The Asia Pacific in the New Millennium
Conference keynote address delivered by Robert A. Scalapino

The USF Center for the Pacific Rim is pleased to publish in this issue of Pacific Rim Report the keynote address delivered by Robert A. Scalapino in September 1997 at a conference on "Asia in the New Millennium: Geopolitics, Security, and Foreign Policy" held at the University of San Francisco.

The conference was sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences together with its Department of Politics and Center for the Pacific Rim in honor of USF Professor Emeritus of Politics, Richard J. Kozicki.

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We gratefully acknowledge Union Bank of California for funding this issue of Pacific Rim Report through a research grant to the USF Center for the Pacific Rim.

The scientific-technological revolution now encompassing an ever larger portion of our world shows no sign of abating. On the contrary, whether the field be information, medicine, transnational relations or space exploration, the future will bring further advances. One arduous task of leaders and citizens alike is that of adjusting to the pace of change. Compared to earlier centuries, ours is an age when rapid and diverse responses to events are often required. Little time for contemplation or reconsideration is given. Fatigue—physical, emotional and mental—is thus a frequent companion to the exhilaration of confronting an unending stream of new challenges.

The impact of speed upon Asian societies is only now beginning to be felt in its fullest dimensions. Having come late to the industrial revolution, much of Asia has been accustomed to a greater degree of continuity than is permitted today. When thinking of the past, the great Buddhist legacy, the wheel of life, comes to mind. Wherever one got on that wheel, one came back to the same starting point. There are other symbols of the traditional order still in evidence: the respect for ancestors and for those senior in age; the special accord for agriculture even after the advent of the industrial age; and the premium upon consultation and consensus all testify to a linkage with the past reluctantly abandoned.

With much of Asia in the very vortex of revolutionary advances, it is easy to assert that the 21st Century will be an Asian century, as is commonly done. One can assemble statistics to demonstrate the dominant role this region will play in the world economy. One can also point to substantial if highly uneven advances in military power. Moreover, at least one Asian society, Japan, now stands on the scientific-technological frontiers, and with its capacity for creativity enhanced, an ability to go beyond adaptation.

Yet to speak of Asia as a unit or single entity is profoundly misleading. There are many Asias and despite the rapid advance of economic interdependence and the reduction of ideological barriers, there will continue to be vast differences—economic, political and cultural—between and among Asian societies. Indeed, diversity within each society inevitably accompanies development, promoting extensive differences of a generational as well as of a sub-regional nature.

For these reasons, to advance a thesis of uniformity as is implied in such concepts as the clash of civilizations or the end of history does a great disservice to reality. The supreme intellectual challenge today is to advance generalizations that pay homage to complexity.

Japan’s Uncertain Future
Despite the frightful price paid by the Japanese for World War II, in reality, that war liberated Japan from the costs of imperialism. Imagine a situation today where Tokyo was trying to maintain its political-military dominance over East Asia.

Yet Japan’s past was not totally obliterated, and certain aspects provided a foundation for rapid post-war advances. Japan could utilize an heritage of valuing education, sustaining discipline throughout the social structure and adapting foreign ideas while providing them with Japanese characteristics—to borrow a phrase now widely used. Moreover, Japan possessed a homogeneous people, a territory suited in size for rapid growth and a homeland sufficiently detached from others to preserve a strong sense of identity.

Enter the United States! Few conquering forces could have combined the resources and the will to assist in advancing an erstwhile enemy so swiftly and effectively. Having come into the region as firefighter, the United States remained as missionary on behalf of democracy. It later added the role of auditor, keeping a close eye on the trade balance sheet. Notwithstanding the rising controversies in the economic realm, however, the U.S.-Japan post-1945 alliance has represented an highly effective relationship based upon the mutual benefits derived from radical differences. From this condition was derived a capacity for reciprocal exchanges fulfilling separate but compatible interests. Today, however, Japan presents powerful evidence of one fundamental fact: no economic strategy, however successful, is good for all times. While Japan’s program of neo-mercantilism and a cartelized industrial structure provided the impetus for an extraordinary growth over four decades, substantial changes are now required if Japan is to remain competitive, encourage innovation and maintain satisfactory relations with its principal trading partners, most especially the United States. Yet as current indications make clear, major reforms will not come easily, given various entrenched interests in opposition. The struggle is likely to be a protracted one, despite the promises of political leaders.

Meanwhile, the internationalization of the Japanese economy will continue, while the premium on the domestic front will be to stay on the frontiers of the technological revolution; to manage effectively an increasing number of foreign workers at home; to advance the service sector; and above all, to handle the costs of a rapidly aging society. By the year 2015, approximately one-fourth of the Japanese population will be 65 years of age or older, and there will be slightly less than 2.5 workers for every individual in retirement.

Japan will also seek to distribute the developmental process more broadly within the nation, with efforts to bring those parts of Japan outside the Tokyo-Osaka mega-urban belt into increased economic activism, thereby alleviating the extraordinary pressures of the intensively urbanized east coast. Portions of west Japan, for example, will become parts of several Natural Economic Territories (NETs) involving regions around the Sea of Japan, or East Sea rim, and the Bohai Gulf. NETs are economic entities that cut across political boundaries, taking advantage of geographic proximity and reciprocal needs and capacities, combining resources, manpower, technology, capital, and managerial skills to optimal advantage.

Japan’s dependence upon external resources will remain extremely high as will dependence upon the environmental policies pursued by neighbors. Hence, Japan will increasingly take a leadership role in seeking a resolution of the great issues of the 21st Century—those relating to resources, population and environment—issues that will determine the health, indeed, the survival of all mankind. In this manner, Japan can give enhanced meaning to the term “comprehensive security.” Thus, if the alliance with the United States holds and the perception of threat remains within bounds, Japan is likely to determine that its interests are best served by exerting leadership in the economic-technological rather than the military field.

Like other democracies, this nation must meet the political challenges that confront contemporary open societies. Recent events have shown a declining vote rate together with a rising cynicism or indifference to politics among the citizenry. There are few commanding figures in the Japanese political arena, and leaders struggle to maintain acceptance. A series of scandals involving politicians and elements of the financial-industrial community have provided ample material for exposés.

At this point, it is not clear whether Japan will return to a dominant party system, create a stable two party system or continue with coalition politics. The predominant characteristic of Japanese politics at present, however, is centrisim despite certain gains of the Communist Party, reflecting its role as the only clear opposition.

For the average citizen, urban life presents increasing challenges: adequate housing, suitable transport and personal security. Even in Japan, crime rates have been rising. Above all, how does a democratic society balance rights and responsibilities for leaders and citizens alike, and how does it provide political values underwriting loyalty and commitment to the system?

While these issues are not regime-threatening in the case of Japan, no political system—including that of democracy—is guaranteed permanence, and democracy here as elsewhere must face the serious problems that modernity has bequeathed.

Like all societies, Japan has its special characteristics, but in the issues that it faces at home and abroad, it epitomizes some of the challenges that post-modern society will face in the 21st Century, whether its locale be Asia or elsewhere.

Singapore: Asia’s Political Alternative To Democracy

The second advanced modern Asian society, Singapore, is very different from Japan in most respects, although certain similarities exist. One is the discipline that pervades the society, buttressed, to be sure, by a soft authoritarian political order. Like Japan, Singapore has been blessed with a relatively efficient bureaucracy providing paternalistic guidance to the financial-industrial structure. Another similarity is the advantage
of scale and a single dominant ethnic-cultural group despite a small Malay and Indian population. However, Singapore has sometimes been
called a Chinese island in a Malay sea, with its near neighbors ethnically and developmentally different.

Singaporean Chinese have reached out in terms of trade and investment to these neighbors, and to China as well. On a broader canvas, the
Chinese of Southeast Asia, while constituting only about 15% of the total population, control some 85% of the financial and productive
resources. It is thus not surprising that Malay-Chinese ethnic relations are delicate, especially in Indonesia. Singapore, it might be noted, has
done well in utilizing the small Indian portion of its population in government and academic positions. Indeed, it has probably handled multi-
ethnic relations as well as any Asian society.

As it looks ahead, Singapore’s challenges will be similar to those of other post-modern societies: how to remain competitive in the midst of
the rapid advances of neighbors; how to deal with the aging of its population; and how to assist in promoting the tranquility of the immediate
region upon which it is increasingly interdependent. Ever greater efficiency in the use of labor and resources combined with continuing
emphasis on the service and high-tech sectors are required.

Unlike Japan, Singapore represents a political alternative to democracy. Its route has been that of authoritarian-pluralism. Politics remain
controlled, albeit, through legal means, or more precisely, means deemed legal by Singapore’s political leaders and judiciary. To oppose the
People’s Action Party, the dominant party, is to jeopardize one’s finances and one’s career as the fate of key oppositionists so clearly
illustrates. Libel suits are often instituted when leaders are criticized—and generally won.

Yet pluralism also exists in the Singaporean system. A civil society apart from the state has emerged with some degree of autonomy, a tribute
to the diversity that accompanies modernization. And the economy is increasingly mixed, with the private sector paying a crucial role.

Authoritarian-pluralism has been the path taken by many Asian societies, in part because it accords with indigenous political cultures, in part
because it facilitates rapid economic development by providing stability together with pragmatic economic policies. As I shall soon note, it is a
system increasingly threatening Leninism in those states still calling themselves Communist.

What is the future of Singaporean politics, or more broadly, of authoritarian-pluralist regimes elsewhere in Asia? Viewing the evolution of
South Korea and Taiwan, it is tempting to predict that democracy will sweep over Asia, with all other systems cast aside. At a minimum, such
a prediction is premature. There are indeed challenges to authoritarianism in whatever form. The charismatic leadership of the past is being
replaced by technocrats—more effective administrators perhaps, but rarely emotionally satisfying. Hence, legitimacy will be increasingly
dependent upon performance, especially in the economic realm, with pageantry relegated to a lesser role.

Further, as noted, diversity is the handmaiden of economic development and diversity must find some form of political expression. Yet factors
of scale, ethnic composition, developmental pattern and tradition will combine to preclude a single political system for the foreseeable future.

South Korea and Taiwan: On the Brink of Advanced Modernization

Prior to exploring this issue further, let me turn to a second category of Asian societies measured in economic terms, namely, societies on the
threshold of advanced modernization—the Republic of Korea and Taiwan. Once again, factors of human resources, appropriate economic
policies, political stability and optimal size were each important elements in their achievements in recent decades. However, the economic structures of the ROK and Taiwan are significantly different. That of Korea is close to Japan, the giant chaebol or
conglomerates dominating the economic landscape. Taiwan has been characterized by the prominence of small and medium enterprises despite
the advent of some large-scale enterprises. Yet in both cases, the role of government in the planning and guidance of the economy has been
extensive, with a combination of import substitution and export orientation prevailing.

These are two societies strongly homogeneous in ethnic terms, but with certain domestic cleavages an nonetheless. In the case of Korea, a
powerful regionalism exists, long dominating the political scene. In the case of Taiwan, a breach, never healed, separates the Taiwanese and
the Mainlanders, with the former constituting 85% of the population, the latter, most of the remainder. At this point, the Taiwanization of
Taiwan’s politics is irreversible, with both domestic and regional implications.

In the movement from authoritarianism to democracy that took place in these two societies, four interwoven factors appear crucial: economic
development; leadership decisions; a growing political consensus among the elite transmitted to the citizenry at large; and conditions
minimizing the risk of chaos under political openness.

Yet as in the case of Japan, these societies illustrate the problems as well as the advantages of late 20th Century democracy. At the head of the list
is money politics, the huge financial requirements of elections and the maintenance of a competitive political system. Thus, corruption and
scandal threaten to become synonymous with the democratic order here and elsewhere. Even the bureaucracy has been seriously tarnished. As
China and Indonesia among others graphically illustrate, these problems are by no means confined to democracies, but they receive greater
public display, hence, they have the potential to be system threatening.

At present, however, neither South Korea nor Taiwan seem at risk in this respect. The institutions permitting political change within the
system appear to be widely accepted.
A third category of Asian states can be categorized as the rapidly developing societies, and include Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. Differing in certain important respects, these societies have in common a successful developmental course in the recent past, despite the current financial crisis, with progressive economic interdependence and market-driven decisions.

These are also societies multi-ethnic in composition, with political problems resulting therefrom. Further, even more than in the case of the first two categories, these societies confront the problem of relatively fragile political institutions and a high dependence upon personalities in politics. In most cases, moreover, at least a shadow of military involvement in leadership persists.

Indonesia typifies these characteristics, differing from others, however, in its geographical and demographic dimensions. Economic growth here continues to be accompanied by authoritarian, highly personalized politics, with the military prominently on the political stage, but with the attitude and actions of one individual central to the political order. In such a setting, a key question that will govern the future is when and how the institutionalization of politics will supplant personalized dominance. An equally important question is whether ethnic and regional differences within the society can be accommodated with a minimal resort to suppression. Both issues illustrate the fact that for these societies, security is first and foremost a domestic issue.

Malaysia also illustrates the crucial role of leadership at this point, although here, the political climate is somewhat more open. The delicate ethnic balance has been handled with some effectiveness, and the threat of Islamic fundamentalism has significantly lessened. Mahathir, Malaysia’s current head, finds political value as well as personal satisfaction in giving voice to anti-Western nationalism on frequent occasions, backing Asia-exclusive proposals even while seeking Western investment and technology. And again, while generational change in leadership inevitably lies ahead, its timing and nature rest largely in the hands of one individual.

In the recent past, Thailand and the Philippines have both been headed by men of a military background, transformed into civilian politicians, albeit, of very different types. These societies illustrate the uncertainties of states newly achieving rapid economic growth after a record of economic mistakes and political turmoil in the recent past. Indeed, in the case of Thailand, these factors remain a part of the picture. And in the Philippines, the recent issue of President Ramos’ political future again illustrates the importance of leadership, even in a society where democratic institutions have a considerable legacy.

For these two societies, however, the broad economic course now seems clear. The path of economic openness will be pursued. Yet as the recent Thai crisis illustrates, economic undiscipline and weak, slipshod regulatory practices can exact a heavy price. In both cases, moreover, the odds favor a continuance of democratic politics but with recurrent crises.

In Thailand, the military will remain an important interest group. Another military coup would evoke widespread opposition, and hence, is only likely under extreme circumstances. Political instability, however, will be a periodic occurrence. Hence, here too, security in the most fundamental sense is a domestic problem, and despite variations, political institutions remain fragile, with a substantial gap also between formal and informal politics.

Fron Leninist States to Market Economies: China, Vietnam, and Laos

A fourth category of Asian nations are the reforming Leninist states, namely, China, Vietnam and Laos. China is especially important, given its massive size and lengthening economic and military reach. Several generalizations are in order.

First, the broad economic course being followed—one of increasing privatization, market orientation and external ties—is irreversible. Cyclical downturns are likely. Further, the state will continue to play an important economic role, with some portion of the economy under state ownership at least for the near future. But there is no road back to the old socialist order.

One should pay homage to the remarkable growth of the Chinese economy in the past eighteen years, and to the successes of the more recent past in Vietnam and Laos. At the same time, each of these societies will continue to face serious economic problems.

For China, the ailing state-owned enterprises, the crisis in financial institutions, the huge under- and unemployed rural work force, the west-east gap and the massive corruption are problems that will not be quickly or easily resolved. As recent events have shown, the current government must confront unrest among dismissed workers in the cities and peasants in the countryside rebelling against high taxes and corrupt local officials. These matters are far more serious at present than student unrest. Further, the quest for resources—energy, food and water especially—will tax the ability of those who lead this huge society. Thus, 21st Century China will be a major power with major problems.

In the political realm also, the balance-sheet is complex. The past is irrevocably gone. This is a time when third and fourth generation leaders must pursue a more collective leadership since no single individual can encompass total power. Similarly, power must be shared among center, region, province and locality. Decentralization—within limits—is a concomitant of economic growth.

China is not marching toward democracy despite such developments as local elections and a more assertive National People’s Congress. The Communist Party will continue to dominate the state and society, but Leninism is giving way begrudgingly to authoritarian-pluralism, as noted earlier. And the issue of whether a revitalized nationalism can serve as a substitute for a declining Marxism-Leninism in underwriting citizens’ loyalty to the state and party is among the most crucial questions. In any case, ideology is in decline despite the efforts of leaders.
In the realm of foreign policy, it might be noted that despite a degree of ideological similarity, Laos and especially Vietnam evidence a concern about the power of a rising China. Hence, the joy of being admitted to ASEAN was extensive. There is greater security when small states positioned next to big ones can be a part of a collective body.

### Failing Asian States: North Korea, Cambodia, and Myanmar

Finally, there are three East Asian societies that must be put in the category of failing states at present—North Korea, Cambodia and Myanmar. These are states that are either plagued with an highly deficient economic strategy, grave domestic cleavages of a political nature, or some combination of these factors.

Whether the immediate future for these states be conflict, collapse or gradual reform, they could easily constitute regional as well as domestic problems. Failed states often invite external involvement. Hence, the decision of the great majority of Asian nations to make efforts to assist these states in developmental terms rather than to shun them.

Let me now turn from the diversity of Asia to more generalized themes, seeking to assess future probabilities on a broader canvas. On the economic front, the prospects are generally favorable. With virtually no exceptions (even North Korea has timidly initiated changes), a broadly common economic strategy is in effect. The age of autarky and the quest for maximum self-reliance have ended. Consequently, internationalism along with intensified regionalism will advance in diverse forms. Its institutional aspects are already well known—ASEAN, APEC and at the global level, the WTO.

Even more important are the non-institutional forms of economic interdependence—the great financial flows, the transnational components in industrial production of all types and the swift emergence of diverse NETs.

Asia is far from having achieved the level of integration that marks the European Union, and that will continue to be true, given the much greater diversity existing. But compared to the 1960s, progress through such bodies as ASEAN and APEC has been remarkable. The march to an all-region free trade community may or may not be reached by 2020 as APEC has projected, but the economies of the region will certainly have moved in that direction.

On balance, the economic trends now signalled for the next century are favorable to the cause of peace. Intensive economic interaction will naturally continue to produce contentious issues, especially at the bilateral level, but for societies deeply interwoven, the costs of military conflict soar. One critical challenge, however, lies directly ahead, as noted earlier. Can serious environmental hazards and major resource needs—both generated by further economic growth and population increases—be handled effectively? This, not territorial or ideological matters, will constitute the central issue determining the degree of harmony or discord in our future world, with Asia being a crucial testing ground.

Fortunately, these are not zero-sum issues. Failure means that everyone loses; success benefits all, even if unequally.

To meet these issues, the role of scientists and technical experts in national and international policy-making must be greatly expanded. Further, surveillance of compliance must be pursued as rigorously as efforts to reach initial agreements.

Meanwhile, another challenge on the economic front will steadily rise in importance, namely, the capacity of nation-states to provide greater economic balance to the diverse classes and regions within their jurisdiction. Paradoxically perhaps, over time, serious inequities are tolerated less in a dynamic economy than in one mired in massive, uniform poverty.

### Politics of the Future

On the political front, East Asia presents a diverse scene as we have noted, but one uniform challenge must be faced. This region like the rest of the world is destined to confront the continued rise of three partially conflictual forces: internationalism, nationalism and communalism. Communalism is manifested within as well as outside the nation in the form of stronger ethnic identification; deeper affiliation with religion, especially fundamentalist religion; and/or primary allegiance to one’s local community. In each case, these are manifestations of the search for a more meaningful community at a time when a titanic global revolution is shaking everyone’s moorings.

Meanwhile, nationalism is resilient throughout Asia, whether as a substitute for slipping ideologies, a manifestation of resentment against perceived external abuses or inequalities, or a symbol of heightened pride and self confidence. Indeed, certain leaders seek to defend the absolute sovereignty of the nation-state in 19th Century terms, seemingly oblivious to the need to share sovereignty if the great issues of the 21st Century are to be properly handled. Whether nationalism takes relatively benign or militant forms will be one vital element in inter-state relations in the decades ahead.
In any case, East Asia will continue to live with diverse political systems, as has been noted, even though ideological barriers will continue to be appreciably reduced. Leninism will gradually give way to authoritarian-pluralism. Democracy will generally survive in those societies where it presently exists, but it is not guaranteed permanence, and retreats may take place where economic policies are mishandled or leaders decide to override fragile institutions.

On the international front, a combination of deep-seated cultural-ethnic prejudices, recent history, and major differences in power will render trust and cooperation difficult in certain settings. Northeast Asia in particular will require prodigious efforts in the decades ahead if a firm basis for cooperation is to be created, especially in the strategic realm.

A special problem existing in this sub-region is that of divided states or territories, legacy of World War II. The hostility between the two Koreas remains high despite recent modest advances toward dialogue. No one can predict the future of North Korea or the course of events on the Korean peninsula at this point.

At least five scenarios for the North must be kept in mind: early, swift collapse; gradual, irreversible disintegration with rising internal friction; minimal change sustained by tight military control; conflict on the part of a desperate elite; and an evolutionary pattern whereby the DPRK undergoes gradual changes and greater interaction with the region of which it is a part, making peaceful reunification a future prospect. While none of these scenarios can be ruled out, the second and fifth seem most possible at present, and all neighbors including the ROK are working toward the evolutionary goal.

Perhaps the Taiwan issue is more dangerous in the long run since it involves potential conflict between and among major powers. At present, while economic and cultural intercourse between China and Taiwan is steadily growing, political relations are at an impasse, and both parties are upgrading their military facilities.

Moreover, in a variety of ways, Taiwan is seeking to give its de facto independence greater strength and meaning. China stands by the “One Country, Two Systems” formula despite ample evidence that this formula is not acceptable to a majority of the Taiwan people. And political developments on Taiwan suggest that the Kuomintang is in trouble, with the possibility of a Democratic Progressive Party electoral victory at some point in the future, an event further complicating the scene since the DPP has been the historic advocate of independence despite recent modifications.

Thus, Taiwan is an issue that will require a combination of patience and resourcefulness on the part of everyone if a serious crisis is to be avoided. All other territorial issues can probably be handled through such means as joint development of resources since most involve islands and atolls in Pacific or South China Sea waters.

Meanwhile, the prevailing power structure in the Asia Pacific will slowly undergo changes. The United States will remain the predominant military power regionally as well as globally, setting the pace in terms of ultra-modern military technology—information technology, long-range weaponry and rapid deployment. Naturally, this technology will produce a change in the nature of military strategy, with long-range operations and swift movement replacing close-in force deployment. By the same token, distant areas involving civilian populations will represent front lines.

As noted earlier, the Asia Pacific nations other than the United States best equipped to pursue the ultra-modern strategic path are Japan and possibly South Korea, partly because both are closely connected militarily with the U.S. In the longer run, China is very likely to move in a similar direction although this will take a number of decades.

Asia will see a continuance of the present power imbalance, based on a strong U.S. strategic commitment coupled with its bilateral alliances with Japan, the ROK, and more loosely, the Philippines and Thailand. This situation, however, is not destined to be permanent. At some point, Russia will reenter Northeast Asia in strategic terms more formidable, thus adding another dimension to the scene. Japan will further develop its military modernization, hence, reach, but as noted earlier, will probably depend for influence firstly on its economic and technological strength. Such a decision, however, will depend upon the continuing credibility of the U.S. and the absence of a perceived threat.

Most importantly, China will be the rising military force in the region over time. The gamble of all other Asia Pacific nations for the near term at least will be that a combination of continuing domestic challenges and ever growing international economic ties will combine to maintain the Chinese pledge to live by the five principles of peaceful coexistence. To underwrite this gamble, however, every nation including the United States will pursue a combination of incentives and deterrents seeking to influence Beijing’s decision-making in the direction of the PRC leaders’ current commitments.

To the south, the ASEAN ten will present a stronger collective voice, one that will influence major power decisions and attitudes in certain cases. Moreover, multilateral mechanisms will be strengthened, operating along side bilateral alliances. As noted, ad hoc coalitions will be created on an issue-specific basis in an effort to deal with certain problems. And such bilateral alliances as continue will be increasingly flexible, permitting diverse lateral relationships, and moving from patron-client structures in the direction of partnership.

Finally, the general scene in the Asia Pacific will be enormously affected by whether and in what form the U.S. strategic commitment continues. Given its enormous stake in Asia, that commitment is very likely to remain strong, but much will depend upon two interwoven factors: the actions and attitude of Asian nations and the American domestic environment.
Let me conclude by raising a problem less frequently discussed, and one to which I briefly alluded earlier, namely, that of leadership. Despite the gradual strengthening of political institutions in Asia, underpinned by a legal structure, the role of leaders remains critical throughout the region, and elsewhere as well.

Yet never in history have the pressures on leaders been so intense. The problem is especially acute in democratic societies where the media plays such a powerful role in shaping public opinion and seems driven to feature every aspect of leaders’ private lives as well as their public performance. Consequently, the only political heroes at present are dead ones.

However, the most serious problem may lie in the nature of our age. Leaders today have vastly less time to make critical decisions than in earlier decades. If news is instant, so often are the demands to decide policies. Yet the complexity of most problems and issues make immediate decisions risky unless they are flexible and subject to frequent review.

In any case, if decisions, especially hazardous decisions, are to be accepted by the citizenry, a vastly more extensive educational process is required, especially in a society like the United States. Top leaders must play the role of teachers, providing citizens with greater in-depth knowledge of key international issues and the intimate relationship between their domestic well-being and the harmonious development of the world with which they are increasingly interdependent. Few leaders, including our own, are playing this role adequately today.

Yet when one balances the positive and the negative, there is ample reason for cautious optimism regarding the future of the Asia Pacific in the century ahead. A combination of factors makes war among and between the titans increasingly improbable, notwithstanding the likelihood of violence at lesser levels.

• Continuing advances in science and technology offer hope for advances in environmental preservation and resource enhancement if nations and people have the will to pursue the new opportunities.

• Economic strategies offering rapid growth are now widely pursued and while excesses have produced serious crises in some instances, lessons are being learned.

• Cultures will differ but less and less in absolute terms as all societies increasingly display an openness to external influences. Ours will not be one world, but neither will it be a series of separate, conflictual civilizations.

Let me conclude where I began. In conceptualizing the future, we must abandon extremities and learn to deal with complexity. And in complexity, there lies hope.