then, indeed, there is little incentive in the rest of the world to welcome American power. But if legitimacy is recognised as the necessary complement of power in a democratic world, if multilateral institutions are understood to be not only a constraint on power, but also a foundation of power, because they make power more acceptable, the rest of the world has no problem with American power.[1]

Of course, Guehénno was speaking to an American audience, and I do not think he was representative of 'the rest of the world', or even of the rest of France. After all, France is the European country whose foreign minister has coined the expression: 'America as a hyper-power' and whose president has outlined the vision (curiously coinciding with some old formations by Nixon and Kissinger) of a multipolar world based on a balance between four or five great powers, like the European concert of the nineteenth century.

Personally, without going as far as Guehénno, I tend to be on the side of the majority of Europeans and the minority of French who disagree with the notion of multipolarity as constituting, by itself, a valid description of a future international system and a valid objective for foreign policy. I am tempted (and reinforced in this by the reading of this book) by the idea expressed by two other Frenchmen, that the ideal of multipolarity is an expression of weakness.[2] This is the same weakness that induces Russia's need to be constantly confirmed in its superpower status, precisely because it knows it has lost it. I think that the notion of multipolarity, which has an obvious validity and relevance if one defines its context, can be very misleading, both theoretically and politically. It can lead one to forget the difference between poles, both in terms of power and in terms of ties. If one wants to avoid the so-called 'billiard ball model' of international politics, one must, on the one hand, recognise transnational ties, affinities and

cleavages. On the other hand, one must acknowledge the fact that multipolarity means neither equality nor equidistance between the different units.

The international system is both unimultipolar and unimultilateral. All states maintain, to various degrees, a certain freedom to act unilaterally and a certain necessity, obligation or interest in respecting and using some multilateral framework. It is within these multilateral frameworks that multipolarity makes sense, just as, conversely, multilateralism by itself has no chance of moderating and channelling hegemony if it is not associated with an element of multipolarity, which enables the other members of the system to resist and retaliate against hegemonic unilateralism. In this respect, the threats implied by the policies of the Bush administration demonstrate the wisdom of Helio Jaguaribe's notion of resistant states. However, on the other hand, this resistance can be successful only if the policy of the states has a more positive content than just opposing the US. Furthermore, they cannot fall into the illusion that an abstract multipolarity (balancing the US with Russia, China and India, for instance) can erase the inequalities, the constraints and the solidarities of the Western capitalist and liberal democratic world.

Thomas Schelling, defining the mixture of cooperation and conflict that characterises international politics, proposed 'a theory of incomplete antagonism and imperfect partnership'. Similarly, we could suggest that all politics are a combination of *incomplete inequality* and *imperfect reciprocity*. Of course, to increase reciprocity, one needs to reduce inequality, but even in the most unequal relationship there is an element of reciprocity; and even in the most orderly and harmonious reciprocity there is a dimension of inequality.

It follows, too, that Professor Jaguaribe's trinity of ruling, resistant and conditioned states, while valid and illuminating, must be complemented by the recognition that even the ruling hegemon is somehow conditioned (if only by physical factors and by the nature of its own society). Furthermore, even the most conditioned state has some capacity for resistance. However, this applies above all to the intermediary category: that of states that may be resistant, but are at the same time part of the ruling system and conditioned by their relative weakness before both the hegemon and the global system. It is they who, as Professor Jaguaribe points out, have the capacity to increase their ruling dimension and the risk of being increasingly conditioned or dependent. The outcome of this dilemma, however, depends on their ability both to unite, or at least to coordinate, and to propose constructive social and political solutions as an alternative to economic determinism. In this respect, President Cardozo's statement at the 2001 FTAA meeting in Quebec, 'The FTAA is a choice, but Mercosul is a destiny', quoted by Amaury de Souza in Chapter 9, while valid geographically and culturally, could not be reversed. If not the FTAA, at least globalisation and capitalist interdependence, and the central role of the US are, in a sense, destiny—just as, on the other hand, are parochial reactions in the name of ethnicity or nationalism, or a renaissance of revolutionary romanticism. By contrast, the creation of intermediary levels capable of mediating between the two extremes on a regional

and multilateral basis, such as the EU and Mercosul, is a deliberate choice, which requires both imagination and perseverance.

In my opinion, this book is both a very stimulating encouragement and a very compelling analysis in that direction.

Pierre Hassner
Centre d' Etudes et de Recherches Internationale, Paris

NOTES

1. Guehénno, Jean-Marie, 'Is the US too powerful?' paper for conference *France and the United States in New Century,* Centre on the United States and France, 24 May 2000, Brookings Institution, Foreign Policy Studies.
2. Melandri, Pierre and Justin Vaisse, 'L'empire du milieu', Paris, Odile Jacob, 2001.