Curtin Briefing Report

The Outlook for Stability in East Asia

Lloyd R Vasey, R Admiral USN (Retd). Member of the US Advisory Committee on The John Curtin Centre.

A senior strategist in the US Clinton Government warned at a recent John Curtin Centre Briefing that the Asian balance of power is in transition.

Retired Rear Admiral Lloyd Vasey, Vice Chair and senior strategist for the Hawaii-based Pacific Forum was addressing participants at the second Curtin Briefing on the ‘Outlook for Stability in East Asia’. He said there is a great deal of uncertainty as old rivalries and disputes, suppressed during the Cold War, are resurrected.

“Emergent nationalist movements, religious fundamentalism, and social change accelerated by the information revolution are potentially destabilising in some countries,” Admiral Vasey said.

He said all nations are modernising military forces, acquiring new weapons technologies and shifting strategic priorities from ground warfare to air and maritime power projection capabilities.

The arms build-up in the region was not yet an arms race, still the message was clear—government leaders saw military power as an indispensable instrument of policy.

Admiral Vasey presented four fundamental factors which are setting the agenda for a new security environment in Asia.

The first was the emergence of the Peoples’ Republic of China as a regional power. There is little doubt in Admiral Vasey’s mind that Chinese leaders have long-range vision of China being the chief power in East Asia, with no military competitors of any consequence.

He said China’s fast growing economic influence, political confidence and gradual military modernisation (including nuclear war-fighting capabilities) are seen as the principal defining factors in Asia’s future security.

Territorial disputes, such as those involving countries bordering the South China Sea—where oil and minerals are thought to exist—coupled with a growing independence movement in Taiwan, could precipitate a sharp military response.

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Events...

Vulpar Seminar—May 5-7
Computer aided functional capacity evaluation. Assessing ability of injured workers to return to work. Key speaker—Mervyn Lotsof, a lawyer from South Australia. To be held at Curtin University.

Curtin Briefing: ‘Professor Chula talks about Leadership and Business Ethics’—May 15
Professor Chula is Chair in Leadership and Ethics, Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond, USA. Coordinated by John Curtin International Institute in conjunction with the St. James Ethics Centre and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia. To be held in Sydney, NSW.

SMEC—Science and Mathematics Education Centre—Mid-June
John Curtin International Institute Course to be held in Brunei.

‘Interactive Science and Technology Education’—July 3-7
Course by SMEC—Science and Mathematics Education Centre (John Curtin International Institute) and National Science and Technology Centre. Keynote speaker—Dr Michael Gore, Director of Questacon and recently awarded Julius Sunner Lectureship. To be held in Canberra.

John Curtin Exhibition 1941-1945—July 5
Joint exhibition between Australian Archives and The John Curtin Centre, located at Parliament House, Canberra.

SMEC—Science and Mathematics Education Centre July 10-14
(John Curtin International Institute) Course to be held at Curtin University.

‘The Necessity of Craft: development and women’s craft practices in the Asian Pacific region’, edited by Lorna Kaino—September
This book examines the complex issues surrounding the general decline in women’s traditional craft practices and their appropriation into a more commodified form of production. In September the book will be available from Hewitt’s Art Bookshop in Fremantle.

Programs for the rest of the year will be highlighted in our next newsletter.

The John Curtin Centre

University of Technology
Perth, Western Australia
Getting ready for Asia tomorrow

Vice President of Motorola, Dr Terry Heng, told The John Curtin Centre's Singapore Consultation held last December that professionals who have no preparation for working overseas will find the world closing in on them.

Over 60 percent of Motorola’s business is now in the Asia Pacific Indian Ocean region.

Dr Heng said for Motorola to be successful its professionals would have to understand the social, economic, religious and politically diverse issues which exist among the nations of the region.

He said that understanding these fundamentals was essential for the future generation of multinational executives.

“These men and women need specialist training to prepare them as their career moves them from Singapore to China, China to Vietnam and so on,” Dr Heng said.

“We have to prepare for the various post-GATT scenarios and the effects of the inevitable changes in political leadership.”

Curtin University Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Maloney, agrees with Dr Terry Heng that Universities must be involved in what is happening in business and need to help business adapt to change.

“The John Curtin International Institute will fill a vacuum within the region and provide a neutral environment where professionals and scholars can learn together,” Professor Maloney said.

It was this neutral quality and the geographical position of Perth, Western Australia, on the periphery of the region which convinced Dr Heng and Motorola to support the establishment of The John Curtin International Institute.

Professor Maloney said the consultations in Singapore brought overwhelming support for the Institute; and business, government, embassy and academic representatives who attended provided constructive advice about the Institute’s programs.

“Terry Heng’s keynote address created vivid discussion on the need for cross-cultural programs to create a better understanding in the region,” he said.

Dean of Programs for the Institute, Professor Joanna Barker, said a separate consultation with the Curtin University alumni in Singapore provided great input to the direction the Institute should take.

“The alumni are particularly keen to support the Institute by promoting programs throughout their organisation,” Professor Barker said.

“To date we have held consultations in the United States, Canberra and now Singapore, to help us understand the wider region’s needs. “We really want to make sure we’re international, inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural.”

A third factor involved the potential for the Korean peninsula to be the most dangerous flash point in Asia despite the US-North Korea nuclear accord of last October.

“In essence, the agreement is based on an interlocking sequence of complex steps over several years and the good faith of the two parties—a risky assumption that is already coming apart,” he said.

Admiral Vasey said the fourth factor to be considered was the positive concept of “cooperative security”, very popular in Southeast Asia.

“This approach to security issues emphasises the prevention and resolution of conflict—cooperation more than competition. It looks at security comprehensively, including the economic and social aspects, rather than only the military.”
Dean of Programs for John Curtin International Institute

Professor Joanna Barker officially took up her position as Dean of Programs of The John Curtin International Institute in early April 1995.

As Interim Director of the Institute during 1994, Professor Barker met government, business and academic representatives in Australia and overseas to determine what programs would best meet the needs of the Asia Pacific Indian Ocean region and enhance Australia’s international relationships.

Her goal for the next three years is to promote an Institute of Excellence in international education and research, focusing on eight thematic areas. Programs will assist in the development of future leaders from the Asia Pacific Indian Ocean region in such fields as government, education and the corporate arena.

Born in New Zealand, Professor Barker trained as an occupational therapist. She had over 20 years professional experience as a practitioner and as a manager before joining the Western Australian Institute of Technology (now Curtin University of Technology) as Head of the School of Occupational Therapy. In 1988, Professor Barker was the first occupational therapist to be awarded a PhD in Australia and was appointed to the Board of Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, a major teaching hospital in Western Australia, in 1983 and was appointed Chair of the Board in 1989 to 1994. She was also President of the Hospital Association of Western Australia from 1992 to 1994. This organisation is active in policy and development in health care and a member of the Australian Hospitals Association.

Professor Barker has published over 22 articles, presented 43 papers, attended over 90 national and overseas conferences and seminars, been an adviser to government, private business and other universities, and supervised several students at masters and PhD level. She is active in research and has received several grants, totalling $376,400, over the last ten years.

Found—a letter from John Curtin

"My dear children,
You, the children of today, are passing through a terrible period in the world's history.
Some 25 years ago, your mothers and fathers endured the dangers of the first world war in the hope that it would secure a happy world in which you could usefully and happily live your lives.
But that was not to be. So again, all the peoples who cherish freedom have had to take up arms to prevent their homes being overrun by wicked men who want to make themselves masters of the world.
We, the people of Australia, have cheerfully taken our part in this struggle to secure for you a way of life more peaceful and happy than ours is today..."

The above extract comes from a letter sent to Australian children in 1942 by Prime Minister John Curtin and was written at a time when there was a great need for everyone to take responsibility and be unified in the war effort.

The letter was found by chance by Peter Di Marco of the State Archives. Peter was examining a file about a country school which deals with correspondence generated at a time when everybody was being asked to save resources, including paper. What better example than to use the reverse side of a letter from John Curtin telling Australian children "we cannot afford to waste one little thing during these years of trouble"?

Letters like these are an invaluable part in understanding our past. The style, language and tone of the letter is just as important as the content in recreating the feeling of the time.

The John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library is building its collection of materials and memorabilia, focusing on aspects of Australia's politics and history.

If you would like to donate letters, photos or other memorabilia to the John Curtin Centre or allow us to make a copy please contact:
Lesley Carman-Brown
Senior Project Officer
John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
GPO Box U 1887
Perth WA 6001
(09) 351 7549

All material accepted by the Centre will be placed in secure and environmentally-suitable storage to ensure its preservation.
Executive Director's Notes

In the past six months there has been exponential growth in support for the development of The John Curtin Centre. To date we have raised $29 million for construction and have begun fund raising for the Institute.

The consultations we have held in the USA, Canberra, and Singapore have helped to raise our profile as a centre of international importance. On a recent visit to Perth, the Korean Ambassador met with Vice-Chancellor John Maloney, Professor Barker and myself, to exchange ideas that he originally raised during the Canberra consultation last year. On a daily basis the Executive is communicating with people who have attended the consultations or have heard about us through various business and academic networks.

It is encouraging that people continue to offer support and ideas for The John Curtin Centre—some of which are now coming to fruition, particularly those for the International Institute. Programs are being implemented as a result of advice for the Institute from many people within the Asia Pacific Indian Ocean region—programs such as the Institute’s first masters program in Management and Leadership starting this year and coordinated by the Curtin Business School.

The John Curtin Centre is now a reality and while its construction is still at preliminary stages the activity of the Gallery, Library and Institute denotes otherwise. Systems are in place and we are planning to make available information about The John Curtin Centre on the Internet. It will be placed on the World Wide Web, and will link information on all the different components of the Centre. We will advise you of the location when it becomes available.

This year is the 50th anniversary of John Curtin’s death and the end of World War II. It will be a time for reflection and will prompt us to ensure such tragedy never occurs again. It is our aim that The John Curtin Centre will play an imperative role in the development of future leaders from the Asia Pacific Indian Ocean region, based on cooperation and collaboration, to build strength and prosperity.

David Waddell

New Curator for the John Curtin Gallery

One of Australia’s leading curators has been appointed to head The John Curtin Gallery. He comes with an extensive background in contemporary art, as well as significant experience with more traditional art, and has high profile involvement in a number of leading arts bodies.

“The Gallery will be a unique and vibrant centre with a wide-ranging program,” he said. “It will feature high quality exhibitions drawn from the University Art Collection, as well as those developed in conjunction with both artists and other collections from Australia and overseas.

“Our goal is to operate locally, nationally and internationally and to develop audiences at each level.”

The Art Gallery will complement the work of the International Institute and the Prime Ministerial Library, with time Western Australia’s premier art organisation. He was curator for the 1994 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, initiator of ARX (the Artists’ Regional Exchange, which brings together artists from Australia and Southeast Asia for a biennial series of exhibitions and symposiums), and was centrally involved in the establishment of the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts. Mr Barrett-Lennard has published widely in art journals and catalogues both in Australia and abroad. He has presented lectures at numerous universities in Australia and New Zealand, and has written many conference papers on art galleries and their audiences.

Mr Barrett-Lennard brings with him extensive contacts through his curatorial work and wide travels, as well as through active participation with such organisations as the Museum Australia National Council, its Professional Development Committee (which he Chairs) and the ARX Committee.
Eminent business leaders give support

Key business leaders from throughout Australia and the Asia Pacific Indian Ocean region are playing a vital role in helping to shape the future direction of The John Curtin Centre. A Sydney based advisory group has been formed comprising Caltex Managing Director, Mr Barry Murphy; Hallmark Asia Pacific Group Managing Director, Mr Phil Scanlan; Mr Allen Blewitt, Deputy Executive Director Institute of Chartered Accountants; and Tyree Holdings Chair, Mr Bob White. We are delighted to receive support from such widely respected business leaders.

In this issue we profile Mr Scanlan and his thoughts about the globalisation of Australia and the role of The John Curtin Centre.

As former Managing Director of Coca-Cola Amatil, Mr Scanlan led the company through successful expansion into the South Pacific and Southeast Asia as well as pioneering entry into Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Under his leadership Coca-Cola Amatil’s operation became the most geographically diverse company in the world. He served eight of his 13 years with Coca-Cola Amatil as a member of the Board.

He is currently Chair of AESOF (Japan) and of Central Sydney Area Health Service (July 1993), Director of Australis (1993), and of Spectrum Network Systems. He has served as Founding Chair of The Sydney Institute (Australia’s leading current affairs forum) and continues to serve as Emeritus Governor. Mr Scanlan joined the Fulbright Board, and founded the Australian American Leadership Dialogue. He is credited with the creation of the Australian Centre for Education in Budapest Hungary, a project of IDP, the international arm of the Australian Universities and Colleges.

"Australia is unique as a two ocean continental nation—with its foundations of traditional ties with Europe and North America and now its strategic engagement with the Asia Pacific Rim," Mr Scanlan said. He believes that if Australia is to effectively pursue trading routes beyond its boundaries there is a need for an autonomous and neutral centre where international issues can be debated by business people, academics and government.

Mr Scanlan sees the role of The John Curtin International Institute as integral to the globalisation of Australia.

"It will be a centre of national importance which is why I am committed to being involved," he said.

About John Curtin

Curtin was a man extraordinarily sensitive. He felt the strain and responsibility of everything that he did. For example, it was through his personal decision, finally, that the 9th Division was returned to Australia instead of being sent to Burma, as Winston Churchill wished ... I think the Division was about 14 days on the water without any naval escort. You could tell throughout that fortnight ... that he felt himself personally responsible for the lives and safety of those thousands of young men on those ships ... When news was reached of their safe return ... John Curtin was as a man released from great darkness and unhappiness.

Alan Fraser from "On Lips of Living Men" [Thompson, John, Landsoune, Melbourne: 1962].

Earthworks and hammers

Construction began on the site for The John Curtin Centre in early May. Mr Richard Scott of the University Planning Office is responsible for coordinating the building project.

"Brand Deykin & Hay produced a design with a nice balance in the overall composition which addressed the needs of a multiple function centre," Mr Scott said. The design is aimed to give equal importance to the Gallery, the Prime Ministerial Library and the International Institute and yet be united in the centre's role as a place where Australians and people from across the world will work and learn together.

"The site of The John Curtin Centre at the entry to the campus makes a statement about Curtin University," he said.
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