In the twenty-first century, according to Parag Khanna, three empires strut their stuff on the world stage. The United States, the European Union, and China are "frenemies." Globalization fosters interdependence. But fear and greed continue to drive geopolitical competition. "Arrayed along and sandwiched between" the superpowers, Khanna points out, are second world countries. Encompassing the world's emerging markets, they are divided between haves and have nots and may or may not be moving toward democracy. Their fate—and that of the superpowers—rests in no small measure on how they relate to one another.

*The Second World* provides a primer on "the new geography of power." The book bears the stamp of its author, a rising star in think tankdom who was born in India and raised in Dubai, Germany, and the United States. The director of the Global Governance Initiative at the New America Foundation, Khanna is fluent in five languages. Young (and unaffiliated with an academic department), he is breathtakingly ambitious and idiosyncratically old-fashioned. Using *East to West: A Journey Around the World* (1958), by the venerable (but no longer venerated) Arnold J. Toynbee, as his "most insightful guide," Khanna traveled to more than fifty countries so that he could "slip into their skin"—and capture what Toynbee called "the collective subconscious psyche" of second world states who can "choose their friends but not their neighbors."

An immensely informative introduction to some of the least understood places on the globe, *The Second World* moves across countries and continents at breakneck speed. And it crackles with challenges to conventional wisdom. Radical Islam, Khanna claims, is not a potent geopolitical force. The Middle East may be better off if Iraq implodes. Musharraf's Pakistan is a client state of China, not a reliable ally of the United States.
At times, the breadth of Khanna's project limits the depth and clarity of his analysis. Consider his seven page tour of Brazil. "Captain of a second world trade axis," he writes, Brazil is like an hourglass, with the indigenous and African populations at the bottom "and a narrow bottleneck ensuring nonexistent mobility to the elite at the top." Recently, however, Brazil has spent more on poverty reduction than all other Latin American countries combined. Its "innovative energy strategy" and economic development initiatives are "working." Why, then, does Khanna conclude that "the sand is falling through Brazil's hourglass"?

But even when he leaves the details to devils, Khanna provides a provocative, penetrating, and prescient framework for understanding international politics. In their approaches to the global marketplace, he suggests, the United States relies on coalition, the European Union on consensus, and China on consultation. With its credibility in free fall, military force more a problem than a solution, and the dollar no longer a safe harbor for investment, the United States may snap like a rubber band when stretched too far. "America cannot turn things around simply because it wants to," he warns, and certainly not with blind faith in individual freedom and free markets.

Meanwhile, with the largest market and the most powerful economy in the world, the European Union has transformed virtually every country in its reach by setting stringent conditions for membership—and making massive investments in infrastructure. The Balkans and the Caucasus may be next.

China, Khanna acknowledges, may "hide its ambition and disguise its claws." But its "MBA emperors" are now competing, successfully, for influence on every continent. China has emerged as the preeminent power in Asia. Its products have penetrated markets everywhere else as well, and the regime has used massive trade surpluses to acquire assets in industrial and
industrializing countries. Khanna's confidence in China's willingness to tackle inequality among its citizens may be misplaced, but his claim that "globalization is happening on China's terms" seems on target.

Though he articulates no programmatic vision for the future, Khanna demonstrates that the world is not flat—and that globalization alone will not trump geopolitics. He ends his admirable book with a timely reminder that maintaining stability in international relations requires a "deep understanding of second world political dynamics" and steady and sustained statesmanship, by the new “G-3,” to ensure sounder stewardship of our endangered planet.

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