

U.S. Treasury Secretary argues that in the past much of it was wasted — and one can also disagree on what a development strategy for individual countries should include, since there's considerable disagreement among experts. But it's hard to believe that more financial assistance will not be crucial.¹⁴ And if the U.S. won't play the game will others go ahead anyway?

Differences between the U.S. and other members of the G8 go well beyond aid financing. If the cold war was often described as the glue that binds, the "new war" looks likely to become the acid that erodes. The transatlantic rift over the next stage of the war — specifically the implications of American policies with respect to the "axis of evil" — will not be easily resolved, to put it mildly. But it is not just the charges made by some leading Europeans that the United States is becoming unilateralist and treating coalition partners like "satellites".¹⁵ As a number of military experts have noted, the U.S. is far ahead in military capabilities, and poised to grow even more, so that the disparity will widen. So NATO is just not needed to fight "new wars" and will have to find another role for itself. This will take some time, of course, and there is by no means a unanimity of view among the European members.

As Paul Kennedy has noted recently, in military terms there is only one player.¹⁶ And the same is at present also true in economic terms. And the disparity of power in both is likely to grow for the foreseeable future. There is no catch-up on the horizon which will create a convergence club. This is hegemony big time.

So what has all this got to do with summit reform? The summit was created by middle powers at a time when the hegemon was — or appeared to be — in decline. The cold war prevailed. But the catalyst that sparked the change was crisis — the breakdown of Bretton Woods and the onset of OPEC One.

I would argue that there is a different kind of crisis facing the G8 today. The widening transatlantic divide on both security and other issues and the concern of most other countries in the globe about alleged American unilateralism could well represent a serious threat to global stability. The summit is the only forum that could deal with the complex global issues that have and will arise in this world of deepening integration and uncertainty. But the credibility of the summit has steadily diminished — and given the centrepiece of