



# **Sovereign Wealth Funds: Threat or Salvation?**

## **(Peterson Institute for International Economics - Publication)**

*Edwin Truman*

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Sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) are not a new phenomenon in international finance. Governments of a few countries have used similar entities to manage their international financial assets for several decades. Moreover, countries have always held international reserves, and government-owned entities have made cross-border investments for many years. However, with the rapid increases in international reserve holdings and in revenues from the export of nonrenewable resources over the past decade, total holdings of international assets by SWFs have grown to at least \$3.5 trillion, and international reserves, which can be used for similar purposes, have risen to nearly \$7 trillion. This timely book first traces the origins of SWFs and the buildup of international reserves. It then describes the issues raised by these large governmental holdings of cross-border assets for three entities: the countries that own them, host countries, and the international financial system. The author describes what is known about the 50-plus SWFs of various countries. Principally, Truman presents a 'scoreboard' consisting of 33 elements in four categories: structure, governance, transparency and accountability, and behavioral rules. This ground-breaking 'scoreboard' is widely acknowledged as a key contributor to the development of a set of generally accepted principles and practices: the Santiago Principles for SWFs by the International Working Group of the International Monetary Fund. Finally, Truman discusses the evolving role of SWFs in the context of the global economic and financial crisis and its aftermath. This volume offers recommendations for the policies of countries that manage funds and those that expect to receive investments from them in the future.



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