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The unprecedented military, economic, and political power of the United States has led some observers to declare that we live in a unipolar world in which America enjoys primacy or even hegemony. At the same time public opinion polls abroad reveal high levels of anti-Americanism, and many foreign governments criticize U.S. policies. Primacy and Its Discontents explores the sources of American primacy, including the uses of U.S. military power, and the likely duration of unipolarity. It offers theoretical arguments for why the rest of the world will_or will not_align against the United States. Several chapters argue that the United States is not immune to the long-standing tendency of states to balance against power, while others contend that wise U.S. policies, the growing role of international institutions, and the spread of liberal democracy can limit anti-American balancing. The final chapters debate whether countries are already engaging in "soft balancing" against the United States. The contributors offer alternative prescriptions for U.S. foreign policy, ranging from vigorous efforts to maintain American primacy to acceptance of a multipolar world of several great powers.