In six issues, stretching from July/August 2009 to May/June 2010, *Foreign Affairs* published nineteen articles relating to U.S. power, seven on the rise of China, and six on energy and the environment. Online—at ForeignAffairs.com—the magazine published twenty-four annotated Reading Lists, covering topics from Israeli politics to the financial crisis, twelve Letters, including one from Tehran and another from Kathmandu, and numerous Snapshots and Postscripts.

Several major essays evaluated the Obama administration’s progress during its first year. Zbigniew Brzezinski called on President Barack Obama to do a better job of turning his soaring rhetoric into action. The president’s ability to govern, Brzezinski said, would be tested by the immediate challenges of Iran, Afghanistan-Pakistan, and Israel-Palestine. Kenneth Roth lamented that Obama had not lived up to his campaign promises to end Bush-era human rights abuses. Barry Eichengreen and C. Fred Bergsten assessed how the financial crisis would affect the U.S. dollar. Bergsten urged further steps to balance the budget and stimulate private savings. Meanwhile, Josef Joffe, Niall Ferguson, and Michael Mandelbaum debated whether U.S. preeminence is here to stay or could quickly wane, and whether the United States should lament its demise. Even as the future of U.S. hegemony remained in question, it was clear that China was becoming more powerful. Robert D. Kaplan wrote that its need for natural resources, markets, and greater security is pushing China to increase its influence over neighboring territories and seas. Ken Miller examined China’s financial strategies and the challenge they present. Marc Levinson argued that global financial regulations would do more harm than good. He favored coordinated regulations by nation-states over remedies proffered by multilateral committees. An annotated online Reading List provided by George J. Gilboy provided context to these discussions.

As China reaches out, other countries will need to deal with internal problems: Bronwyn E. Bruton wrote that the United States should renounce intervention in Somalia and encourage local development; Charles King and Rajan Menon identified the Caucasus as Russia’s looming challenge; and Robert C. Bonner explored how Mexico could target its drug cartels, using lessons from Colombia’s war on drugs. In a lead essay on U.S. defense policy, Robert M. Gates explained that rather than fighting allies’ wars, the United States will need to help them better defend themselves. In a separate essay, Brzezinski marked the sixtieth anniversary of NATO by calling for it to become the hub of a web of regional security organizations. Charles A. Kupchan argued that it was time to seriously consider including Russia in NATO to achieve Europe-wide security. Dmitri Trenin evaluated the prospects of a “reset” relationship between Russia and the United States, and Andrei Lankov concluded that only internal initiatives would lessen North Korean intransigence. Meanwhile, Morton I. Abramowitz and Henri J. Barkey evaluated the implications for U.S. policy of Turkey’s expansive courting of Iran and its souring on Israel. Evan A. Feigenbaum, George R.
Packard, and Yoichi Funabashi evaluated the prospects and possible pitfalls of developments within U.S. allies India and Japan.

Wesley K. Clark and Peter L. Levin wrote that the threat of cyber warfare required Washington to quickly secure computer networks, software, and hardware. Graham T. Allison and Charles D. Ferguson took opposing sides on the practicality of the Obama administration’s goal of reducing the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile. Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press warned that the United States must retain the right nuclear weapons capabilities lest adversaries conclude that Washington's nuclear strategy rests largely on bluff.

James M. Lindsay and Ray Takeyh argued that the United States could successfully contain Iran in the event that Tehran gains a nuclear weapons capability. In online Snapshots, Andrew J. Tabler counseled the Obama administration to restart investigations on Syria’s reactor in order to gain leverage over Damascus, and Rashid Khalidi and Bret Stephens debated whether the end of Israeli settlements would bring peace to the region once and for all.

Countering terrorists and insurgency in Afghanistan comprised another major theme this year. Jessica Stern described how terrorists could be rehabilitated, citing Saudi Arabia’s partially successful reeducation program. Stephen Biddle, Fotini Christia, and J Alexander Thier urged the Obama administration to give up on building an Afghan centralized state and aim instead for decentralized democracy. Sheri Berman drew parallels between state building in Louis XIV’s France and in Afghanistan today. In an online Snapshot, George Gavrilis called for the United States to use the international community’s intervention in Tajikistan as a model. In an online letter from Kabul, Kim Barker described the major problems U.S. forces face: corruption, warlords, and the Taliban.

With the Copenhagen round of climate talks having taken place in December, and the next round on the horizon, Foreign Affairs continued its coverage of environmental and energy issues. Michael A. Levi forecasted that the Copenhagen talks would end in deadlock and, in a Web
Postscript, compared his predictions with the actual outcomes. Jessica Seddon Wallack and Veerabhadran Ramanathan argued that reducing “black carbon” would be a viable way to fight global warming and Joel Kurzman called for a cap-and-trade system for carbon emissions. David G. Victor and Linda Yueh described the pressure that a growing demand for green energy, and for energy in developing countries, is putting on the International Energy Agency, and Edward L. Morse and Christof Rühl discussed oil markets after the economic crisis. These articles were accompanied by Morse’s online Reading List on oil and Victor’s on climate change.

Laurie A. Garrett examined the viability of Cuba’s expensive healthcare system, particularly in a post-embargo world. Yale president Richard C. Levin told of the aggressive efforts to raise the quality of Asian universities, and Jack A. Goldstone illustrated the major demographic changes to which global institutions will have to adapt. Isobel Coleman put the spotlight on efforts to empower women in the Muslim world.

Though the economic downturn continued to depress advertising revenue and newsstand sales, overall magazine circulation remained healthy. Average paid circulation of 157,566 for calendar year 2009 was down only 2 percent from 2008. The magazine’s website generated 14 percent more new subscriptions in the first half of 2010 than in the same period last year, and increased efficiencies in production and distribution contributed to the continued profitability of the magazine.

During the past year, more than 7,500 readers downloaded bimonthly issues through the Amazon Kindle, Barnes & Noble Nook, and Sony Reader. Two Foreign Affairs ebooks—The Clash of Civilizations? The Debate and China on the World Stage—were developed for the eReader market in collaboration with CFR Publishing. In response to a demand from international readers for timelier and less costly delivery, a digital-only subscription is in development. Other digital initiatives include a platform for mobile delivery of content on smartphones, as well as a section of the website to host audio and video content. Foreign Affairs LIVE, entering its third season this fall, has drawn more than two thousand readers to discussions with authors and editors in a lively public forum.

James F. Hoge Jr.
Foreign Affairs Editor

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