



Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World (Belfer Center Studies in International Security)

Graham Allison , Henry Kissinger (Foreword) , Robert Blackwill

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Grand strategist and founder of modern Singapore offers key insights and controversial opinions on globalization, geopolitics, economic growth, and democracy.

Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World (Belfer Center Studies in International Security) Details

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From Reader Review Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World (Belfer Center Studies in International Security) for online ebook

Sid1983 says

Why read this book? Because world leader's have said LKY is one of the smartest leaders they have ever met.

The book isn't to look back at 50 years of Singapore but present LKY's opinion of the world ahead (circa 2013)

Some of the stuff he says is relevant today in a the era of PresidentCheetos, such as how to deal with China but not isolating it but by economically competing S.Asia. Then there are things like how Mexican culture will spread in the US that I don't agree with. He too contradicts that by saying that one of the US' strengths is the embrace of immigrants. Also, he does have a bit of a fixed mindset, and yes, is a undoubtedly a bit of a strongman. I do like his belief in discipline and a hard-ass approach, I find other ideas anachronistic and non=progressive.

CHINA

Wants to be #1 -- Other smaller Asian countries are uneasy

Strategies in place:

? Out build and out sell everyone else

? Focus on education

? Diplomacy, not force i.e. put their heads down and work for the next 40-50 years to catch up with the US in GDP terms vs. mistakes re armaments Jp and Germany made and also have the rest of South Asia grow with them via trade to expand their influence

Challenges:

? Language, hard to attract foreign talent to go there

? Cultural -- lack of free flow of ideas

? Graft & the lack of a judicial framework

? Rising income inequality

Political framework:

he doesn't see the country become a democracy // on Xi Jinping; "he has iron in his soul" and went through more tribulation than Hu Jintao

USA

US isn't in decline -- "Historically, the U.S. has demonstrated a great capacity for renewal and revival"

Main strengths:

"Americans have a can-do approach to life: everything can be broken up, analyzed, and redefined. Whether it can or it cannot, Americans believe it can be solved, given enough money, research, and effort."

"entrepreneurial spirit" with a lot of people starting up cos, failing and doing it over again

"the individual's position in society. In American culture, an individual's interest is primary. This makes American society more aggressively competitive, with a sharper edge and higher performance."

"It is a country that embraces immigrants."

Concerns about the US:

Democracy: "to win votes you have to give more and more. And to beat your opponent in the next election,

you have to promise to give more away. So it is a never-ending process of auctions" "the American voter has shown a disinclination to listen to their political leaders when they debate the hard issues.

The presidential system is less likely to produce good government than a parliamentary system. In the presidential system, your personal appearance on TV is decisive," in a Parliamentary system you have to rise up in the ranks and be vetted

The US systems leads to a "leader, one who can present himself and his programs in a polished way... I am amazed at the way media professionals can give a candidate a new image and transform him, at least superficially, into a different personality.

"I believe that what a country needs to develop is discipline more than democracy"

Concerns over US culture

"breakdown of civil society"

"The ideas of individual supremacy... when carried to excess, have not worked. They have made it difficult to keep American society cohesive.

"In the U.S., the community's interests have been sacrificed because of the human rights of drug traffickers and drug consumers."

" sense of cultural supremacy which leads the American media to pick on [other countries] ... Because we have not complied with their ideas of how we should govern ourselves."

"Multiculturalism will destroy America. There is a danger that large numbers of Mexicans and others from South and Central America will continue to come to the U.S. and spread their culture across the whole of the country."

How does it remain #1?

"The 21st century will be a contest for supremacy in the Pacific, because that is where the growth will be ... If the U.S. does not hold its ground in the Pacific, it cannot be a world leader"

"To hold ground in the Pacific, the U.S. must not let its fiscal deficits come to grief."

"The U.S. must not let its preoccupation with the Middle East— Iraq, Iran, the Israelis, and oil— allow others, especially China, to overtake its interests in Southeast Asia. The Chinese are not distracted. They are looking for energy everywhere, and they are making friends everywhere"

China & USA

Chance of confrontation

Low -- no ideological differences -- competitors, not adversaries

"China will not let an international court arbitrate territorial disputes in the South China Sea, so the presence of U.S. firepower in the Asia-Pacific will be necessary if the United Nations Law of the Sea is to prevail."

The role of US stability in the world

"The world has developed because of the stability America established. If that stability is rocked, we are going to have a different situation."

Changes to US policy as China rises

"Americans believe their ideas are universal— the supremacy of the individual and free, unfettered expression. But they are not— never were. In fact, American society was so successful for so long not because of these ideas and principles, but because of a certain geopolitical good fortune, an abundance of resources and immigrant energy, a generous flow of capital and technology from Europe, and two wide oceans that kept conflicts of the world away from American shores.

The U.S. cannot stop China's rise. It just has to live with a bigger China, which will be completely novel for the U.S.,

The U.S. Congress is against any new free-trade agreements. If the next Congress continues to oppose FTAs, valuable time will be lost, and it may be too late to try again.

Do not treat China as an enemy from the outset.

On the influence US can have on China

It is the U.S., more than any other country, that can integrate China into the international community... The difficulty arises from America's expressed desire to make China more democratic. China resents and resists this as interference in its domestic matters.

If the U.S. attempts to humiliate China, keep it down, it will assure itself an enemy. If instead it accepts China as a big, powerful, rising state and gives it a seat in the boardroom, China will take that place for the foreseeable future. So if I were an American, I would speak well of China

This is the fundamental choice that the United States has to make: to engage or to isolate China. You cannot have it both ways. The best way to quicken the pace and direction of political change in China is to increase her trade and investment links with the world. Then her prosperity will depend increasingly on the compatibility of her economic system with those of the major trading nations.

India

Constraints because of a democratic government & culture

Bureaucracy and caste system are the enemy of meritocracy

Complex political system makes it hard for decision-making

It's not a real country ...nation states along a rail line the British put down

Average civil servant seems himself as a regulator more than a facilitator

Indian economic strengths

Superior governance and quality of ROE in the private sector

Transparent & functional capital markets

Demographic dividend -- but needs job creation let it become a curse

"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."

Challenges

Red tape, lack of infra, labor laws

Post independence, bought into mechanization and planning -- then in the 90s, focused on having to dismantling the inefficient SOEs

Other relic of historical legacy is the emphasis on fairness of distribution, "Equality of incomes gives no incentive to the resourceful and the industrious to outperform & be competitive"

Islamic Extremism

Its unprecedented in that it's global -- "Islam has not been a problem, contemporary radical Islam is a problem"

The roots are in the belief the West has put them down -- it feeds on the alienation that globalization has generated and globalization is largely US led

Tracing the rise, "price of oil quadrupled in 1973, Saudi Arabia has generously financed the missionary movement -- overthrow of the Shah in Iran in 1979... has had a profound impact on Muslim beliefs in Islam's power. Finally, the participation of large numbers of Southeast Asian Muslims in the jihad in Afghanistan during the 1980s and the 1990s has radicalized significant numbers of the Southeast Asian Muslims"

A large part of the issue is the Saudis financing madrasas

Islam doesn't help because it believes in assimilation vs. other religions

Key objectives of the Islamists: it's the right time to exert superiority of Islam, get the oil and build the caliphate

If Muslims in Europe and the US don't distance themselves from extremists, they will be ostracized
Whether it becomes a bigger problem depends on what happens in Saudi Arabia and other oil states
It's up to moderate Muslims to win the struggle and "eventually, the fight will boil down to one between Muslims who want to return to the Islam of the 11th century (when Islam shut out the outside world and cut itself off from new ideas) and those who want to see a modern Islam attuned to the 21st century"

On Economic Growth

Lessons to learn from Singapore's rise to a first-world country?

? Embraces everyone who wants to join

? Make haste slowly, don't foist change, let it happen gradually

? Didn't do what other countries that gained independence did in Asia viz. embrace socialism

Chief drivers of growth for Singapore

quality of man power \ immigration double edged sword \ scholars and innovators should be welcome \ people matter so education does too \ creativity of leadership to see what's worked elsewhere and bring it home \ spirit of entrepreneurship

Core competencies of workers today: Greater autonomy, self supervision, enterprising, English

On Geopolitics & Globalization

Biggest global challenges: Eurozone disintegration / North Korea / Jp stagnation / Middle east and their building the bomb

GFC: causes were liberal regulations and the belief the free market will correctly allocate capital while what really happens is institutions maximize their own wealth

What needs to be done to compete in a globalizing world? Think globally, collaborate \ life long learning \ international in your outlook, embrace global talent, be wary of nationalism \ foster education in the youth
Globalization can not be reversed because you can't take away the tools that created it viz cheaper transportation & communication \ protectionism will inevitably lead to conflict

On the future of democracy

The role of government: to provide people with a framework within which they can fulfill their needs. The business of a government 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.

Good government raises standards, doesn't just maintain them

The role of a leader: It is the duty of leaders to instill confidence in the people so that they will stand up to be counted

The test of leadership lies not merely in echoing fears and doubts, especially when these fears and doubts, however real, are capable of solution and of being rendered irrational and unfounded \ A nation is great not by its size alone. It is the will, the cohesion, the stamina, the discipline of its people, and the quality of their leaders which ensure it an honorable place in history.

On popular opinion: I learned to ignore criticism and advice from experts and quasi-experts, especially academics in the social and political sciences \ One has got to get over the temptation of the news media capturing one's soul. Never mind what the news media say \ There are moments when you have to be thoroughly unpopular. But at the end of your term, you should have brought about sufficient benefits so that the people realize what you did was necessary and will vote for you again.

Requirements for democracy: mobilize opinion \ honest political parties and a vigilant electorate to choose \ citizens who are willing to accept sacrifice for the long run

Risks:: people are fickle and emotional arguments win \ voters aren't rational and don't always face rational

choices \ order needs to precede law and while universal rights are great, they can't be blindly applied
On balance in society: society needs to nurture excellence and encourage the average \ need competitiveness and collaboration

On how he thinks

Fundamental principles

Humans are inherently vicious \ it's assumed all men and women are equal, but is equality realistic?

The world is too diverse for a single ideology to dominate

His approach to policymaking

Liberal pragmatist to produce the most happiness for the most number of people

Be a gentleman, do no evil, try and do good, loyal to family and faithful to his wife

The belief that the interest of society > individual, vs. the US

He looks at other societies and tries to relate it back to himself otherwise it's irrelevant -- have discussions with knowledgeable people

do not try to impress by big words. Impress by the clarity of your ideas...

Paradigms he uses

The first corroboration of logic is when it becomes reality

Acid test is performance not promises

It's not theory or philosophy that guides him but practical considerations

On societies and progress

Civilizations emerge when societies are given challenges to overcome and when those challenges are just right, societies flourish. But for that they need determined leadership, efficient administration and social discipline

"society should make it worth people's while to give their best to the country. No society has existed in history where all people were equal and obtained equal rewards. If that were to be practiced, and the lazy and the incompetent were paid as much as the industrious and the intelligent"

You must want. That is the crucial thing. Before you have, you must want to have. And to want to have means to be able, first, to perceive what it is you want; secondly, how to discipline and organize yourself in order to possess the things you want—the industrial sinews of our modern economic base; and thirdly, the grit and the stamina,

You need a striving society that's clear about what it wants, equal chances to show they are better than the other, forward looking management and to retain dynamisms, a multi racial lingual immigrant society without losing your original culture

British society stagnated because of cradle to grave welfare, discoveries slowed because the rich were viewed with disdain, while the US has emphasized personal independence, respect for those starting new businesses, acceptance of entrepreneurial failure, tolerance for income disparity

On successful leaders

Talk about a fixed mindset! "I believe 70– 80% of a person's capability, proclivities, temperament is genetic.

The day you are conceived, at least 70% has already been fixed in the womb"

Powers of analysis; logical grasp of the facts; concentration on the basic points, extracting the principles.

Erwin says

Highly recommended. Another book in the spirit of The Prince focused on understanding populations and politics as they are, not as we wish them to be. This is a fascinating compilation of Lee Kuan Yew's observations on government, citizens, management, Singapore, the West and the East over the last several decades. Some of the portions I found most interesting include:

"Democracy should not be made an alibi for inertia. There are many examples of authoritarian governments whose economies have failed. There are as many examples of democratic governments who have achieved superior economic performance. The real issue is whether any country's political system, irrespective of whether it is democratic or authoritarian, can forge a consensus on the policies needed for the economy to grow and create jobs for all, and can ensure that these basic policies are implemented consistently without large leakage."

"When those in office regard the power vested in them as a personal prerogative, they inevitably enrich themselves, promote their families, and favor their friends. The fundamental structures of the modern state are eroded, like the supporting beams of a house after termites have attacked them"

"We must not go against what is historically inevitable"

"I learned to ignore criticism and advice from experts and quasiexperts, especially academics in the social and political sciences. They have pet theories on how a society should develop to approximate their ideal, especially how poverty should be reduced and welfare extended. I always try to be correct, not politically correct."

"So long as you run this one person, one vote, the easiest of appeals that can be made to the ground are the simple, emotional ones, not economic development and progress and all these other things they do not understand, but simple things: pride in race, in language, in religion, in culture."

"But I am convinced, personally, that we would have a better system if we gave every person over the age of 40 who has a family two votes, because he or she is likely to be more careful, voting also for his or her children."

"He or she is more likely to vote in a serious way than a capricious young person under 30.... At the same time, once a person gets beyond 65, then it is a problem."

"when authority is not backed by position, prestige, or usage, then it has to defend actively against challenge."

"For the acid test of any legal system is not the greatness or the grandeur of its ideal concepts, but whether, in fact, it is able to produce order and justice in the relationships between person and person, and between person and the state."

"To maintain this order with the best degree of tolerance and humanity is a problem...."

"To be successful, society must maintain a balance between nurturing excellence and encouraging the average to improve"

"Communism has failed. The welfare state of Western democracies has also failed."

"We have arranged help, but in such a way that only those who have no other choice will seek it. This is the opposite of attitudes in the West, where liberals actively encourage people to demand entitlements with no sense of shame, causing an explosion of welfare costs."

"If there is insecurity, there will be fewer investments."

"we buffer the lowest 20% to 25%, the weaker achievers, from the tough competition of the marketplace"

"We may have conquered space, but we have not learned to conquer our own primeval instincts and emotions that were necessary for our survival in the Stone Age, not in the space age."

"I have always thought that humanity was animal-like, while Confucian theory says that it can be improved. I am not sure it can be, but it can be trained, it can be disciplined.... You can make a left-hander write with his or her right hand, but you cannot really change his or her natural-born instinct."

"We read many things. The fact that it is in print and repeated by three, four authors does not make it true. They may all be wrong. But through my own experience ... I concluded: yes, there is a difference."

"Fredrich Hayek's book The Fatal Conceit: Errors of Socialism expressed with clarity and authority what I had long felt but was unable to express, namely the unwisdom of powerful intellects, including Albert Einstein, when they believed that a powerful brain can devise a better system and bring about more "social justice" than what historical evolution, or economic Darwinism, has been able to work out over the centuries."

"I would describe myself, in perhaps European terms, as between socialist and conservative. I would put myself as a liberal. As someone who believes in equal opportunities so that everybody gets an equal chance to do his best, and with a certain compassion to ensure that the failures do not fall through the floor.... I want to run the system as efficiently as possible, but make allowances for those who will not be doing well because nature did not give them enough, or they cannot make that extra effort.... I am a liberal in the classical sense of that word, in that I am not fixated on a particular theory of the world or of society. I am pragmatic. I am prepared to look at the problem and say, all right, what is the best way to solve it that will produce the maximum happiness and well-being for the maximum number of people?"

"You can read about it, but it is irrelevant if you do not relate it to yourself ... which I constantly do...."

"You must not overlook the importance of discussions with knowledgeable people."

"They built this big government house on a hill with Indian convict labor in 1868 to dominate the populations...."

"the ever-present danger of regression and even collapse...."

"For at 60, more than at 50, comes the realization of the transient nature of all earthly glories and successes"

"ephemeral quality of sensory joys and pleasures, when compared to intellectual, moral, or spiritual satisfactions. . . "

"I do not work on a theory. Instead, I ask: what will make this work"

"Choose a solution which offers a higher probability of success, but if it fails, I have some other way. Never a dead end"

"If history is on their side, that liberal democracy is inevitable, then just ignore me"

"The final test is life"

"I do not believe the American system is either desirable or affordable"

"Because one is a proven tested system, the other is not proven, why not let the other chap prove it first?"

"The final proof is what happens to the society"

"History does not repeat itself in the same way each time, but certain trends and consequences are constants. If you do not know history, you think short term. If you know history, you think medium and long term"

"To understand the present and anticipate the future, one must know enough of the past, enough to have a sense of the history of a people. One must appreciate not merely what took place, but, more especially, why it took place and in that particular way. This is true of individuals, as it is for nations. "

"Young people learn best from personal experience."

"Had they done this before they were drawn into the Vietnam War, they might well have chosen not to draw the battle line in Vietnam, but in Cambodia"

"Impress by the clarity of your ideas.... I speak as a practitioner"

"If I had not been able to reduce complex ideas into simple words and project them vividly for mass understanding, I would not be here today"

"Habit of ignoring unpalatable facts and avoiding unpleasant controversy."

"But it is possible to create a society in which everybody is given not equal rewards, but equal opportunities, and where rewards vary not in accordance with the ownership of property, but with the worth of a person's contribution to that society."

"I did not understand what a cosseted life would do to the spirit of enterprise of a people, diminishing their desire to achieve and succeed. I believed that wealth came naturally from wheat growing in the fields, orchards bearing fruit every summer, and factories turning out all that was needed to maintain a comfortable life. Only two decades later, when I had to make an outdated entrepot economy feed a people, did I realize we needed to create the wealth before we can share it. And to create wealth, high motivation and incentives are crucial to drive a people to achieve, to take risks for profit, or there will be nothing to share."

"You must want. That is the crucial thing. Before you have, you must want to have. And to want to have means to be able, first, to perceive what it is you want; secondly, how to discipline and organize yourself in order to possess the things you want-the industrial sinews of our modern economic base; and thirdly, the grit and the stamina, which means cultural mutations in the way of life in large parts of the tropical areas of the

world where the human being has never found it necessary to work in the summer, harvest before autumn, and save up for the winter."

"You cannot have people just striving for a nebulous ideal"

"equate rewards to performance"

"forwardlooking good management"

"Realism and pragmatism are necessary to overcome new problems"

"avoidance of the buffet syndrome where, for a fixed price, you can take or eat as much as you want. That is why welfare and subsidies destroy the motivation to perform and succeed"

"the American state insisted on an adequate command of the American version of English before accepting the immigrants as citizens of the state ensured the unifying force of one common language in the people"

"When the British emissary Lord Macartney arrived in Beijing in 1793, bringing with him the marvels of the industrial revolution, the Emperor Qian Long was not impressed. The great emperor told the English nobleman, "There is nothing we lack nor do we need any of your country's manufactures.""

"Cradle-to-grave welfarism blunted the ambition of many budding entrepreneurs"

"Worse, high personal taxes dampened the desire of many to achieve wealth and success"

"respect for those starting new businesses"

"acceptance of failure in entrepreneurial and innovation efforts"

"tolerance for a high degree of income disparity"

"He mastered defense matters, read up the classics on strategy, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and Liddell Hart."

"He subscribed to military journals to know the latest in military weaponry."

"He [Xi Jinping, the likely incoming president of China] is reserved-not in the sense that he will not talk to you, but in the sense that he will not betray his likes and dislikes. There is always a pleasant smile on his face, whether or not you have said something that annoyed him."

"Presidents do not get reelected if they give a hard dose of medicine to their people. So, there is a tendency to procrastinate, to postpone unpopular policies in order to win elections. So problems such as budget deficits, debt, and high unemployment have been carried forward from one administration to the next."

"India is a nation of unfulfilled greatness. Its potential has lain fallow, underused."

"Indians will go at a tempo which is decided by their constitution, by their ethnic mix, by their voting patterns, and the resulting coalition governments, which makes for very difficult decision-making."

"If Iran gets the bomb, Saudi Arabia will buy the bomb from Pakistan, the Egyptians will buy the bomb from

someone, and then you have a nuclearized Middle East. Then it is only a matter of time before there is a nuclear explosion in the region."

"The Russian population is declining. It is not clear why, but alcoholism plays a role; so do pessimism, a declining fertility rate, and a declining life expectancy.... Siberia and Vladivostok are filling up with more and more Chinese. The lands on the bend of the Amur River will be repopulated by Chinese. Russians may suddenly decide that the future is worth living and bring more children into the world to reverse this demographic trend, but I do not see that shift occurring in the near future."

"Westerners have abandoned an ethical basis for society, believing that all problems are solvable by a good government...."

"In the East, we start with self-reliance. In the West today, it is the opposite. The government says give me a popular mandate and I will solve all society's problems."

"In any given society, of the 1,000 babies born, there are so many percent near-geniuses, so many percent average, so many percent morons.... It is the near-geniuses and the above-average who ultimately decide the shape of things to come...."

"I put myself down as determined, consistent, persistent. I set out to do something. I keep on chasing it until it succeeds. That is all...."

W says

Not much to gain if you've already read his autobiography, watched a few of his videos, or read some of his speeches. The value comes in the focus on the flaws of Western democracy, which he tread more delicately in his late 90's/2000 autobiography. Allison et al do drill down to the very essence of the man and there are quite a few gems.

The key takeaway from LKY's style of pragmatism is that he has strong views on generalized principles while tempering them with localized exceptions. To a typical Westerner they would seem to be inconsistent, but if you throw out the pretense of egalitarianism, they make sense.

For example, LKY praises Singapore's diversity and cosmopolitan atmosphere as well as America's ability to assimilate immigrants. However, he comes down very hard on multiculturalism. To paraphrase Mark Steyn: The British colonialists were much more multicultural than most modern multiculturalists – they knew all about other cultures, spoke obscure languages, had lived in places far flung, and had a firm grasp of history – they just knew which culture was objectively better. Though not highlighted in the book, LKY has previously spoken about the difficulty of dealing with Muslims in Singapore (once challenged on TV why he took seemingly inconsistent views towards evangelical fundamentalist Muslims and Christians: "Christians don't strap bombs to their chests."). Furthermore, he likes to stress that people are not equal and that no amount of social engineering will change this fact. He takes this to the more controversial level by saying that most abilities are 70% genetic and that different people (races, nationalities, regions) will have superior/inferior attributes.

Another example of contrast is LKY's idealized society of one governed by elites vs. his distrust of theories of the elites. Ironically he cites Hayek's Fatal Conceit as a strong influence on his role as social planner.

Perhaps LKY is more Popperian than Hayekian in that he views all social theories as simply that until tested. He refuses to wed himself to any particular ideology. A parallel axis is his fundamental distrust of pluralism and laissez faire while seeing inherent benefits in chaotic order of entrepreneurial societies like the US.

Abridged abridged LKY....

Future of China

The mistake of Germany and Japan was their effort to challenge the existing order. The Chinese are not stupid; they have avoided this mistake...The Chinese have calculated that they need 30 to 40, maybe 50 years of peace and quiet to catch up, build their system, change it from the communist system to the market system.

[They may never equal the Anglophone world because they have] cultural habits that limit imagination and creativity, reward conformity; a language that shapes thinking through epigrams and 4000 years of texts that suggest everything worth saying has already been said, and said better by earlier writers.

I do not believe you can impose on other countries standards which are alien and totally disconnected with their past. So to ask China to become a democracy, when in its 5000 years of recorded history it never counter heads; all rulers ruled by right of being the emperor, and if you disagree, you chop off heads, not count heads.

Future of the US

In the presidential system, your personal appearance on TV is decisive, whereas in a parliamentary system, the PM, before he becomes the PM, has been a MP, and probably a minister, and in Britain the people have sized you up over a period of time...and they have come to certain conclusions as to what kind of person you are, what kind of depth you have, what kind of sincerity you have in what you say...Your presidents, I mean like Jimmy Carter...my name is Jimmy Carter, I am a peanut farmer, I am running for president. The next thing you know, he was the president!

I do not believe that democracy necessarily leads to development. I believe that what a country needs to develop is discipline more than democracy...[for example] the Philippines has an American-style constitution, one of the most difficult to operate in the world.

The expansion of the right of the individual to behave or misbehave as he or she pleases has come at the expense of orderly society...it has a lot to do with the erosion of the moral underpinnings of a society and the diminution of personal responsibility. The top 3 to 5% of a society can handle this free-for-all, this clash of ideas. If you do this with the whole mass, you will have a mess.

Multiculturalism will destroy America. There is a danger that large numbers of Mexicans and others from South and Central America will continue to come to the US and spread their culture across the whole of the country. If they breed faster than the WASPs and are living with them, whose culture will prevail? Will the WASPs change them, or will the immigrants change the existing culture? They will change each other, but it would be sad for American culture to be changed even partially.

A well-ordered society with a long unbroken history, like Britain or Japan, has its national solidarity and its establishment based on the king and the royal family, a religion and the elders of the church, the elite in the ruling parties who alternate power, the elite in the public service and armed forces, the elite in commerce, industry, and in the professions.

Future of US-China relations

If the US attempts to humiliate China, keep it down, it will assure itself an enemy. If instead it accepts China as a big, powerful, rising state, and gives it a seat in the boardroom, China will take that place for the foreseeable future.

W: The most compelling argument I've heard from LKY doesn't make an appearance in the book but can be found in LKY's autobiography on US foreign relations: "I argued that if a nation on the rise, with an excess of energy, was not allowed to export its goods and services, its only alternative would be to expand and capture territory, incorporate the population, and integrate it to make for a bigger economic unit. That was why nations had empires which they controlled as one trading bloc...if trade in goods and services was blocked, then China would revert to its historical solution of small warring states conquering one another to gain control of more territory and people until they became one colossal continental empire."

Future of India

"Only over half of each Indian cohort completes primary school, a big loss"

W: Suppose the question is : which way is the causality in India? Are they uneducated because they're poor/misgoverned or is there a third variable at play?

Somewhat surprised by LKY's praise of Nehru and Congress and little mention of the progress under Rao and BJP (1991-2004) as well as the achievements of Modi in Gujarat

Future of Islamic Extremism

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not the cause of Islamic terrorism...terrorism would continue even if the Middle East problem were solved. Saudi Arabia has generously financed the missionary movement by building mosques and religious schools and paying for preachers throughout the world, spreading the teachings and practices of its austere version of Wahhabist Islam.

(Said in 2011) If the US leaves Iraq prematurely, jihadists everywhere will be emboldened to take the battle to Washington and its friends and allies. Having defeated the Russians in Afghanistan and the US in Iraq, they will believe that they can change the world. 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.

Future of National Economic Growth

I offered every parent a choice of English and their mother tongue, in whatever order they chose. By their free choice, plus the rewards of the marketplace over a period of 30 years, we have ended up with English first and the mother tongue second.

The Roman and British Empires were examples in history of how trade flourished for hundreds of years under the protection of a comprehensive unified system of laws.

We draw our talent from only 3 million people. A short mountain range is unlikely to have peaks that can equal Mount Everest. You need a long mountain range like the Himalayas unless you are special people like the Jews in Israel. With a population of four million Jews, they have the talents of a population of more than

40 million. Everyone knows that Shanghai are the brightest and sharpest people. But few know why. It is because, for over 150 years, ever since it became a treaty port for the foreign powers, it has drawn the ambitious, energetic, and talented from the Yangtze Delta, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and other provinces along the river, a catchment of some 200-300 million.

Future of Geopolitics and Globalization

Russia's future is no different than it was 10 years ago or even 20 years ago, when the Soviet Union collapsed, except that it has lost its hold on energy resources in the Caucasus and Kazakhstan. It has been unable to develop an economy that generates wealth independent of energy and natural resources.

The global financial crisis was caused by excesses of the liberal system of regulations and the belief that a completely free market will allow enormous innovation and allocate capital to the most profitable enterprises with the highest return.

Future of Democracy

In the West, especially after WWII, the government came to be seen as so successful that it could fulfill all the obligations that in less modern societies are fulfilled by family...In the East, we start with self-reliance. In the West today, it is the opposite.

I learned to ignore criticism and advice from experts and quasi-experts, especially academics in social and political sciences. They have pet theories on how a society should develop to approximate their ideal, especially how poverty should be reduced and welfare extended. I always try to be correct, not politically correct.

Between being loved and feared, I have always believed Machiavelli was right. If nobody is afraid of me, I am meaningless.

I am not intellectually convinced that one person, one vote is the best. We practice it because that is what the British bequeathed us, and we have not really found a need to challenge. But I am convinced, personally, that we would have a better system if we gave every person over the age of 40 who has a family two votes, because he or she is likely to be more careful, voting also for his or her children. He or she is more likely to vote in a serious way than a capricious young person under 30 ... at the same time, once a person gets beyond 65, then it is a problem. Between the ages of 40 and 60 is ideal, and at 60 they should go back to one vote, but that will be difficult to arrange.

I understood Deng Xiaoping when he said: if 200,000 students have to be shot, shoot them, because the alternative is China in chaos for 100 years...Deng understood, and he released it stage by stage. Without Deng, China would have imploded.

How Lee Kuan Yew Thinks

Frederick Hayek's book *The Fatal Conceit: Errors of Socialism* expressed with clarity and authority what I had long felt but was unable to express, namely the unwisdom of powerful intellects, including Einstein, when they believed that a powerful brain can devise a better system and bring about more "social justice" than what historical evolution, or economic Darwinism, has been able to work out over the centuries.

The Japanese invasion of Singapore was the single biggest political education of my life because, for three

and a half years, I saw the meaning of power and how power and politics and government went together, and I also understood how people trapped in a power situation responded because they had to live.

China's stagnation was caused by its arrogance and complacency. It refused to learn from the West. When the British emissary Lord Macartney arrived in Beijing in 1793, bringing with him the marvels of the industrial revolution, the Emperor Qian Long was not impressed. The great emperor told the English nobleman, "There is nothing we lack nor do we need any of your country's manufactures." The price China paid for this arrogance was 200 years of decline and decay, while Europe and America forged ahead.

I believe 70-80% of a person's capability, proclivities, temperament is genetic.

Shell had the best system of [selecting leaders], and the government switched from 40 attributes to three, which they called "helicopter qualities"... What are they? Power of analysis; logical grasp of the facts; concentration on the basic points, extracting the principles. You score high marks in mathematics, you have got it. But that is not enough.

June Ding says

Changed my thinking on China and democracy.

Lucas says

Somehow this book helps me understand the way Lee built Singapore, through the way he viewed China, US and the world.

Goyam Jain says

I got interested in Lee Kuan due to of course his work in Singapore but more so due to my burgeoning interest in foreign policies. It is a fascinating subject in its own right where one needs to access a country just like one would access a human character and personality. This text will be less about book or Lee Kun. He is a legendary leader and master in governance. But rather about how his views and analysis can be used and can shape our mind set with regard to governance and world around.

Lee is out and out pragmatist. He desists fundamental democratic principles like 'One person one vote', 'Assumed Innocence in law', 'Keeping individual freedom at cost of community' etc. He also with equal conviction desists fundamental communistic principles like 'Equality for all – Equal wages', 'Closing economy', 'Over-Centralization of power and policies' etc. What he believes in is pragmatic solution to each incoming problem. Without much focus on age old and shoddy theories, one should focus on probabilities of most favourable outcome. Having abled people, well educated, well established, in Trump words 'Stable Genius' who have character of giving back maximum to society because they are capable enough. Lee is completely in agreement with taking harsh decisions, if you know they will yield long term benefits. He criticizes democracy for not being able to do so due to plenty of fundamental reasons. He 'understands' Xiaoping's stand of killing even 200000 students during Tiananmen massacre or else face 100 years of unstable and slow China.

This is the background over which he lays his vision of progress, development and happiness in society. I

think Leeism would be favourable to our current regime's challenging policies on economic front. A generation must be ready to burn and bear policy changes which might be unpopular but are more probable of yielding benefits in long term.

Further, the focus Lee puts on education, single language, culture and skill development of youth, is immense. He firmly stands that USA has imbibed cohesiveness and openness. They foster innovation, excellence and entrepreneurship. Their culture of starting from scratch, their overview towards failure, and their ability to step out again is something to be learned by all nations. Current state of USA is rather unappeasable. They are completely going against their strengths. Due to ever going technology and communication advances, it is completely illogical of them to forgo their core strengths. But when you have case of mental illness against chief of 50 states, there is not much left to be debated.

Yet, India can learn importance of international language and quality education. At this juncture, India needs to create local leaders who are well learned, and have zeal to give back. This is possible through quality education and quality jobs so that best of best stay here. Also, they need to open arms to world, giving them viable alternate by strengthening infrastructure and stable government (which currently exists). How much this stable government is exercising openness and inclusion rather than achieving their personal fundamental goals is left to mass to decide.

Again, this is a good read for any one with interest in foreign policies and Singapore's miraculous development. There are a lot of other pointers touched in book. So it's a goodread.

Tey Shi says

LKY offers clear insights to how the international political arena would likely change, and some of the countries mentioned have indeed taken the measures that LKY had suggested in order to solve the problems their country is facing. A good read to understanding international relations. The theories of racial superiority remains rather dubious to me but that would be something I would comment further after I have learnt more about the topic. The compilations of various interviews and speeches spanning few decades although engaging and makes for a good read, but I cannot help but wonder if LKY's position on the various issues has changed throughout the years.

Fattah Fathun Karim says

Lee Kuan Yew might look a little authoritarian to some scale to the readers of this book. But if you go through the book in full you will get to see the mind of one of the most intelligent person ever to live. This is not his book to be precise but a collection of interview questions and answers compiled as a book. The interviewer threw quite a lot interesting questions regarding geo-politics towards him and the answers he gave proves that he is one of the greatest leaders to tread on the planet. In short the interviewers asked him about the future of China, USA, India, Russia, and their diplomatic relations. He also sheds some lights on islamic militancy and how it would affect the world unless tackled instantly.

Lee Kuan Yew was a visionary. He rose into power as soon as singapore emerged as an independent nation. His critical thinking, strategies and pragmatic approaches is what build the modern singapore, took it from the third world status to the first world in about three generations of time. He took lessons from the success of the first world countries and applied them in his. The success that followed was clearly exponential. Lee understood the importance of globalisation, global integration, free trade and meritocracy. He understood the drawbacks of multiculturalism and the need for basic homogeneity.

He argued that India which was a potential superpower when Nehru and Gandhi was holding its wheels, failed to emerge as one because they couldn't tackle India's basic problems, such as, caste system, quota system, complicated bureaucracy, lack of basic cultural homogeneity, language standardization throughout all the country and so on. They also couldn't set their goal straight and lacked a stable leadership which put the country into much political turmoil. This stagnated India's growth to a large extent. Yet But Lee insists that India has no other option. It has to tackle its core problems to be able to rise as a global superpower. India has potentials. It is abundant in resources and manpowers. So, if the core problems can be addressed India will definitely rise from this stagnant condition that India is in.

China, on the other hand has stable leadership. It could set its goal straight, i.e to be parallel with in power with respect to the United States. Chinese people focused on technology and industry and worked their ass off to bring the country to a productive situation. They are a confident nation without very little chaos and disorder because of their cultural and verbal homogeneity, and a unified goal in all. Chinese are doing very well in global politics too. They know that challenging world's biggest superpowers isn't a sensible option, because to build a better China they needed their technologies and their knowledge. So, instead they chose to comply and take meticulous steps in foreign policy making. They try to infiltrate and reduce US dominance in Southeast regions by offering more lucrative offers than the US, utilising the best out of the free market environment. The problem with China is its indifference towards global integration. It doesn't attract foreign talents and do not use them. They should instead learn from The US who offer a quality life to the foreign talents and use them. The science and technology that the US developed can be largely attributed to its immigrants. Just look at silicon valley for an example. China should have learnt from that. Instead they were busy preserving their ethnic purity. Lee also told the then Chinese president to make English the official language. But they didn't listen. According to Lee, English is a skill that every country should make its people master. Mostly because, it's the language of science, academia. Chinese govt. could've at least entered the globalisation period and prepared its nation for such moments which would take their growth rate skyhigh.

Also, Lee Kuan Yew showed his concerns on the US regarding their politics. He told that US presidential system is based on public popularity. But a country's leader should be defined by his skill, not through his media portrayal. But US culture is different. Otherwise how can they call out Hollywood celebrities to run for presidential elections? Also, he insisted that this system is so flawed that their president needs to constantly need to think about polls, public image. This is bad leadership because it hurts long term plans. Also plans that general people might not fathom and find displeasing but necessary nonetheless. Also, this gives the option for unqualified people to rise in power, because the general public are gullible. They depend on media packaging to elect their president. This doesn't let good leadership to come in. A good leader needs experience in the field which they clearly lack.

Lee showed his immense respect for the US culture which encourages and patronizes innovation. He purported that, even if the US faces economic crisis, it will take no time to jump back because its culture is shaped as thus. It will create new means by which it will jump back in no time. This is such a practice that the rest of the world lack. For instance, China has a culture of conformism. It doesn't reward innovations like the west do. That's why it relies on foreign innovations and copying them to the full. This is what halted China in challenging the global superpowers, their dependence on foreign technology.

Lee also had huge respect for the Israelis because of their meritorious culture and practical approach towards everything. He was astounded by seeing their culture of nurturing intelligence. This is what had put them on the map still instead of being surrounded by huge adversaries all around, like Iran, Syria and to be honest all of the Middle East.

Anybody who would read the book would be utterly amazed by his valuable insights. It's no wonder that such leadership can change a nation's fate. The result of which is Lee's policy that boosted Singapore's GDP per capita from 400 USD to 50000 USD. A must read book this is. Highly recommended.

Denis Tan says

Good summary of this thoughts over the duration of his public life - would be better if it documented some of the mindset shifts he had too.

Hadrian says

A 'collected sayings' book, with the sources being pieced together interviews, public statements, essays, and so forth. Although the authors did conduct their own interviews, some of these answers are fluid composites of statements made over the past twenty years.

We see the usual stuff here, but some interesting new thoughts. He shares the cautious ambivalence on China's rise, noting that its sheer size make global ascendancy extremely likely, but that it must change some 'cultural factors' including herd conformity, and that it would promptly collapse if it became a liberal democracy tomorrow. A democratic law-set and constitution do not a democratic government make.

With the United States, he doubts that it will fall into a precipitous decline, as it will invariably find a way to recover. He treads the narrow line on government programs, saying that they should be 'facilitators' and not solely 'charity cases'. Education, technical innovation, and integration-assimilation are America's strong points, although he shares his usual dictums on media micromanagement for some social issues. He also echoes the hilarious racism of the anti-immigration set, giving vague Murray-style platitudes about 'racial dilution'.

With the Middle East, he points the finger squarely at Saudi Arabia on the rise of Muslim extremism for its domestic policies, courting the United States, and missionary work of Wahhabis, which preach a tempting solution for the disaffected exploitation which Muslims feel has occurred over the past century. His interest, therefore, is developing democratic alternatives. As for Iran, he says this is where the West is likely to blunder and let Iran acquire nuclear weapons. Fear is, of course, the primary motivation for acquiring nuclear weapons, and Iran does so from fear of encirclement or destruction by the West. Once Iran does so, then the Saudis or Egyptians might get them out of fear for their own safety. A regional nuclear arms race would be disastrous for multiple reasons.

This book is not, perhaps, the end-all be-all of the man's life and thought, but it is a convenient summary for those without the time for larger books. Let -all- the facts themselves speak about the man's life and views.

Tai says

This book is written in an interview style and is quick and easy to read. A good portion of it is basically a racist rant. He starts off disparaging Hispanics, then Indians, and then Islam, blatantly stating that America

will be ruined if Hispanics aren't quickly assimilated into WASP culture, that Indians who grow up close to their culture will be lazy and corrupt, and that Islam is a religion of extremism (if all 1.3 billion Muslims were terrorists we'd be in serious trouble). This outlook is extreme but somewhat reflective of the segregationist mindset which permeates Singapore so its interesting from that perspective.

Regarding his insights on global geopolitics - intelligent readers familiar with international relations theory and looking for more details on these subjects will be disappointed by his mostly superficial and often misinformed analysis. He states that scholars should be pursuing venture capital and entrepreneurship over history and poetry - and it seems from reading this book that he has never read a legitimate academic history book in his life. Once again the book reads more as a rant about what countries or societies should be doing, without much thought into the realities and complexities they face. An example is India where he advocates a less democratic and more authoritarian political system. There are some interesting insights sprinkled in here, particularly around the rise of China and his formula for success in Singapore, but these are still relatively high level.

Regarding neo-liberalism - the book is subtly pro-neoliberalism, as he advocates free trade agreements, liberalization of economies in developing nations, etc without any economic evidence as to their benefits (and in fact Singapore's success was in large part due to its calculated introduction of a very selective number of these policies slowly over the decades - but this basic level of detail is not mentioned in the book). However he does bring up the inequality created when these policies are implemented as one of the largest issues of our time, without offering any potential solutions.

Mai Lien Nguyen says

Sách r?t hay và d? ch?u. Có l? b?i vì mình có nhi?u ?i?m ??ng tinh v?i quan ?i?m c?a Lý Quang Di?u về dân ch?, t? do, bình ??ng và toàn c?u hoá. Nh?nxg ?i?u mình ch?a bao gi? nói ???c v? dân ch? và t? do hoá ra ?ã ???c Lý Quang Di?u ?? c?p ??n. Nói chuy?n c?m tính và huy?n bí m?t ch?t thì mình có descendant là nh?n m?m, mà v? t?ng th? thì mình thích s? ri?ng t?, thích ?ien cu?ng lu?n (theo l?i horoscope và c?ng t? ý th?c), thích t? do, ghét b? b?o bu?c, nh?ng sun sight song ng? l?i lu?n c?m th?y c?n ràng bu?c v?i con ng??i; mình ?ã ngh? r?t nhi?u v? t? do cá nh?n và ý th?c c?ng ??ng r?i nh?n ra t? do hay dân ch? nào c?ng c?n ph?i có m?t khu?n kh? nh?t ??nh, mà có khu?n kh? thì c?n t? do n?a hay ch?ng? Xã h?i làm h?n ch? các cá nh?n trong m?t s? vi?c nh?t ??nh nh?ng l?i h??ng ??n m?c ?ích chung c?a s? ti?n b?, t? do và dân ch? c?ng tu? m?c ?? và ph? thu?c vào ý th?c, v?n hoá, l?i s?ng c?a con ng??i. Th? n?n là, lúc nào ch?t c?m gi?n v?c cùng s? b?o bu?c thì l?i m?t b??c t? an ?i mình. M?i chuy?n ch? cách nhau m?t l?n ranh gi?i m? ?o d?p d?nh. ??y là chuy?n mình thích thú nh?t khi ??c ???c quy?n n?y, c?m gi?c nh? g?p m?t ng??i b?n l?n tu?i l?i r?t h?i?u mình. Ngoài ra, trong sách có m?t câu b?n v? chuy?n ??c sách và h?c h?i. Einstein có m?t câu n?i ti?ng v? vi?c, ??c sách nhi?u làm thui ch?t tr? tu? và s? s?ng t?o. Nh?ng có l?, ý c?a ông ph?i h?p v?i v? c?a LQD m?i tr?n ??y. Tr?n ??y th? nào, thì xin m?i ??c quy?n n?y s? r?o h?n.

Bàn v? các qu?c gia, t??ng quan l?c l??ng và xu th? phát tri?n, các quan ?i?m c?a Lý Quang Di?u ?ã, nói theo ki?u truy?n ch??ng, ?? thông kinh m?ch cho mình kh? nhi?u. Th? c?t l?i và (t? cho mình là) trung t?m ch?nh là con ng??i. Nh?ng con ng??i ? ?t n??c, v?ng m?n kh?c nhau b? chi ph?i b?i nhi?u y?u t?, và ?t h?n con ???ng phát tri?n là kh?ng gi?ng nhau, nh?ng c?ng d?a trên n?n t?ng, s? s?ng t?o, kh?ng ng?ng ??i m?i t? khoa h?c c? b?n. H?m l?u r?i, b?n có t?m s? v?i mình, h?i ti?c vì ?ã h?c ngành kinh t? (theo m? mình n?i là cái ngành chung chung m? h? ch?ng ngh? ng?ng) mà mu?n chuy?n ??i sang ngành k? thu?t nh?ng ?ã mu?n r?i ... H?m qua, mình g?p m?t anh, anh b?o ?ã ch?n r?i thì h?y t?m ni?m s? l?a ch?n c?a mình là ??ng nh?t và theo ?u?i n?, lúc tr? khi quy?t ??nh h?y suy ngh? k?. Ng?m l?i, mình c?ng h?i l?ng v?i s? l?a ch?n c?a mình (dù hi?n t?i v?n l?ng b?ng) nh?ng n?u ???c khuy?n các b?n tr? h?n th? hy v?ng các b?n s? ??c quy?n n?y và

có s? l?a ch?n v? con ???ng khoa h?c c? b?n, khoa h?c ?ng d?ng hay khoa h?c xã h?i; vì mình bi?t tu?i tr? m? h? mà, ??n gi? mình c?ng v?n m? h? th?i. Nh?ng ??i kh?i, m? h? c?ng có nhi?u lo?i ... Theo l?i anh Vi?t (mình g?p ? trên) thì ch? có m?t s? ít ng??i may m?n, nh? Mozart, steve jobs ..., m?i t? nh? sinh ra ?ã bi?t mình mu?n làm g?, s?ng ch?t vì ?i?u g?i th?i. L?i nói ??n chuy?n s? ít ng??i may m?n, trong cu?n sách này, Lý Quang Di?u có quan ?i?m r?t hay v?è bình ??ng, ông kh?ng tin vào "bình ??ng". Hai ch? bình ??ng và công b?ng n?n hi?u theo ngh?a n?o và li?n h? ch?ng v?i các b?u c? ph? thông ??u phi?u. Ph??ng th?c chia lá phi?u mà LQD g?i ý, mình ngh?, v? lý lu?n r?t ?n t??ng và kh? ch?t ch?.

N?i chung ??c xong sách, mu?n n?i kh?ng h?t ng?y v? nh?ng chuy?n, ôi th?i "v? ??i" mà ?nh h??ng tr?c ti?p hay gián ti?p ??n ??i s?ng th?c ti?n xã h?i. Tuy n?i, mình l?i v?n b? ?nh h??ng b?i A m?i r?i c?n cao tr?, n?n tin t??ng r?ng kh? n?ng l?nh ??o (hay m?t s? kh? n?ng kh?c) c?a con ng??i có th? rèn gi?a ???c. ??y là ??c tin c?a mình th?i, c?n kh?ng tin nh? v?y mình s? nh?t chí ch?t m?t (là tuýp ng??i d? lung lay n?n ph?i bám ch?c vào m?t cái g?i ?6 mà).

N?i dung th?i hay nh?ng d?ch th?i d? qu?á. Ch?a có th?i gian ??c sách ti?ng Anh xem h? vi?t nh? th? n?o, nh?ng d? l?m, l?i c?n kh?ng có ch? th?c n?a n?n th?i ?ành t? th?n v?n ??ng v?i hi?u bi?t n?ng c?n. À, g?i là ko có ch? th?c c?ng h?i oan, th?c ch?t là có reference n?i dung ?o?n ?6 n?m trong ?o?n thuy?t tr?nh hay bài lu?n n?o c?a LQD.

Guyin Y. says

I believe certain parts were taken out of context due to the particular format of this book, but nonetheless I have so much respect for LKY. "I want to be correct, not politically correct" --- so sharp, so wise and so brutally honest!

Brit Cheung says

I got a Chinese copy and read the Ebook of English the previous year, and still possessed the immense impulsion to read it again. The book and his other works scintilate his perceptive state visions and wisdom for international studies, genuinely illuminating and thought-provoking.

Acclaimed to be the founding father of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew was one of the rare country leaders winning paramount respects both in Asian regions and western hemisphere. His preeminence not only lies in that he successfully transformed a backward city scaled state into a nation of great and unique significance and greatly improved his peoples living standards but also in that his political wit and wisdom that are still effectively illuminating leaders of many nations to some extent ,both big and small.

One detail that I conjured up is that when president Mr Obama initially took his presidency to commence his first state visit to China in 2009 , he first visited Singapore before he went to China. It is very likely that he thought it would be better to consult Mr LKY for his perspectives on how to deal with China or Sino-US relation stuff.

I will confine my attention to the first three chapters and articulate what I understand about the book.

The first two chapter are on how China and the United States' future will be like. The answer he reckons is an inevitable rise for China. But he thought rise is not a good word, fraught with provocative connotations and better to be changed to evolution or development, which were soft ones. The advantages for China are its

population and economic influence on its neighboring nations and beyond. China can easily sanction a country merely by denying its access to its 1.3 million population market if it wants to. And it was almost late for US to scramble for economic partners and influence exclusively both because these nations are within China's proximity geographically and because China has already built strong economic ties in the form of FDI and other mechanisms. So even the negotiations on US-leading TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) has reached an agreement, any country involved cannot sever the economic ties with China and exclusively rely on US, which they know so well.

while meantime they are all alert and weary about their own national interests in order not to plunge into the same historical destiny in which China in ancient times was the dominant power of the region. I read from the lines and could speculate that America's pivot to Asia policy must have been influenced by Mr Lee Kuan Yew's suggestions. US's military presence in Pacific Asia is absolutely necessary if it doesn't want to lose East Asia, the economic hub and engine for this century.

The two nations are both co-operative and competitive but not necessarily making each other adversaries, which serves no interests for both and the world. For instance, global issues like climate change will not be settled with each other's absence.

The advantages for the United States are its creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, its universal ideals and English language which is widely used across the globe.

The United States can appeal global talents in its favor and get them fitting quickly but for China, Chinese language is extremely difficult to learn and its culture is not easy for global talents to fit in.

Well, I want to complement his ideas with some of my understandings. The first is why China will inevitably grow to be a global power with its uniqueness besides Mr Lee's analysis. The second I want to talk about is the language issue.

I need to focus on the second one to save me some time. Chinese language indeed posed a barrier for attracting global talents. And as far as I read Mr Lee once advised Chinese leaders to make the country English the first language, but even himself knew that it would be unfathomable not only because of China's vast territory but because its varied and distinct cultures.

That was a mission impossible. But China can send its talented young people to America and other regions to learn the cutting-edge technology and managerial expertise and bring them back. But I think what Mr Lee failed to mention is that Chinese people's civilian creativity and mass enthusiasm for entrepreneurship, which emerged just recent years. I can be sure that power and magnitude will be staggering and stunning, which is quite even beyond governments' expectations. Take "single day" shopping spree for instance, one day's volume of transactions online reached stunning 91.2 billion RMB this year, a staggering number. Those ubiquitous online shops are just some visible examples of its domestic consumption power whose potential is far away from fully tapped. The mass entrepreneurship and innovation is on the surge.

For western talents working in China, I believe it won't pose them immense challenges because more and more young people are becoming bilingual, a favorable trend for both. But I do hope the Chinese people should be more inclusive and forge a tolerable atmosphere for attracting global talents; they are fools if they don't grasp the trend.

I intend to leave the first one next time.

Anyway it is a great and important, instructive book for which I plan to do some note-taking when I read it for a third time.

Angie Kim says

Lee Kuan Yew is brilliant. I never agreed so much to one politician's views.

On India:

"I am against a society which has no sense of nurturing its best to rise to the top. I am against a feudal society where your birth decides where you stay in the pecking order. The example of that, par excellence, is India's caste system."

On America:

"The ideas of individual supremacy ... when carried to excess, have not worked. They have made it difficult to keep American society cohesive. Asia can see it is not working. Those who want a wholesome society where young girls and old ladies can walk in the streets at night, where the young are not preyed upon by drug peddlers, will not follow the American model.... The top 3 to 5% of a society can handle this free-for-all, this clash of ideas. If you do this with the whole mass, you will have a mess...."

"governments believed that they could always afford to support the poor and the needy: widows, orphans, the old and homeless, disadvantaged minorities, unwed mothers. Their sociologists expounded the theory that hardship and failure were due not to the individual person's character, but to flaws in the economic system. So charity became "entitlement," and the stigma of living on charity disappeared. Unfortunately, welfare costs grew faster than the government's ability to raise taxes to pay for it."

"One person, one vote is a most 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."

"Contrary to what American political commentators say, I do not believe that democracy necessarily leads to development. I believe that what a country needs to develop is discipline more than democracy. The exuberance of democracy leads to undisciplined and disorderly conditions which are inimical to development. The ultimate test of the value of a political system is whether it helps that society to establish conditions which improve the standard of living for the majority of its people, plus enabling the maximum of personal freedoms compatible with the freedoms of others"

On islam:

"Among Muslims, especially in the Middle East, there is a profound belief that their time has come and that the West has put them down for too long.

Militant Islam feeds upon the insecurities and alienation that globalization generates among the less successful. And because globalization is largely U.S.-led and driven, militant Islam identifies America and Americans as the threat to Islam."

On humans in general:

It is the near-geniuses and the above-average who ultimately decide the shape of things to come.... We want an equal society. We want to give everybody equal opportunities. But, in the back of our minds, we never deceive ourselves that two human beings are ever equal in their stamina, in their drive, in their dedication, in their innate ability.'

I have always thought that humanity was animal-like, while Confucian theory says that it can be improved. I am not sure it can be, but it can be trained, it can be disciplined.... You can make a left-hander write with his or her right hand, but you cannot really change his or her natural-born instinct.
