

2009 COLVIN VILLIERS ORATION

The Challenges of Our Time

*"Everybody knows that the dice are loaded.
Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed.
Everybody knows the war is over.
Everybody knows the good guys lost.
Everybody knows the fight was fixed:
The poor stay poor, the rich get rich.
That's how it goes. Everybody knows."*

- Leonard Cohen

Paul Monk
Victoria Barracks
21 March 2009

Good afternoon, Major General Alexander, Group Captain Story, ladies and gentlemen. When I consider that previous speakers to have delivered this address at your conference have included a Supreme Court Judge and a sitting Federal Treasurer, I feel very much honoured to have been invited to stand in their place. I am reassured by the thought that their knowledge of military medicine was, in all probability, as modest as my own.

It was Group Captain John Colvin of the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve and Surgeon Captain Jim Villiers of the Royal Australian Navy Reserve who, with the support of Prince Henry's Hospital, conceived the idea of this annual conference. Their primary aim was to bring you together to discuss the state of military medicine. Their secondary aim was to promote shared understanding between the services. This is the second Colvin Villiers Oration and it is a privilege, indeed, to have been asked to deliver it. I have called it *'The Challenges of our Time'*. I hope that it will make some contribution toward a shared understanding among you of the context in which military medicine will need to be practised in the years ahead.

In standing here, I am reminded of the time, some fifteen years ago, almost to the day, when I took over the China desk at the Defence Intelligence Organization and was informed that the next day the Surgeon General would be coming in, with his SO, for a briefing from me on Chinese military medicine. I should mention that, at that juncture, there had been no-one manning the China desk for six months and I had inherited a pile of Secret Intelligence reports literally a foot high that had never been read.

I went to the vault, where our files were stored – and which I had put into tolerable order some years before, by imposing the Defence Intelligence

Thesaurus on a shambolic archive; something I wryly describe in the preface to my book, *Thunder from the Silent Zone: Rethinking China*. I soon discovered that there simply was no file on Chinese military medicine. Was this surprising? Well, given that the number of DIO analysts assigned to work on China had declined steadily over the preceding decade from twenty to nil, it could hardly be regarded as *especially* surprising. It was, let me assure you, far from being the only topic that had been neglected in that time.

What was I to do? The Surgeon General was about to visit Beijing and wanted to know what he should ask his Chinese counterparts. Could I help him at all? Not much, I thought, but it was never my style to bluff, so I waited until he arrived the next morning with his SO, took them into my small office and, sitting with my back to a map of the military regions of China, confessed that I had just taken over the desk and did not have a file on the subject. I immediately added, however, that were I going to Beijing and wanting to talk military medicine with the Chinese I would begin by asking them what problems they had encountered with field hospitals and military medicine in their brief but bloody war with Vietnam, in 1979.

Before either responded to this suggestion, the SO put me at ease by asking ingenuously, with reference to the map behind me, “Are those all the provinces of China?” “Ah! No!” I replied evenly. “Those are the *military regions* of China.” The lack of pretension on either side was evident and we proceeded to have a perfectly sensible discussion about the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War and the kinds of questions one might put to the Chinese in 1994. An hour or so later, my visitors left, apparently quite satisfied. This was confirmed later, when I received a personal letter from the Surgeon General thanking me for the briefing, saying it had enabled him, in Beijing to get off to a good start and that the visit had been very successful.

I tell that little story because I am in no position to say anything meaningful to you this afternoon about *military medicine*, but I do hope that what I have to say will prove useful to you as a kind of background to your own thinking about *the challenges you face* and the conversations you will have with one another concerning the environment in which your work, now and in the foreseeable future, actually takes place. It is that larger picture that I have been asked to address.

Those of you in this room will all have been mature professionals when, less than a generation ago, the Berlin Wall was dismantled and the Soviet Union tumbled into what the Marxists had so long and so haughtily termed ‘the dustbin of history’. Ever since the relatively innocent years of the Second International, before the First World War began in 1914, they had fondly imagined they would soon be casting capitalist economics and ‘bourgeois’ democracy into this dustbin. Instead, twenty years ago this year, the Communist bloc itself melted away. Many of us hoped that now a liberal democratic global order would rapidly emerge. Francis Fukuyama went so far as to hail what he dubbed ‘the end of history’.

However, history was far from ended, as we now know. Let’s recall some of the major developments that have occurred in the past twenty years to jolt us out of such complacent hopes as that espoused by Fukuyama:

- The irruption of global Islamic jihad, in the form of non-state terrorism; most spectacularly with the 11 September 2001 assault on America;

- The contentious military measures undertaken – in Afghanistan and Iraq – to root out the training grounds and break the self-confidence of such terrorism;
- The widening proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with India and Pakistan becoming nuclear powers, North Korea defying the NPT, withdrawing from it and finally announcing its nuclear status with an odd, pint sized nuclear test; and Iran looking ominously close to completing nuclear weapons, with very serious implications for the Middle East and the global oil market that is centered on it;
- The realization, or open admission, that A. Q. Khan had been taking nuclear technology and weapons designs to market out of Pakistan for years and that what he did is almost certainly something which can be replicated by others in the future, not only with regard to nuclear weapons but other perilous technologies;
- The more than ever serious question of whether we have already reached Peak Oil and must manage the difficult transition to a new form of basic energy source for the global economy – if one can be found;
- The apparent linkage of the use of fossil fuels to what climate scientists now tell us is a very alarming onset of global warming with potentially very serious consequences for the human order of things;
- Broader concerns about the human ecological impact on the planet and the possibility that we have seriously, perhaps irrevocably, undermined the biogeochemical systems on which our long term existence – to say nothing of our imagined indefinite growth and wealth – crucially depends;
- The serious concern specialists have expressed about the neglect of global public health systems and capacities, even as infectious diseases

have fought back against our vaccines and new microbes, such as HIV, SARS and H5N1 avian influenza have bubbled away in noisome and crowded corners of the Earth, foreshadowing a potential global pandemic that could cause hundreds of millions of deaths and trigger catastrophic social and economic disorder;

- The extraordinarily rapid increase in wealth and incipient power of China and, to a lesser extent, India and Brazil in the past twenty years;
- The refusal of these newly emergent economic powers to countenance curtailment of their greenhouse gas emissions at the expense of economic growth;
- The failure of the Doha Round of free trade talks, at just the point when we thought that a globalised economy was coming to fruition, not least because the United States, the EU and Japan will not liberalize their agricultural economies for the good of Africa, the Middle East and Latin America;
- The collapse, in 2008, of the global financial system, due to the interaction of massive trade and savings imbalances across the Pacific and the proliferation of ingenious financial instruments called derivatives, which enabled financial institutions, companies and households to leverage their assets into levels of debt previously unthinkable;

That list of a dozen concerns is not necessarily complete, but notice one thing about it: all these concerns are *global* in character. They pose dangers which are neither directed at a single country nor susceptible to being brought under control by one country – however powerful. Nor are they matters of conflict between states in the traditional sense, though they may trigger such conflict. They are challenges which, in fact, strike at the very heart of our inherited concepts of what national security is about and how

we should ensure it. They also throw into high relief the grave inadequacy of our existing international institutions for doing anything about such dangers.

This is the world in which we now live. It is not, of course, the case that any of these dangers is wholly new in *kind*. There have been terrorists and revolutionaries before now, arms traffickers and financial crises, pandemics like the bubonic plague and the Spanish flu, the rise and decline of great powers. What is new and ominous, I suggest, is the truly *global scale* of the problems now arising; and the fact that they are all occurring so soon after we thought we had a broad consensus on the principles which should govern a new global order of things and the breathing space to create it. In saying this, I have in mind less Frank Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), than Michael Mandelbaum's *The Ideas That Conquered the World: Peace, Democracy and Free Markets in the Twenty-First Century* (2002).

It is for this reason that I have been writing and speaking a good deal in recent years about Philip Bobbitt and the rise of what he called the market state. For those of you who remain unfamiliar with his name or ideas, let me very briefly summarize them. He has doctorates in both law and strategic studies, has worked in several US administrations at senior levels in the national security and intelligence world and is currently a professor of constitutional law at Columbia University. In 2002, in the wake of the 11 September 2001 assault on the United States, his book *The Shield of Achilles* was published. It had been written before that assault and had anticipated the kind of danger that it so dramatically embodied.

In that book, he argued that, contrary to widespread, so-called 'realist' assumptions, the state was *not* something that had been defined at the Treaty of Westphalia, in 1648, and had operated on consistent lines ever since.

Rather, it was an evolving concept, which had undergone multiple mutations since the fifteenth century, had only emerged as the nation state in the 20th century, only gone global in this form in the second half of the 20th century and was already, by 2000, undergoing a further mutation – into what he dubbed the ‘market state’ – to cope with the development of a global world characterized by weapons of mass destruction, international telecommunications and rapid computation. In such a world, he said, the national security assumptions upon which the nation state was based cannot hold and will have to be rethought.

It was, Bobbitt argued, the invention of light, mobile artillery, in the late fifteenth century, that triggered the downfall of the feudal state and the rise of the princely states of the Renaissance. From that point forward, law and strategy co-evolved, as the states of the Western world competed for survival and for mastery. The famous Westphalia settlement was only one in a long series of peace treaties that modified the order of states and there is not any foreseeable end to this process. John Keegan, he wrote, might expect that states will master the arts of peace and give us a world without war; while Martin van Creveld expects that states will fail to sustain law and war will degenerate into the chaotic mayhem of stateless gangs – what Robert Kaplan, about a decade ago, dubbed ‘the coming anarchy’. But law and war had conditioned one another for centuries, he argued, and would surely continue to do so.

If, however, we are to meet the challenges we now face, we have a great deal of thinking to do – and the shocks we have experienced since 2001 have surely underscored this. Here is how Bobbitt himself set out the conceptual challenge facing us:

“The nation-state’s model of statecraft links the sovereignty of a state to its territorial borders. Within these borders, a state is supreme with respect to its law, and beyond its borders a state earns the right of recognition and intercourse to the extent that it can defend its borders. Today this model confronts several deep challenges. Because the international order of nation states is constructed on the foundation of this model of state sovereignty, developments that cast doubt on that sovereignty call the entire system into question.

Five such developments do so: (1) the recognition of human rights as norms that require adherence within all states, regardless of their internal laws; (2) the widespread deployment of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that render the defence of state borders ineffectual for the protection of the society within; (3) the proliferation of global and transnational threats that transcend state borders, such as those that damage the environment, or threaten states through migration, population, disease or famine; (4) the growth of a world economic regime that ignores borders in the movement of capital to a degree that effectively curtails states in the management of their economic affairs; and (5) the creation of a global communications network that penetrates borders electronically and threatens national languages, customs and cultures.

As a consequence, a constitutional order will arise that reflects these five developments and, indeed, exalts them as requirements that only this new order can meet. The emergence of a new basis for the state will also change the constitutional assumptions of the international society of states, for that framework, too, derives from the domestic constitutional rationale of its constituent members.”

The closest precedent for what Bobbitt had in mind in writing all this was what took place in the early 20th century – the rise of an earlier global trading

order, followed by its lapse into world war and revolution, then the creation of international institutions to try to maintain order among warring nation states. Bobbitt drew particular attention to the work of Colonel Edward House, close adviser to President Woodrow Wilson.

Wilson's ill-fated aspiration to steer the early 20th century world away from what House called 'a typhoon of irrational revolution' is well known. The League of Nations failed and the Second World War was even more devastating than the First. Its costs were redoubled by the outbreak of totalitarianism in both fascist and communist forms, which both took a huge toll of lives. Bobbitt hopes that we can do better in the early 21st century, but it is far from self-evident that we shall. And, as some sombre observers have warned in the past decade, the technologies and dangers now arising could make the disasters of the mid-20th century look like child's play by comparison, if things get out of hand. We have known that for decades, because we have lived under the Sword of Damocles of the nuclear balance of terror and even the end of the Cold War has not removed the nuclear danger from the world.

The hinge of fate, to borrow Winston Churchill's title for the fourth volume of his history of the Second World War, would appear to be the very things Bobbitt specified as the key drivers of change in the world order: weapons of mass destruction, international telecommunications and the still rapidly developing technologies for rapid computation. How we handle these things is likely to determine whether we reshape the global order along the broad lines Michael Mandelbaum anticipated, or slide into what could be an era of catastrophic conflict; some scenarios for which are darker than any for which we have historical precedent – a statement I do not make lightly, as a long time student of history and international affairs.

What strikes me again and again, in studying human affairs, is that timely warnings go unheeded and that too often we adjust our collective behaviour only after making tragic blunders. Our more optimistic, non-Malthusian English forebears may have thought, in the long century between the defeat of Napoleon and the beginning of the First World War, that reason, science and enlightened government were destined to spread across the world, under the benign influence of British power, free trade and a vaguely defined Providence. The catastrophes of the 20th century, which Zbigniew Brzezinski dubbed the century of mega-deaths, surely put those expectations into sombre perspective. But victory in the Cold War at least briefly revived the notion that they would resume their march under *American* power. We are now at a point in time when we must consider the possibility that such expectations are profoundly problematic and that the challenges that are looming before us may prove overwhelming.

This thought has doubtless occurred to many people in recent months, with the sudden onset of the global financial crisis. Even now Bernard Bernanke is saying that the American and world economies will revive within twelve months; that in fact nothing is fundamentally wrong. Perhaps a revival will occur in short order; yet plainly the derailment that has just occurred has fundamental systemic causes and there seems to be little evidence to date that those causes have been adequately understood, or that remedies for them are to hand. There have been calls for a radical restructuring of international economic institutions, but it is far from clear how consensus on such a restructuring is to be achieved, or upon what principles it would rest. Robert Shiller's *The New Financial Order: Risk in the 21st Century* was published in 2003. In 2006, his was one of a small number of voices openly

warning of the sub-prime problem and the risks it presented. But such warnings failed utterly to head off the meltdown.

A similar story could be told in a number of areas of vital concern. Last November, as part of a visit to the United States, I spent a few days in Austin, Texas, as a guest of Philip Bobbitt. While I was there, I attended a symposium at the University of Texas, at which ex-Senator Sam Nunn, who has been so active for many years in the counter-proliferation field, spoke of the perilous neglect of counter-proliferation under the Bush administration and even earlier under the Clinton administration.

If we wish to preclude nuclear terrorism, he argued, we should, at a minimum, complete the program begun after the Cold War of securing all existing supplies of plutonium and enriched uranium. This is something which would cost peanuts compared to fighting the war in Iraq, but which has been starved of funding while that war has been waged, he observed. Nor do the long and patient efforts to dissuade Iran from completing nuclear weapons appear to have been to any avail. It is now, according to the best informed estimates, very close to having a nuclear weapons capability. Pakistan, meanwhile, teeters on the edge of a political precipice and it has a significant nuclear arsenal.

It is only a few years since Laurie Garrett and others were warning that avian flu could mutate into a form that was transmissible from human to human and we would then face a catastrophe of awesome proportions, for which the world was almost wholly unprepared. It has not occurred to date. Indeed, with so much else seizing the headlines, it seems to have disappeared from the list of immediate concerns. Yet, whether or not an avian flu pandemic breaks out in the immediate future, it is evident that very

little has been done to alter the conditions which would allow such an outbreak to become catastrophic and the current financial crisis would seem likely to starve any such initiative of funding for the next few years.

But in no case are the dangers we face more intractable than with regard to the ever more serious warnings we are getting about climate change and the threat it poses to our global habitat. I am well aware that there are still those who argue that the science in this matter is questionable. I note that, just a fortnight ago, in New York, the Heartland Institute hosted its second conference on this subject and Australia's own Bob Carter summarized its findings by remarking that a major program of public education is required to undo what he described as "the nonsensical hysteria about dangerous, human-caused, global warming that now surrounds us at every turn." I am not of the opinion that it is nonsensical hysteria, but I believe the confusion surrounding this issue is a melancholy testimony to our enormous difficulties in generating informed and rational consensus on vital matters, even among highly educated and scientific individuals.

Many of you will have heard of James Lovelock, the maverick scientist and author of the Gaia hypothesis – the idea that the Earth is somehow a living system that we barely comprehend, but have been wantonly interfering with for centuries, especially in the past hundred years. His latest book is called *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning*. It is a book which reminds me in some ways of the popular works of Bertrand Russell, written after he tired of serious philosophy and took to dashing off books on politics, education, peace and what have you. Lovelock is dismissive of the IPCC's models of climate change and of the Kyoto style policy based on them. He is dismissive, also, of green activists and entrepreneurs who call for the replacement of fossil fuels with renewable energy sources and the banning

of nuclear energy. Yet he ventures to declare that we have already gone past the point of no return with regard to the use of fossil fuels and the triggering of global warming and will, in the 21st century, face a catastrophic environmental breakdown that will render our current population and civilization utterly unsupportable. He recommends that we resign ourselves to what he calls the bitter realism of accepting a massive culling of our numbers by Gaia – Mother Earth.

It is not my intention here this afternoon to discuss the ins and outs of Lovelock's rather muddled, but thoroughly alarming thinking, any more than I have explained what Robert Shiller sees as the financial order for the 21st century. Rather, I want simply to point to the general phenomenon of a set of challenges which are novel in their scale and appear to be defying the capacities of our experts and governments and international institutions to agree on what is *so*, much less on what to *do*. That human beings have difficulty agreeing with one another or cooperating across state boundaries is not new, in itself, but it is new in both its scale and apparent urgency. It is especially troubling because it looked as though we pretty much had things in hand and could adjust international affairs piecemeal over the coming decades of peace, democracy and free trade.

Thomas Homer-Dixon wrote about this underlying cognitive problem, in a book called *The Ingenuity Gap: How Can We Solve the Problems of the Future?*, in 2001. He worried that perhaps this ingenuity gap will prove too much for us. His observations were even more sombre than those of Philip Bobbitt and have come back to me in recent months, as I contemplate the financial crisis and work with various clients on the environmental challenges we face. Homer-Dixon wrote, at the turn of the century:

“Whether we’re trying to manage the global environment, national computer networks, or international financial markets – all complex systems – there are, first, challenges arising from the pace of change in these systems. The faster the pace, the more likely serious gaps will appear between the systems’ behaviour and our lagging management capabilities. Second, there are the challenges arising from our ignorance of how the complex systems around us work...But when we can only guess at the extent of our ignorance, realizing that we are almost certain to be confronted with unknown unknowns, it makes sense to build buffering capacity into our institutions: that is, to give them the slack and the resources they need to respond to surprises...

And, third, once we have come up with a good design for an institution, we still face the often huge challenge of overcoming political opposition to it, or (to put it differently) devising the political bargain among different interest groups that will actually allow the institution to be created...The social sciences should be an important source for this ingenuity; they should be important tools in the tool kit we use to devise institutional solutions to our problems. Economics and political science especially should be able to help us create solutions. But...both of these disciplines are blunt and broken tools at best...”

The pace of change has been stunning in recent years and is the key feature in scientific warnings about the onset of global warming. But it is our *lack of buffering capacity* that is most alarming.

The world’s financial institutions just melted down because they were absurdly over-leveraged. Many of them, it turned out, had no buffering capacity at all; or rather they had massive *deficits* in buffering capacity. This is ironical, when you consider that the whole idea of derivatives, as financial instruments, is to provide *precisely* such buffering capacity. The warnings from Sam Nunn about securing nuclear stockpiles, or from Laurie Garrett about the run down state of global health systems are about a lack of buffering capacity. The key dangers of climate change lie in the lack of

buffering capacity in our economic and social systems for coping with it. In short, we have been *running our systems absolutely full throttle* and we seem exposed to the risk that they will lack any significant resilience when seriously tested. The global financial crisis is at once a symptom of this and a warning about what else could happen in the decades ahead – unless we can overhaul our *modus operandi* quite radically.

Where does this leave us, then? From the somewhat abstract point of view, it leaves us with monumental collective tasks of information processing, conceptual reframing and institutional reform. While a few individuals and research teams might perform prodigies of information processing and conceptual reframing, the practical problem, as Homer-Dixon was well aware, lies in *translating* any such conceptual work into institutional forms and common behaviors that actually improve matters. Philip Bobbitt's work is a case in point. His books are prodigious works of scholarship and reflection, but most readers flounder in trying to extract from them what exactly should be *done* in legal, strategic or political terms – and in what order of priority.

It would be comforting to be able to conclude that the human system evolves naturally and is self-organizing and self-correcting. In this view, the work of countless thinkers and interest groups will generate solutions to our problems without anyone ever master minding the whole thing. Didn't we learn from the debacle of Communism and Nazism that such master-minding is a brutally costly and self-defeating exercise? But the challenges we now face surely leave most of us profoundly uneasy at the thought of relying on the system self-correcting. Suppose we were to be urged to accept this in the case of the world financial system. The problem is that, whether it is the financial system or the eco-system, we seem to need to act soon and

energetically, but we have no clear idea of what to do and no efficient means for reaching a useful consensus on the subject.

In a chapter of *The Vanishing Face of Gaia* called ‘Geoengineering’, James Lovelock offered a reflection on our profound dilemmas that will, I think, resonate with this audience. He wrote:

“Putative geoengineers are in a similar position to that of physicians before the 1940s. In his book The Youngest Profession the physician Lewis Thomas beautifully described the practice of medicine before the Second World War. There were only five effective medicines available: morphine for pain, quinine for malaria, insulin for diabetes, digitalis for heart disease and aspirin for inflammation, and very little was known of their mode of action. For almost all other ailments, there was nothing available but nostrums and comforting words. At that time, despite a well-founded science of physiology, we were still ignorant about the human body or the host-parasite relationship it had with other organisms. Wise physicians knew that letting nature take its course without intervention would often allow natural self-regulation to make the cure...I think the same may be true about planetary medicine: our ignorance of the Earth system is overwhelming and intensified by the tendency to favour model simulations over experiments, observation and measurement.”

When I first read this, my immediate thought was: what about penicillin? But Lovelock was correct in his dating, of course. Although Alexander Fleming discovered the properties of penicillin in 1928, the first successful medical use of it by Howard Florey was not until 1942. And it is worth remembering that the mid-20th century was the heyday of frontal lobotomies as a crude response to mental disorders. All of which is a reminder of how very far our sciences have come in a remarkably short period of time: the

lifetime of all of us in this room, in fact. But that same lifetime, while it has seen an exponential increase in our knowledge, our capacities for generating, processing, storing and sharing information; has also seen an enormous increase in the human population, in energy consumption, resource use generally and our collective ‘footprint’ as we now like to say, on the biosphere. It is as if we are in a mad race against ourselves to see whether our learning can keep pace with our numbers, our appetites and our proclivities to waste and conflict.

In these circumstances, we do need to be able to step back and seek some larger sense of the scheme of things. I enjoy, in this regard, the work of the great American entomologist and social thinker Edward O. Wilson. If you have not yet come upon it, I most heartily recommend his 1998 book *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*. It was a beautiful and stimulating effort to survey the world of the natural and human sciences at the end of the 20th century and to point to where we could, if we can only collectively embrace the possibility, create a renascent global human culture in the 21st century. He has just published a new book, with Bert Holldobler, called *The Superorganism: The Beauty, Elegance and Strangeness of Insect Societies*. We might see our own human societies reflected in this entomological mirror. For, looked at from a transcendent point of view, as if by intelligent beings from another world, we must seem like insect societies on the face of the Earth, especially in our proliferating hives – the megacities of the modern era.

Insects have existed in their societies for countless millions of years, however; whereas we have changed our social institutions enormously in the space of the past ten thousand years and we have done so extremely unevenly. Moreover, we have done so not as a consequence of *biological* evolution, but solely by *cultural* evolution: the collective and opportunistic

development of our capacities for information processing and conceptual reframing, which is to say imagination. It now seems possible that, by means of an unconscious, runaway feedback process, those very capacities may have sent us, as a species, up a monumental blind alley. That is the grim view to which some of our most enlightened and best informed scientists have been coming in the past few decades. It is not a view of things with which any of us can be comfortable. It challenges us to rise to a new level of comprehension of what we are, what we are doing and how we can create a way out of the difficulties that confront us.

I cannot here this afternoon, of course, embark on an effort to survey how we might find a way out of our difficulties. I fear that Philip Bobbitt's call for an integrated review of law and strategy and international institutions is asking too much of our existing institutions and general populations. I fear that something along the lines that James Lovelock foresees *could* be in store and that the 21st century will become a time of dismal disorder and the unraveling of human civilization. Yet I refuse to *believe* these things. Rather, I persist in trying to think of how we might overcome the challenges we face, as our ancestors overcame every other challenge to their survival and well-being.

What I believe is bracing in all this is that contemplating such prospects must surely awaken each and all of us from the torpor of complacency or cynicism in which it is all too easy to wallow in the opulence and mesmerizing energy of our contemporary 'hives'. And, in particular, I would like to think that all those of us concerned with national security, with medicine and with the relationship between the two will see in such prospects a call to intellectual seriousness, to duty, to possibility that will enable us to rise to the challenges that beset us and give of our best for the

common good. For in the end it is only those moral qualities that offer us, individually and collectively, any hope of making this present century one of human glory rather than one of human apocalypse.

I am certain that many of you will have thoughts on these matters and questions with regard to the thoughts that I have shared with you. I would very much like to hear those thoughts and those questions. Let me, therefore, conclude my remarks here and open the floor to at least a brief question and answer session and some discussion. Thank you for the courtesy of your attention.

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His PhD was in International Relations, from the Australian National University. His dissertation was an analysis of US intervention in South East Asia and Central America during the Cold War and was entitled *Civilization and the Typhoon: America, Land Reform and 'Irrational Revolution' in the Philippines, Vietnam and El Salvador, 1950-1984*.

After receiving his PhD from the ANU, in 1989, Dr Monk joined the Defence Intelligence Organization and was assigned to work on East Asia. He became Japan and Korea Desk Officer in 1992 and head of China analysis in 1994. He left Government service in late 1995 and spent several years teaching in the university system before co-founding Austhink in 2000.

His book *Thunder from the Silent Zone: Rethinking China* was published in 2005. It was followed by a book of poetry and reflections, *Sonnets to a Promiscuous Beauty: A Homage to the Western Canon*, in 2006. In 2007 he produced *Fair Choices* – an examination of the case for industrial relations reform in the Federal election year. His latest book, *The West in a Nutshell: Foundations, Fragilities, Futures*, will appear in print within a few weeks.