

2009 TOPICS:

U.S. and rising powers

Since the end of the cold war, the U.S. has emerged as the world's predominant power. However, in the 21st century some rapidly developing countries have become increasingly influential. Who are these “rising powers?” Will their emergence change the global balance of power? How will the U.S. react?

Afghanistan/Pakistan

Newfound hopes for stability in Iraq have shifted the U.S. military focus back to Afghanistan and Pakistan, one of the most volatile border regions in the world. What impact will this renewed interest have on the two states as well as on U.S. defense strategy?

Energy & the global economy

Rising energy prices, driven by instability in key producing regions such as the Middle East and increasing demand from developing countries, are affecting the global economy. What are the potential consequences of huge wealth transfers to oil-exporting states? Are there any realistic alternative energy scenarios on the horizon?

The Arctic

Rising global temperatures have created new opportunities in the Arctic for resource extraction and inter-continental transport. How will sovereignty disputes among the five countries that border the Arctic affect its potential development? What impact will this race for the Arctic have on an environment already in serious flux?

Egypt in the 21st Century

Egypt has long played an important role in the Arab world while maintaining a strategic relationship with the U.S. With elections scheduled for 2009, how will Egypt deal with serious domestic issues, ranging from Islamic radicalism to food shortages? What factors will influence the path of this regional heavyweight?

Global food supply

Global prices for food staples have risen dramatically, resulting in protests and unrest around the world. What factors are driving prices up, and can they be tamed? What will the political fallout be for governments that fail to act, and what role can global institutions play?

Cuba after Castro

Since Fidel Castro handed over the presidency of Cuba to his brother, Raúl in early 2008, signs of greater economic openness have led to much speculation. Will Raúl seek to reopen ties with the U.S.? What role will Cuba's American exiles play in shaping a post-Castro Cuba?

Universal human rights

As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights celebrates its 60th anniversary, events in the Balkans, Sudan and Myanmar continue to challenge its idealism, while raising new questions about the prospects for humanitarian interventions. Do human rights transcend national borders and customs? Is the definition of human rights changing?