
LEE KUAN YEW: THE GRAND MASTER'S INSIGHTS ON CHINA, THE UNITED STATES, AND THE WORLD, INTERVIEWS AND SELECTIONS

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"The present world is as full of promise as of perils."

-Lee Kuan Yew

Unique it is for the leader of a small, resource-poor city to merit such worldwide admiration (while engendering no small amount of controversy) as Lee Kuan Yew. When Lee passed away in March of this year at the age of 91, President Obama called him "[a] visionary who led his country from Singapore's independence in 1965 to build one of the most prosperous countries in the world today," adding that "he was a devoted public servant and a remarkable leader." Indeed, when one thinks of a head of government of a developing country whose rule lasts for thirty years, the first image to come to mind is generally not that of a contemplative, introspective, measured individual who believes wholeheartedly in capitalism, as much as a controlling autocrat bolstered by a cult of personality and environment of fear. Lee was not immune to the latter accusations, but he also certainly enjoyed and brought to bear (to the ultimate benefit of Singapore's transformation) the former set of qualities, as highlighted in this – one of the last books to be published about him during his lifetime. This text, compiled by Harvard professor Graham Allison, former Ambassador to India Robert Blackwill, and current RAND staffer Ali Wyne, presents a compilation of passages written and stated by Lee, the former long-time Prime Minister of Singapore whose leadership transformed the smallest country in Southeast Asia into what Henry Kissinger calls "the intellectual and technical center in the Asia-Pacific."

Formatted as if it were an interview with Lee, the work draws from over sixty years of Lee's speeches and writings in a way that attempts to answer some complicated questions the United States is likely to face for the remainder of this century. It poses hypothetical questions about the future of geopolitics and foreign relations, and presents germane (though spliced-together) insights from Lee's many speeches, writings, and interviews in an attempt to answer them. The topics covered range from the respective futures of China and the U.S., as well as the relations between those nations. India, Islamic extremism, economic growth—both domestic and as a function of globalization, and the future of democracy itself are also discussed at-length. As the editors explain, the purpose of the

book is not biographical, nor is it a vehicle to look back on the last fifty years, nor Lee's role during them. "Rather, our focus is the future and the specific challenges the United States will face during the next quarter century." The work's intended readership includes high-level policymakers, and can almost serve as a ready-reference for Lee quotes or sound-bites on the several topics it covers. An *Art of War*-style manual for geopolitics it is not, but it nevertheless can serve as an introductory guide to Lee's worldly and learned vantage point of the complexities of the challenges faced by governments and societies today.

As prevailing themes throughout the text, Lee's pragmatism and affinity for Darwinist theories are both very clear. "The acid test" of success, he says, "is in performance, not promises." At the macro level, "It is only when people are encouraged to give their best that society progresses," but individuals themselves also "must have a desire to improve," not merely to gain, as "welfare and subsidies destroy the motivation to perform and succeed." He cautions against "the unwisdom of powerful intellects," who try to theorize their way to better systems of social justice than what economic evolution has wrought. And he argues that different cultures need to take different paths to democracy and the free market, all at once admiring America for being a nation of "high ideals" while criticizing the United States for trying to impose human rights on countries with cultures or climates he thinks are rightly incompatible with tenets of that doctrine, including China. His own Singapore, he says, is "in no position to be fussy about high-minded principles."

I. CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES: COMPETITION AND CO-EXISTENCE

As portrayed in this book, Lee's assessment of the future of China focuses heavily on economic factors—projection of (at least conventional) military force is deemphasized relative to the "peaceful rise" strategy (which Lee calls a contradiction in terms); social-cultural evolution is barely touched upon, but for China's "reawakened sense of destiny" and desire to regain its former imperial status.¹ China's leaders, Lee observes, "operate on the basis of consensus and have a long view,"² and the peaceful rise will require up to fifty years of China focusing on educating its next generations in science and technology, economics, business, and the English language (*not* liberal arts, he specifies) so it can catch up with the rest of the world and convert to a market-based system. Even though the envisioned changes will make China's current system of governing obsolete, it will never be a western-style democracy exercising the concept of one person, one vote in a multiparty system, which he calls a "never-ending process of auctions" that accrues debts to be paid for by future generations. "A government which is open to the vagaries of the ballot box," Lee cautioned, "is a government which is already weakened before it starts to govern."

According to Lee, the peaceful rise strategy requires both internal stability and external peace, which results in China

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being more concerned with diplomacy than force. He sees the danger of a military conflict as low, but appears to favor continued U.S. military presence in the Pacific as a stabilizing force, observing, “A military presence does not need to be used to be useful.” Chinese technology does not allow China to confront the United States militarily, Lee says. Rather, China’s greatest advantage is economic influence in terms of overall GDP (now the world’s largest economy in terms of purchasing price parity), if not in per-capita measures—they have the manpower to do things cheaply, and the country presents an incredibly large market for imports. With respect to the latter, China recognizes its position as a de-facto monopsony—the buying power of its 1.3 billion-strong population will be a driver of global markets, Lee believed, and China can flex its muscles and impose sanctions simply by denying others access.

Although this assessment of China’s economic-centered ambitions has been widely shared,³ it bears noting that the Chinese People’s Liberation Army is also currently undergoing a Goldwater-Nichols-scale reformation to allow for broader projections of force. Ensuring its military development is also noticed, China has recently engaged in several tests of its neighbors’ and the United States’ willingness to counter its military posturing, such as blocking Philippine exports in 2012, declaring an “Air Defense Identification Zone” in 2013, and testing its newest stealth jet during President Obama’s visit in 2014, all of which emphasize its continued development of military capabilities. From China’s historical vantage point, explains Robert Kaplan in his recent book, *Asia’s Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific*, “Beijing’s dominance of [its local geography] is altogether natural.” Thus it is perhaps for both economic and physical security reasons that Lee says China’s neighbors “want the U.S. to stay engaged in the Asia-Pacific so that they are not hostages to China.” Kaplan notes a Vietnamese saying that a distant water cannot put out a nearby fire. Likewise, former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell has characterized the desires of China’s neighbors to have good relationships with both China and the United States as “not as much geostrategy as simply geography.”

Toward that end, Lee says the U.S. should have established a free-trade area in Asia thirty years ago. Without a free trade agreement, Lee said, “Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and the ASEAN⁴ countries will be integrated into China’s economy—an outcome to be avoided.” Lee went so far as to say that, if the United States were to “give up” its position as the superior power in the Pacific, that “would diminish America’s role throughout the world.” Although Lee thought the United States cannot stop China’s rise, and eventually will have to share its preeminent position with the Chinese, he saw as a “fundamental choice” that the U.S. would either have to engage and integrate, or isolate China. He apparently advised the former course, opining that greater investment would promote liberalization in China, and observed that previous threats to its ‘most favored nation’ trade status were counterproductive. He foresaw a relationship that is both cooperative and competitive, noting that contest need not lead to conflict. According to Assistant Secretary Campbell, the Chinese themselves “recognize that [the U.S.] want[s] to have the best possible relationship,” even if, “this is going to be

among the most complex relationships the United States will ever have.” As part of his long view, Lee advised that, while making China’s economic system compatible with the rest of the world, “Make sure that the mindset of the younger generation is not one of hostility . . . Make them feel that they are stakeholders . . . They have to be imbued with the right values and attitudes to meet the future with humility and responsibility,” even though doing so will not make China democratic.

Lee believed that the most significant twenty-first century growth would occur in the Pacific, and President Obama credits Lee with being instrumental in his “pivot to Asia” strategy, since rebranded a “rebalance.” And Lee cautioned that U.S. presence must be permanent: “If the United States wants to substantially affect the strategic evolution of Asia, it cannot come and go.” The most vivid result of this thinking is the much debated (but, as of this writing, still secret) twelve-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which does not include China. Although the TPP would be the largest trade deal in a generation, the total population of the twelve included countries amounts to less than 60% of that of China alone. China’s economy is also 60% of the combined size of the twelve included countries.

Its need to engage China and the rest of Asia in particular ways notwithstanding, Lee unambiguously recognized the U.S. as the world’s only superpower, a fact he attributes to “its advances in science and technology and their contribution to its economic and military might.” Foreshadowing the point central to Brookings Senior Fellow Robert Kagan’s 2014 essay *Superpowers Don’t Get to Retire*, Lee believed that “no major issue concerning international peace and stability can be resolved without U.S. leadership.” “The world has developed because of the stability America established,” Lee said. Nevertheless, “There are no historical precedents on how to maintain peace and stability and to ensure cooperation in a world of 160 nation-states,” and America’s debt compromises its global leadership, and risks its ability to deploy if and when necessary. The last economic crisis, which caused China to be slower in opening its capital markets, also put the U.S. in a “bumpy patch,” but Lee saw the main strengths of American culture as creativity, resilience, and innovative spirit. Lee revered the value of what traditionally has been called the “Protestant work ethic” as an essential “national ethos” that is a driving force of economic competitiveness.⁵

Just as individuals’ innovation and initiative are central to Lee’s vision of socioeconomic success, allowing a society to realize its potential in that regard is the proper role of the government. “A clean, efficient, rational, and predictable government is a competitive advantage,” Lee would say, and adhering to the rule of law ensures stability and predictability. “The business of a government,” Lee said, is to “make firm decisions so that there can be certainty and stability in the affairs of the people. The art of government is utilizing to the maximum the limited resources at the country’s disposal.” Ultimately, however, “The government can create a setting in which people can live happily and succeed and express themselves, but finally it is what people do with their lives that determines economic success or failure.” Harnessing economic growth potential, Lee believed, requires cultivating talent and creativity, rule of law, infrastructure, investment credibility, and knowledge of the English language

as “the language of business, science, diplomacy, and academia.”

He worried about a “breakdown of civil society” in American culture, however. “It has a lot to do with the erosion of the moral underpinnings of a society and the diminution of personal responsibility.” Lee believed western sociologists have created a culture of entitlement by attributing “hardship and failure” to “flaws in the economic system” rather than “the individual person’s character,”⁶ and that populism-driven politics both allows special interests to thrive and defeats self-reliance. “Liberals actively encourage people to demand entitlements with no sense of shame.” Instead, creativity, innovation, and a willingness to take risks and embrace new, diverse ideas are critical to developing and maintaining strength in a globalized world of decentralized economic power. Lee observed that the Internet makes competition for goods and services truly global—there is no more local competition when everybody can compete with anyone around the world, and space and time are no longer relevant to the flow of information and ideas. Lee thought that even “regionalism” is merely disguised protectionism in today’s globalized world. “There is no viable alternative to global integration,” Lee said.

But as important as technology is, there is a growing need to “attract[] talent” to keep a leading technological edge. “Human talent is at present the most scarce and valuable resource for creating wealth in the knowledge economy.” “The economy,” Lee reminds, “is driven by new knowledge, new discoveries in science and technology . . . [S]o while the scholar is still the greatest factor in economic progress, he will be so only if he uses his brains—not in studying the great books, classical texts, and poetry, but in capturing and discovering new knowledge.” In a poignant TEDx talk, world champion magician Jason Latimer frames this dilemma in a slightly different way—because the Internet only spits out the knowledge we’ve put into it, if today’s students and researchers take for granted that the extent of our knowledge is available online, curiosity will be cabined by what is already known (or, worse, what is *believed*), discovery will cease, and the repackaging of old knowledge will be confused with new thinking.⁷

Lee offered a way to counter such dangerous stagnation of learning and creativity: “We must develop and nurture our talent so that innovation and creativity will be integral to education and training.”⁸ He also saw it important to be an “all-embracing society,” which he said the United States is, and China is not. This includes welcoming immigrants who bring talents from abroad, as well as ideas from cultures not one’s own: “Those whose cultures help them to absorb and embrace talented people of different cultures to be part of the new corporate culture will have an advantage.”⁹ Even so, integration and assimilation on a social level are of paramount importance. As noted above, Lee believed wholeheartedly in the English language as being a unifying force in international discourse, and therefore critical to Singapore’s success. And in 1997, Lee said that “the fact that the American state [historically] insisted on an adequate command of the American version of English before accepting the immigrants as citizens of the state ensure that unifying force of one common language in the people.” But contemporary political correctness has led us away from

that and, in Lee’s view, “Multiculturalism will destroy America.”

II. ON INDIA

After several chapters dealing largely with China and U.S.-China relations, the book shifts to one chapter on India, the moral of which takes a cue from the classical liberal thinking of J.S. Mill—if the nation’s culture continues systemically to depress and marginalize significant portions of its population (in this case, via the caste system), it can never hope to fulfill its full economic potential. India, Lee says, has “no sense of nurturing its best to rise to the top.” It has blurred the distinction between welfare and populism, its bureaucrats are regulators rather than facilitators, its institutions are imbued with corruption, and its decentralized system of government effectively turns the country into thirty-two separate nations and fails to meet the demands of a country in need of significant reforms. Despite its instability and corruption, Lee assessed that “India’s system of democracy and rule of law gives it a long-term advantage over China, although in the early phases, China has the advantage of faster implementation of its reforms.” Indeed, the relationship between the world’s two most populous countries is complex. Lee says India’s not wanting to compete with China led to its previously rejecting offers of free trade agreements, while at the same time negotiating with other neighbors. Lee noted the balance of U.S. relations with India also prompted China to position naval forces in the Indian Ocean to protect its supplies of oil from the Middle East and commodities from Africa. Lee also viewed China’s development of ports in Myanmar and Pakistan as a counter to American influence in the region. Indeed, China’s recent commitment to invest \$46 billion in energy and infrastructure projects in Pakistan would seem to represent its doubling-down in this regard, as the negotiating parties of the TPP continue without them.

III. ISLAMIC EXTREMISM AND GLOBAL SECURITY

But, for all the importance of U.S. relations to countries like China and India to the global economy and geostrategy, Lee observes in a chapter on Islamic extremism that “[t]he big divide is no longer between communist and democratic countries, or between West and East. Now it is between Muslim terrorists and the U.S., Israel, and their supporters. A secondary battle is between militant Islam and non-militant modernist Islam.” He says, “The war against terrorism will be long and arduous.” Force must be used to combat Islamic terrorists, but it is critical to recognize that the use of force only addresses the tip of the problem—Lee says it’s the preachers who have to be persuaded. Thus, his thesis on this haunting generational problem—only moderate Muslims can defeat Muslim extremists.

“A worldwide coalition is necessary to fight the fires of hatred . . . When moderate Muslim governments . . . feel comfortable associating themselves openly with a multilateral coalition against Islamist terrorism, the tide of battle will turn against the extremists.” This has happened somewhat in the case of the terrorist group currently calling itself the “Islamic State,” a/k/a ISIS/ISIL/IS, where the United States is part of a nominally sixty-nation coalition, plus the European Union and, perhaps most importantly, the Arab League. And pervasive anti-American sentiment has reportedly ebbed in Pakistan

recently, due largely to a moderate middle-class's growing realization that the growth of ISIS and continued Taliban attacks targeting civilians constitute larger threats than drone strikes meant to eliminate those threats. But this is not to say "the tide" Lee spoke of has turned. Most Arab Spring countries have seen spikes in extremism, and U.S. withdrawals from Iraq and Afghanistan have left voids in counterinsurgency and force protection capabilities that have been exploited by domestic and foreign fighters, alike.

It is without a hint of irony about the Islamic world having once profited greatly from globalization that Lee notes, "militant Islam feeds off the insecurities and alienation that globalization generates among the less successful." Notwithstanding some Japanese tactics in World War II and those of Vietnamese Communists during the Vietnam War, Lee says Islamic extremists are unique in the history of civilization as a "group of people willing to destroy themselves to inflict damage on others." Further, the sheer scale makes the threat unlike any other: "Al Qaeda-style terrorism is new and unique because it is global." Lee hints at the sense of borderless brotherhood among those with "shared fanatical zealotry"—those who perceive divine inspiration from like-minded and supposedly similarly-situated derelicts anywhere in the world. The globalized world allows for sympathizers to admire the violence from afar—voyeurs, world-wide looky-lous, and sadistic narcissists combine for global terrorist theater. In that vein, Lee says that "unless militant groups in the Arab countries and Islamic theocracies are seen to fail . . . militant groups in the non-Arab Muslim world will continue to recruit extremists. . . . [T]he U.S. and its Western allies must ensure that Islamic militancy is defeated by economic, military, and other means to clearly demonstrate to non-Arab Muslims that fanaticism and militancy have no future." "Successive failures in the Muslim world will show that the theocratic state, like the communist state, is a mirage."

But the corollary to that notion is what happens if the terrorists are perceived to succeed. For example, like many others, Lee predicted that:

The costs of leaving Iraq unstable would be high. Jihadists everywhere would be emboldened . . . and a Taliban victory in Afghanistan or Pakistan would reverberate throughout the Muslim world. It would influence the grand debate among Muslims on the future of Islam. A severely retrograde form of Islam would be seen to have defeated modernity twice: first the Soviet Union, then the United States. There would be profound consequences, especially in the campaign against terrorism.

Lee observed, "Where the Vietnamese were content to see the Americans leave . . . Islamic militants will pursue departing Americans to all corners of the globe." In fact, in 2007, Lee stated, "If the United States leaves Iraq prematurely, jihadists everywhere will be emboldened to take the battle to Washington . . . Even worse, if civil war breaks out in Iraq, the conflict will destabilize the whole Middle East, as it will draw in Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey." The United States proceeded to withdraw combat troops from Baghdad in June 2009. The Arab Spring then began in December 2010; the fighting that grew into the still-ongoing civil war in Syria

began in 2011; and ISIS grew from what President Obama alluded to as al-Qaeda's "JV team" into a force warranting the above-mentioned sixty-nation coalition to combat it, while inspiring increasing numbers of loyalists within the United States.

Lee did not envision the Islamic extremists "winning," by which he meant "able to impose their extremist system." But he recognized their ability to induce fear and insecurity. Escalating concern about homegrown terrorists not only seems warranted under these circumstances, but appears to be bearing itself out in increasingly frequent examples. A recent Heritage Foundation report found that 53 of the 64 terrorist plots against the U.S. homeland that it counted between September 11, 2001 and March 2015 "were plotted or perpetrated by homegrown extremists."

And amidst all the gravity of the worldwide extremist and terrorist concerns originating from the Middle East, Lee nevertheless believed that it is Iran's nuclear program that is "the challenge that the world is most likely to bungle." It is hard to guess exactly what Lee would have thought of the framework agreed upon in April, and whether he'd see pushing back the self-imposed deadlines on the multinational negotiations as reflecting genuine resolve to come to a workable agreement (assuming any agreement allowing for a nuclear Iran could be workable), or merely as a stalling tactic.

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership was a significant topic for Lee—both with respect to individuals trying to lead their citizens (or fiduciaries) to greater prosperity, and global leadership by nations, particularly that of the United States:

America is a great nation not just because of its power and wealth, but mainly because it is a nation moved by high ideals. Only the elevating power of her idealism can explain the benign manner in which America has exercised its enormous power since the end of World War II and the magnanimity and generosity with which it has shared its wealth to rebuild a more prosperous world.

But Lee also saw limits to the applicability of those same ideas in other settings. "Americans believe their ideas are universal—the supremacy of the individual and free, unfettered expression. But they are not—never were." As noted earlier, he especially cautioned against an over-emphasis on human rights, advising that Americans should be "more understanding of the cultural realities of China."

Perhaps this explains what the *Washington Post* once described as the Obama Administration's "timid approach to confronting human rights abuses." Despite voicing concerns about China's human right record and occasionally throwing provocative jabs like taking steps to rename the street in front of the Chinese embassy after jailed dissident and Nobel winner Liu Xiaobo, the reality is that the United States appears to accept China's refusal to reform and institute human rights protections. Likewise, although the recent effort to normalize relations with Cuba included requirements that Havana release several political prisoners, the names of those persons were kept private, and independent groups therefore could not determine whether the Cubans were actually releasing individuals widely

believed to be held solely for political purposes. And as the anniversary of Boko Haram's kidnapping of the 276 "Chibok girls" in Nigeria passed with only a Twitter hashtag to show for the effort to recover them, many have found cause to question the current state of American leadership in the world.

After the kidnapping, Peggy Noonan was one of many who wrote that the United States should have taken military action to rescue the girls. She reasoned that the operation would have only had to be of limited scope and short duration, not merely for rhetorical purposes to quell the resulting diplomatic hullabaloo, but because the goal was predetermined and straightforward. But most of all, she opined, the action should have occurred quickly, quietly, and without boasting about it. The most effective way to project American power, she said, is to act decisively in defense of high principles, and then withdraw again once we have righted the wrong we sought to correct. Certain tenets of international law aside, Noonan argued that all civilized people would have been able to agree that we did right, and for the right reasons.¹⁰

Edward Luce in the *Financial Times* goes so far as to write that the Chinese see Obama as a weak leader and expect "empty gestures" from him, such as last year's espionage indictments against five Chinese nationals. The *Washington Post's* editorial board disagreed, saying the Administration "should be commended" for that action. On the issue of the 2014 agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, *The Economist* wrote that the U.S. sacrificed far more than China did; others opined that was to be expected given the two countries' respective states of development, and that the negotiations nevertheless represented progress on global environmental issues. These differing assessments about the current Administration's leadership, or lack thereof, begs a question for Lee not addressed in this book: to what extent current American foreign policy truly reflects, or ought to reflect high principle, rather than base pragmatism? Perhaps another loaded follow-on was also warranted: as to either our foreign or domestic policies, has the United States measured up to Lee's previously mentioned charge of "the business of" government? Our endlessly complex tax code, ever-growing library of regulations, budget sequestration, a recent history of politics trumping policymaking to the point of perceived zero-sum gains among partisan actors, all should give us pause.

V. CONCLUSION

Although the book as a whole conveys some sense of Lee's complex views on the interrelationships between order, stability, rule of law, economic growth, and the social-political underpinnings of each, it often does not delve into the implications or nuances of Lee's observations. For example, Lee presents a somewhat uncomfortable, if pragmatic hypothesis that without order as a precondition, it is impossible for a nation to realize high-minded ideals. A reader might agree with that proposition as a singular statement, but also understand that the rule of law in such an order-driven system is wholly dependent on the good will of he who maintains the order, and his bureaucratic acumen in the peaceful transfer of power. Otherwise, order is merely an end in its own or, worse, a means of perpetuating the wealth and power of he who maintains it, which returns a society to a

quasi-Hobbesian state of nature in which the strong exploit the weak for perpetuity. Perhaps recognizing that, Lee counsels the wise and judicious use of the government's tremendous powers to promote some level of fairness reflecting a "golden mean" between competition and cooperation within a society, which would vary with time and moral values. But the book does not draw an obvious link between these two concepts that helps the reader understand how Lee's thoughts about discrete issues coagulate into the nuanced philosophy that led to his rise to be among the most consulted of the world's leaders.

As such, the biggest shortcoming of the book is the lack of context conveyed in the quoted snippets, which leads to continuity gaps and inconsistencies that a reader cannot determine whether they result from instances where Lee contradicted himself, or merely reflect an evolution of his thinking during the sixty-one years the editors pull from for this compilation. At one point, Lee calls himself a liberal; elsewhere he says he's conservative. On one page he is quoted as saying, "It is the duty of leaders to instill confidence in the people so that they will stand up to be counted;" on another, he says "Machiavelli was right" (presumably about it better for a leader to be feared than loved). In some passages he shows great reverence for the United States, but he also opines "I do not believe the American system is either desirable or affordable" —the editors do not make clear whether he is speaking of our system of markets, welfare, democracy, or another subject touched upon elsewhere. He promotes wide exchanges of ideas and finding inspiration beyond one's borders, but decries multiculturalism. He expresses concern about income disparity, while observing that "equality of incomes gives no incentive to the resourceful and the industrious to outperform and be competitive." And one comment made with respect to immigration policy and attracting migrants to gain an economic advantage, that "more active government involvement in encouraging or discouraging procreation may be necessary," is left completely without context, explanation, or follow-up.

There are also several passages that quote Lee projecting political or economic developments on time horizons that had lapsed before the book was published. For example, Lee is quoted as saying in 2007 that, "India probably has three to five years to fix its infrastructure;" the book includes no indication about whether Lee believed it was on-track to doing so at the time of his last interview cited, in December 2011.

To be sure, this book will arm policymakers with plenty of Lee's quotes, but out of context it is doubtful the volume will be able to prove to be much guidance in the actual art of policymaking. And because it is somewhat a book of quotations, readers are bound to different interpretations about what Lee meant or would have thought about various developments. For readers predisposed to thinking that President Obama is a good leader and Obamacare was a great effort despite public opposition, they can quote Lee as saying that a leader "must paint his vision of their future to his people, then translate that vision into policies which he must convince the people are worth supporting, and finally galvanize them to help him in their implementation." For those who think the President lacked a coherent vision from the get-go, they can point to Lee's observation that, "One person, one vote is the most dif-

difficult form of government. From time to time, the results can be erratic. People are sometimes fickle. They get bored with stable, steady improvements in life, and in a reckless moment, they vote for a change for change's sake."

There is at least one area where the book is unambiguous, however: it does not have a happy ending for those who champion the broadest sense of American exceptionalism, in that Lee envisioned the United States as having to share its preeminent global status with China, and is somewhat unsatisfying in its lack of concrete answers to the series of vexing questions it poses. But perhaps that should be expected - a foreign leader who rose to prominence in another sphere of influence who proved tremendously effective at drawing from the strengths of the diverse cultures that comprise his polyglot constituency, is bound to candid acknowledgement of others' shortcomings and recognize the need to adapt broad principles to specific circumstances. In Singapore, Lee rooted out the corruption that is endemic to much of the rest of Asia, and was able to quell generations-long rivalries bet Singapore's three chief ethnic groups—Chinese, Malays, and Indians. He made that country, in one observer's words, "efficient beyond words," and molded a citizenry that takes great pride in their government and aspires to government service, rather than merely coveting the authority to exercise government power. This contrasts with a modern American system burdened by regulations, and hampered by a preoccupation with racial differences and political correctness that overshadows what should be common goals for a prosperous and harmonious future. Regardless of whether one agrees with Lee on any particular point, the remarkable impact of Lee's vision and leadership clearly has proven to be more significant than others' hope and change.

Endnotes

1 "Where are the protesters of Tiananmen now?" he asks rhetorically. "They are irrelevant." Although Lee may have been challenged on this point at the height of the Hong Kong protests last year, one might expect that he would have looked at those protesters' failure to affect material change as reinforcing it. Indeed, in a 1994 interview with Fareed Zakaria that appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, Lee went so far as to argue that success of the Tiananmen protesters would have effectively ruined China. "Let us assume that the students had carried the day at Tiananmen and they had formed a government. The same students who were at Tiananmen went to France and America. They've been quarreling with each other ever since. What kind of China would they have today? Something worse than the Soviet Union."

2 Lee is quoted as being "impressed by" China's current leader, Xi Jinping, who, Lee says, has had a hard life. *Forbes* listed Xi as #3 on its list of the world's most powerful people in both 2013 and 2014, behind Vladimir Putin (#1) and Barack Obama (#2). *Forbes* notes Xi may be "the most powerful Chinese ruler since Mao Zedong." <http://www.forbes.com/profile/xi-jinping/?list=powerful-people>

3 For example, Senator John McCain made statements to that effect at the Foreign Policy Initiative's 2011 conference.

4 Association of Southeast Asian Nations, whose membership consists of Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

5 See also Niall Ferguson, *CIVILIZATION: THE WEST AND THE REST* (Penguin Books, 2012); Blaine Harden, *ESCAPE FROM CAMP 14* (observing that "South Korea's obsession with achievement has paid astonishing dividends. . . ." South Korea's Protestants make up 24% of that country's population.).

6 Lee's point on economic entitlement arguably extends into other areas of evolving norms. The book quotes Lee as saying, in 1984, that, "Because American officials release secrets, that is supposed to be the 'in' thing. It shows

that yours is a free society where if any ministers or courts suppress the truth you feel it is your duty to leak it to the opposition. That is something new, and it is not proven. So when you tamper around with the fundamentals of society . . . the effects are in the next, and often after the next, generation." One might ask if Lee, in effect, predicted the rise of leaks based on the narcissistic self-righteous indignation of low-level functionaries like Bradley Manning and Edward Snowden, a phenomenon perhaps best explained by the development of a political-legal culture more permissive of leaks, combined with an explosion of technology proliferating information more widely than ever, and a generation partial to work-life balance over honorable hard and purposeful work. See also n. 9, *infra*. For a discussion of a parallel generational shift with respect to individuals' behavior and privacy, see Adam R. Pearlman and Erick S. Lee, *National Security, Narcissism, Voyeurism, and Kylo: How Intelligence Programs and Social Norms are Affecting the Fourth Amendment*, 2 TEX. A&M L. REV. (forthcoming 2015).

7 Jason Latimer, *Seeing Beyond the Illusion of Knowledge*, TEDx Wall Street 2013, available at <http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/Seeing-Beyond-the-Illusion-of-K;search%3Atag%3A%22tedxwallstreet%22>

8 Perhaps ironically, Lee observed that it is easy to get a "blank mind to take in knowledge and become trainable." "To get literate and numerate minds to be more innovative, to be more productive, is not easy. It requires a mindset change, a different set of values." As illustrated in the following two examples, this principle can work on two different levels – both with respect to general education, as one might suspect is what Lee was most directly referencing, as well as specific knowledge. As to the former, the "millennials" are the undoubtedly the most highly-educated generation ever, but they prioritize work-life balance over work ethic. To be sure, Lee also understood the value of working smarter, not necessarily harder – workers "must be enterprising and innovative, always seeking new ways of doing the job, to create the extra value, the extra edge," he said, but there can be little doubt that the highly educated millennials are likely not as "trainable" in the way Lee meant it as those who begin with potential and desire, but not preconceived notions about how the world does or should work. Nevertheless, the second example illustrates the tension inherent in the previous point - Anatoli Tarasov refused to watch videos of western hockey teams when developing the Soviet Union's indomitable hockey program. Instead, he created a style of play cabined only by rule books and his imagination, rather than being patterned off of how others played the game. This would seem to be a prime example of an otherwise educated man's discipline (even courage) not to use available resources that might prepare him for an assigned task, in a way that ultimately allows him to innovate in his field. To be sure, such a tact is not risk-free proposition. But one of the things Lee admired about the United States is our "frontier society" - an entrepreneurial culture that sees risk and failure as natural outcomes in the search for success.

9 On the business level, Lee said, "Corporations that get their ideas from only one culture will lose out in innovation." That American companies take the most (128) spots on the 2014 Fortune Global 500 list, perhaps is anecdotal support for Lee's valuation of diversity, to the extent American companies tend to put into practice Lee's "all-embracing" approach. But it's also worth noting that, as insular as Chinese society is, that country takes the #2 spot, with 95 companies.

10 Peggy Noonan, *Bring Back the Girls – Quietly: America Has Forgotten How to Exercise Power without Swagger*, WALL ST. J., May 15, 2014. Noonan's conclusions echo the United Nation's determination that NATO's 1999 intervention in Kosovo was "illegal but legitimate."

