Speaker Series
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May 14, 2005

A world in transition
China’s rise symbolic of power shift from US to Asia

We were honoured to have a living legend of diplomacy, Dr Henry Kissinger, deliver a keynote address at the 10th annual CLSA China Forum. For those of you who could not join us in Beijing, we are pleased to provide this transcript of his thought-provoking remarks.

Dr Kissinger began by putting Asia into context. ‘The most important event that is going on in the world today, more important than terrorism, more important than proliferation,’ he told us, ‘is the movement of the centre of gravity of world affairs from the Atlantic to the Pacific.’

And world affairs have been tested by an unprecedented relationship between economic power and military might. ‘In the past, those two were very close together. But, today it is possible to be a huge military power and not be able to translate it into political effectiveness everywhere. And it’s possible to be a big economic power without necessarily being able to win a war against every country in the world.’

Dr Kissinger also offers a different perspective on terrorism. ‘The reason terrorism is a problem for every country is not the acts of violence as such, [but] because there now exists in the world private groups that are capable of doing to the states what only the states could do in the past . . . . And that means that a whole new approach to the international order is needed.’

As CLSA Chairman Gary Coull explained in Beijing, it’s no exaggeration to say that China would not be occupying the place it does in the world today if it had not been for Dr Kissinger’s ground-breaking work, beginning in 1969, to re-establish US-China relations. There was no better speaker for the milestone 10th CLSA China Forum to help us understand where the country is headed in the coming decades.

Dr Kissinger fields questions at the China Forum
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Biography – Dr Henry Kissinger

Dr Henry Kissinger, Chairman, Kissinger Associates

Dr Henry Kissinger was US Secretary of State from September 1973 until January 1977. Having held many other posts under various presidents, he is currently a member of the Defense Policy Board.

Chairman of consulting firm Kissinger Associates, his other roles include being a member of the International Council of JP Morgan Chase; and Chairman of the International Advisory Board of American International Group.

Dr Kissinger received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973; the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1977; and the Medal of Liberty in 1986.

A prolific author, his most recent work is Crisis: The Anatomy of Two Major Foreign Policy Crises. He has also published many articles on US foreign policy, international affairs and diplomatic history. He has a column that appears in leading US newspapers in more than 40 foreign countries.
Presentation

Dr Henry Kissinger is a figure with few equals in the world, a figure on the diplomatic scene in the Seventies, and for the last 25 years still very much a part of the international diplomatic world. You’d already know him by the broad brushes of his career – Secretary of State for the US, the architect of the great opening of China, the father of détente with the Soviet Union, the inventor of shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973. Let me give you a brief introduction to the historical framework, which brings us together today, a framework that will make Dr Kissinger’s vision for US-China relations seem all the more prescient and will highlight the remarkable economic story of China that we’re discussing this week.

The China that Dr Kissinger first visited in 1971 on a secret trip to pave the way for Richard Nixon’s historic trip to China the following year was startlingly different from the China we see today. When Dr Kissinger made that first trip, China had just 820 million people versus 1.3 billion today. Beijing had half the population it has today and roughly five per cent of the automobiles in the country, 100,000 versus two million today. He saw a country isolated from the world since the Communist victory in 1949. It’s remarkable to think the exports of 1970 were just under US$5bn, whereas today they’re 100 times larger at around US$500bn and climbing daily. China’s imports are also well over US$500bn and one of the key ingredients that are driving the regional and global economics. Imports were barely more than US$4bn when Dr Kissinger arrived, so the country that he saw and that he’ll offer perspectives on for us was only a shadow of what it is today in economic and political terms. I think it’s no exaggeration to say that China would not be occupying the place it does in the world today and we would not be here examining China in so much detail had it not been for the ground-breaking work done by our guest speaker those many years ago.

Whenever one recalls the conditions in 1971, one remembers how changed circumstances were. In 1969, when we decided to make moves towards China, there were no communications and almost everything either side did was wrong because each side misunderstood the other. So, for example, we tried to appeal to get an approach to China via Romania, but the Chinese did not particularly trust East European communists. So that was not too successful. Then the Chinese tried to approach us through Edgar Snow, whom we considered a left-wing journalist, so whatever he said we ignored because we thought: ‘of course, you’d expect him to say friendly things about China.’

One of the things we did was to permit the purchase by Americans of US$100 worth of goods in Hong Kong as tourists. That was considered a hugely significant move. And it triggered four foreign-service officers, who were experienced in Soviet affairs, to call on President Nixon and to warn him that if we continued on this daring road of permitting Americans to buy US$100 worth of goods as individuals, this would guarantee a world war with the Soviet Union. It was too dangerous to open to China. Well things have changed dramatically. I’ve been back to China 40 times since then and I’ve just had an excellent visit organised by the Centre of Strategic Studies, some of whose members are here and I want to use this occasion to thank them for their extraordinary courtesy.

But let me talk about the international situation as I see it. And rather than talk only about China, I would rather put it into a general international framework, with emphasis on China. The most important event that is going
on in the world today, more important than terrorism, more important than proliferation is the movement of the centre of gravity of world affairs from the Atlantic to the Pacific. We have had three big revolutions in world affairs in the last 500 years. The first revolution was the rise of Europe in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, accelerating with each century. And that, for about 150 years, in effect made Europe the centre of world affairs.

You could not speak of global international relations in the 17th century because there was no way China and Europe could significantly interact. You couldn’t talk about it in the 19th century because world affairs were determined in European capitals. America was, more or less, isolationist and Asia was in no position to assert itself. In the second half of the 19th century and accelerating in the 20th century, there was the rise of the United States. And that was caused in large part, or at least accelerated in large part, because of the inability of the European nations to manage their own internal relationships. Specifically, they were not successful in managing the rise of new powers within their system.

In 1871, when Germany was unified, the British Prime Minister Disraeli said, ‘this is a greater event than the French Revolution’. They understood that a new power had emerged, but they did not know how to manage it – for two reasons. One was that the established countries really only knew the pattern to which they were used, and second was that the rising country became intoxicated with its growing power and did not know how to integrate itself into the European system. If you look at the history of the 20th century, Germany is now maybe the major economic country in Europe. They could have had this a lot more easily if they had not fought two wars. The two wars that they provoked delayed what history would have produced and what the political and economic system would have produced in the normal course of events.

The second great change that we are living through now, the rise of the United States, was produced by the self-weakening of Europe and it was an extraordinary change in the sense that a country that had no experience in foreign policy and the majority of whose population did not want to be involved in foreign policy rose to imperial status. At the height of the Cold War, I gave a speech in Omaha, Nebraska in the middle of America and in the question period – and this was a bankers’ convention – somebody got up and said, ‘you’re talking about the dangers of this period, but let’s be realistic. What would anyone want from us here in Omaha?’ The headquarters of the Strategic Air Command was 10 miles down the road. If there was going to be any war, Omaha was among the very first targets to be attacked, but the good citizens of that region had no inward perception of that problem.

So whenever I travel, I’m always asked what is the grand strategy of the United States. The fact is that the people in office in Washington may or may not have a strategy, but the American public, even today, rarely thinks in strategic terms. They think in terms of a problem that needs a solution, that has a time limit, and that will go away. They do not think like European and, even more Asian nations, do – that they are part of a long historical process and that problems never get solved; they get mitigated and if they get solved they are the admission ticket to another problem. History never stops.

This difference between Americans looking at programmes and Chinese looking at evolution is one of the issues that affects American-Chinese relations. Now we are living through the third great change: the rise of Asia. This started with the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, though nobody recognised it fully at that time. It was the first time that Asian nations demonstrated
what everyone should have known anyway, that the superiority of the European system was the result of a temporary superiority of organisation and it was not inherent in the societies as most Europeans thought at the time. This rise of Asia has been accelerated with every decade since, but the symbol of the rise of Asia is the rise of China.

In 1971, China was a significant country, but it was not a major economic factor in world affairs. If anyone had described to Nixon and me in 1972, after we were here, that a dominant Chinese economic position in Asia was likely and that there would be a huge balance of payments problem in relation to the United States, or had even described the traffic jams of Beijing and Shanghai, that would have been considered unbelievable. And in a way it is unbelievable.

All of this was accomplished without foreign governmental aid, and in a very brief period of time. The real rise of China occurred after Deng Xiaoping's second return in 1979 and it took some years to get started, so it was done in less than 20 years. It is the fundamental element in international relations today. How is this general shift in world power from the Atlantic to the Pacific going to occur? And what will be the residue of it when the periods of adjustment are over? The symbol of this, but not the only expression of this, is American relations with China. I say it's only a symbol of it because other countries are coming up that will also play a role.

In this country, one needs no lectures on the rise, on the reassertion of a national foreign policy by Japan, a process that is going on slowly, deliberately, but significantly. Of course, in China this is viewed in terms of relations with China, but there is an additional problem of how will Japan view its relations with America, China, Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. Then there's the rise of India, not as dramatic as the rise of China, but also extremely significant. In much American discussion of that subject, the rise of India is often raised in terms of democracy versus other systems in Asia. In my view, this is not the way India looks at foreign policy.

In 1961, during the Berlin crisis, I was a consultant in the Kennedy White House. At that time the belief was that somewhere along the line, India as a fellow democracy would support our position. And I kept telling my colleagues that there was no possibility of India supporting us in Berlin. Berlin was a European city, thousands of miles away, of no conceivably imaginable interest to India. The Soviet Union was a few hundred miles away. Pakistan was right at the border. No responsible Indian statesman would run major risks for Berlin when it had the task of building a new country with restless neighbours.

I look at Indian foreign policy as very similar to what British policy was when they were in India, proving that fundamental national interests always tend to assert themselves. India looks at the region from Singapore to Aden as an area of fundamental strategic interest for it. And it structures the relationships of other outside powers in that area, of America, of China, of Japan in relation to how it affects that region. In dealing with India, one needs to understand that this is not a country that will lead a great crusade. It is a country that has fundamental interests, many of them parallel to those of the United States – especially on the issue of Islamic fundamentalism – but all of them Indian. And like every rising country, its problem is how to relate its national interests to the general interests.
In thinking about international politics, one has to understand a number of principles. One, I’ve already mentioned – there are no final answers. There is no point at which you can say this problem is now settled and we can all go home and worry about domestic economics. Second, every country has, and should have, its national interests. But peace results if the national interests are brought into relationship with each other and when each society believes that maintaining stability is more important than achieving its grievances by force or pressure.

That is the fundamental principle of international politics and it is a special problem in our period for a number of reasons. First, the economies of the world have been linked together in a manner that is totally unprecedented. Second, the consciousness of the world has been linked together in an unusual manner, if only because you can watch what is going on on television contemporaneously, and the speed of that change is unprecedented. When I was Secretary of State, there were no computers; we typed everything on carbon paper; I didn’t have a phone in my car as Secretary of State – I had a radio and the only way they could find me was to let every embassy in Washington know that they were looking for me, in effect, because everyone could listen in to the radio.

Third, there’s a big gap now – and this has never happened before – between economic power and military power. In the past, those two were very closely linked. But today it is possible to be a huge military power and not be able to translate it into political effectiveness everywhere. And it’s possible to be a big economic power without necessarily being able to win a war. For the United States, the big problem is that we are, and will be, the dominant military power for the next decade. But that does not guarantee that we can achieve everything that we want in every part of the world through military power.

China is a growing economic power and it has the reverse problem. So how to relate the elephant to the whale is a serious question for the international system. And all of this is going on at the moment when a number of other occurrences are taking place, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and, in many parts of the world, the disintegration of the existing political structure. The reason terrorism is a problem for every country is not the acts of violence as such. It is because of the existence of private groups capable of doing to the states what only the states could do in the past. This means that the international system as we’ve known it, where the threat to your security could come primarily, or exclusively, from the violation of national borders by other states, is totally altered. It means also that to the extent that a country becomes the target of these threats, it is almost obliged to act pre-emptively because it cannot wait for the threats to occur since the consequences are so significant. A whole new approach to the international order is therefore needed. On the one hand, there is the need for pre-emptive action. On the other, you cannot have one country alone determining when you can act pre-emptively. So how this will finally shake down, you cannot yet tell. But eventually things will move in that direction.

Terrorism is related to the issue of proliferation. Weapons of mass destruction produce an entirely new international equation because in the past wars were fought because leaders believed that the consequences of war were less than the consequences of not going to war. They calculated some benefit from the war. With weapons of mass destruction, the consequences of war are more disastrous than any possible gain you can calculate from it and therefore there is an imperative for peaceful solutions that no previous period has faced. But it also means that to permit countries to acquire such capabilities
is a challenge to the responsibilities of countries in a position to prevent it. When I was Security Adviser and Secretary of State - and anybody else in that position - we had to begin by learning the catastrophe a nuclear war would represent, but we had to act as if we were prepared to do it.

That was in a two-power world with adversaries with similar problems and calculations. But when you have dozens of countries having to make their own calculations for deterrence and then when outside countries have to calculate the impact on each other of what happens between the countries that are trying to deter each other and when you add to that the possibility of proliferation of materials into private hands, then you have a world that is unmanageable. Therefore the issue of proliferation must be a fundamental challenge of those countries in a position to prevent it - not as a favour to each other, but as a necessity of the international system.

If 10 years from now, there are 30 nuclear countries, we would be in an entirely different world. I would predict that at that point, we would face the problem that the German philosopher, Emmanuel Kant, described 250 years ago. He said that sooner or later there would be some sort of world structure for peace. The only question is whether it comes about by human foresight or by catastrophes of such a magnitude that there is no other choice. Ask yourself the question, what happens if a nuclear weapon goes off, anywhere - New York, Beijing, New Delhi, London? It doesn't matter really where. And 100,000 people get killed in an hour and all civic order breaks down and there are no hospitals and no bridges and no roads for weeks. What will that do to human consciousness anywhere, not just in the country where it occurred? And this is what we have to think of today. After all, nuclear materials in Pakistan, a country friendly to the United States and to China, were distributed to several other countries, and Pakistan is a responsible country, by most standards. If that can happen there, what must happen when there are proliferation threats? This is why one is concerned about proliferation.

The issue is not whether North Korea or Iran can attack the United States. In fact, in respect of these two countries we're in a better position to safeguard ourselves than most other nations. The issue is what happens when, as a result of that spread, other proliferations inevitably occur. That you can calculate yourself from the geography of those countries, and these are the terms in which one should look at it, not in the technical terms of how to negotiate the next step. It's in this context now that I want to speak about relations with China.

I'm identified in the United States with those who urge a cooperative relationship with China. The argument is often made that I have a certain sentimental feeling about China based on my past record and based on my frequent visits. It is absolutely true that I have enormous respect for this country and I like its people. But I would like to believe that no serious thinker about foreign policy would base a long-term relationship on his own personal attitudes towards a country. To my Chinese friends and to my American colleagues I always insist that relations with China are not a favour that we do for each other; it is not a personal preference. It must be in the fundamental interest of the two countries or it cannot be sustained.

If, in the normal course of events, history evolves the way European history has evolved and the way world history has evolved, two things will happen. One, China will keep pressing explicitly against the existing international system and the United States will attempt to restrain it. And in a way, both of these things are happening. In the United States, there is a school of thought that looks at China as another version of the Soviet Union and it would like to
slide China into the position once occupied by the Soviet Union: a country to be contained. In China, there are, and must be, tendencies to say, 'we do not like any hegemonic power in the world, not because we dislike Americans, but because we dislike hegemony. We will try to reduce this American power. And how do we reduce this American power? By creating blocs from which America is excluded and that constrain the American freedom of action'. And both tendencies exist and my point is that both tendencies are logical.

I have written a lot about balance of power but that sort of policy inevitably ends in some sort of confrontation. And we cannot afford it on either side. Now luckily, my impression is the American Government in its principal operating branches understands this. I'm convinced that the Chinese government in its principal operating branches understands this too. Nobody wants to go back to a Cold War-type of thinking. Everybody knows that the damage to the world economy would be overwhelming and that at the end of such a process, everybody would be worse off, if indeed such a process has any end. So how to implement that from case to case? It's a challenge that we all face. Let me illustrate this with two issues that affect China-American relations: the first is Taiwan; the second is Korea.

On Taiwan, it is easy to criticise the slow progress that has been made, but it is also remarkable, if one thinks back, what the two sides have accomplished. When I came to China in 1971, we still recognised Taipei as the capital of China. Six months later an American president visited a capital that America didn't recognise. Still we had long and useful discussions with Chinese leaders. If you look at it through the years that have elapsed, we have navigated this relationship on both sides amidst many storms by keeping in mind the fundamental necessity of peaceful relations between China and the United States and from that point of view one can say progress is being made.

I always say outside this country, and therefore I will also say inside this country [China], there are three principles, which I believe are essential to maintain these conditions. One is that the United States recognises that there is one China and that the United States does not deviate from this position. This means it does not encourage, and indeed that it opposes, any attempt to violate this principle. Now, this has been restated by seven American presidents of both administrations. The second is that our Chinese friends understand our concern for peaceful resolution and our willingness to accept any outcome based on peaceful resolution but not one based on force. Third, that everybody able to affect the situation, behave with restraint, including, especially, the authorities in Taiwan. On the basis of these three principles, I am hopeful that progress is being made and that we can continue the process. And one should keep in mind that now seven American administrations have carried out, more or less, this policy, with slightly different words.

What I have expressed here is not my personal view. It is the operating policy that I have observed of the United States, even when it is not expressed. And in that spirit, we can only welcome the sort of dialogue that has evolved in recent weeks between China and Taiwan and reassert what has been said before that any outcome negotiated between the Chinese parties will be accepted by the United States.
As to Korea I have stated the issue of proliferation, and that applies generally, no matter where it operates. The special issue of Korea is that here is a country on China's borders, a basically weak country that stakes its claim to international influence almost entirely on its possession of nuclear weapons. If it succeeds, it will trigger nuclear aspirations in other parts of Asia including on the Korean peninsula and in Japan. It is therefore a country, which China and the United States are peculiarly able to affect and that is something that has to be calculated in our relationship. At the same time, we Americans have an obligation to understand that a country on the borders with China is not just another country. For all these reasons, I have advocated in the United States, some dialogue between our two countries that includes Northeast Asia, in some manner, in order to have a roadmap for what we are trying to do. And I hope that sooner or later something like that, or some variation of it, will emerge.

We have many other issues around the world that will affect us all. For example the strategic challenge of energy. As countries rise, their consumption of energy and raw materials is bound to increase. As industrial production increases around the world demand will outstrip supply, unless supply increases dramatically. We will reach a very strange political situation. In the 19th century, it used to be said there was a great game being played in Central Asia between Britain and Russia over access to the routes to India. And even though most people didn't understand what was going on, it affected the foreign policies of countries for nearly 50 years. Now, strangely enough, the potential for such a great game again exists, except it is now pipelines, and the direction of pipelines, and access to resources that affect major consuming countries.

The market alone is going to be able to regulate this. Somewhere along the line there will have to be some sort of consumer discussion. This is as well a subject that I believe China and the United States needs to discuss bilaterally. China and American leaders will meet five times this year and they're starting something called the Global Dialogue, which is headed by the Deputy Secretary of State in the United States and by an equivalent personality on the Chinese side. They will have an opportunity to chart something that is relevant to the challenges that our period now faces.

The first Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, an old friend of mine, once told me what he claims to be an old Chinese proverb - my Chinese friends here will forgive me. I don't know whether there are as many Chinese proverbs as they tell me and whether they may not make them up as they go along, but he said that the proverb goes something like this: 'When there is turmoil under the heavens, little problems are dealt with as if they were big problems and big problems aren't dealt with at all. When there is order under the heavens, big problems are reduced to the little problems and the little problems should not obsess us.' Now, whether this is a Chinese proverb or a Lee Kuan Yew saying, I think it is a key to our period. Can we distinguish little problems from big problems and can we reduce big problems to little problems? If we can do this, we can create an international order that is unique in that it avoids violence, at least among the big powers, and that really would be a great contribution. Let me stop here and take a few questions.

Garry Coull

Thank you Dr Kissinger for some very thought-provoking remarks.

Question

According to you, and from a US point of view, is there still a five-country strategic pentagon in existence and how are they interacting?
Dr Kissinger: Which are the five countries that are most significant, and how are they interacting?

Question: Yes, that’s it.

Dr Kissinger: That’s the sort of question that gets you into huge trouble. I would say - of course as an American I would put the US first - the US, China, India, I’d include Russia, even though at this moment it is relatively weaker because of its geographic extent and Europe in some manner, but the organisation of Europe puts it in a position between its past, which it is rejecting, and its future, which it hasn’t built. Also, no single European country is in a position, either domestically or in terms of capability, to affect events to the degree that I have described. I would add Japan, which is in a position to affect events. In the foreseeable future, perhaps countries like Brazil. Now, how they are interacting, that is exactly the issue that makes the current International system relatively less stable, because a number of countries, in addition to the ones I’ve mentioned, are seeking to analyse exactly the answer to your question. I think Japan is one of those. And I’ve mentioned India. This is exactly the issue for many of these countries.

Question: How close are we to a pressure point in Iran that would require some sort of pre-emptive action by either the United States or Israel?

Dr Kissinger: First of all, you should understand what I mean by saying that if diplomacy fails, you take pre-emptive action. Pre-emptive action is at the end of a significant process, so you will not wake up one morning and find that the United States has taken pre-emptive military action against Iran. A policy on Iran requires an answer to at least two questions. One, what exactly is the status of their current nuclear programme? And it ought to be possible among the various intelligence organisations in the world to come to an agreement on a factual basis. Second, how much time is there before the process becomes irreversible? Those are the first factual questions that have to be answered. Then two policy questions need consideration: assuming there is a negotiation, which I assume there has to be and which I think America should be prepared to join in some form. Assuming there is a negotiation, when do we know it has failed? Or has it succeeded? How do we know that, because that is related to the previous question. How much time do we have? Once we have decided it has failed, in my view that would be hugely controversial. And what are the sanctions – before we think of military action – that should be taken? Now, these are questions capable of an answer and one should not settle them by newspaper editorials or by calendars, because on that sort of question one ought to be able to achieve a consensus. And we can still disagree about the wisdom of sanctions and so forth.

Question: In your view, based on the last three years, actually since 9/11, the last four years, do you think the United Nations is a viable organisation or do you think some sort of significant restructuring is necessary for it to have relevance in today’s society?

Dr Kissinger: I think that the United Nations is an indispensable organisation no matter what assessment you make of the whole range of things they can do. If it did not exist, in a way, you’d have to invent it. You would need a forum in which leaders can meet naturally and where they need to appear every year without turning that into a question of prestige, of who invited whom. So as a means of communication, the UN is indispensable. There are many problems around the world of a humanitarian, technical nature that can only be solved on a global basis and for which the subsidiary organisations of the United Nations
are essential. On the question of war and peace, the United Nations has played an important role in peace-keeping operations, that is, when the parties have agreed to maintain the peace. All of this they can do and all of this should be strengthened.

What the United Nations cannot easily do is peace-making – when the five or six major powers disagree. When they agree, it can be done, but when they disagree, I don’t know a case where it has worked. Also the United Nations has fallen into rhetorical stances. When there was a non-aligned movement, I used to say to my friends of the non-aligned movement, it is statistically impossible that the United States is always wrong. Every once in a while we are bound to do something that is right, even if it is by accident. And why is it that you can never express this? In the last few years, the United Nations has too easily fallen into the pattern of criticising the United States for alleged hegemony, when, if you look at it from an analytical point of view, the United States did, in many cases, what was necessary, even if the tactics were not as subtle as you might have wished. So the United Nations needs to bring its rhetoric into some relationship with some of the necessities that I have attempted to describe. But the United Nations as an organisation must be made more relevant and in any event, it is essential.

**Question**

I actually have two quick questions. At the beginning of your speech, you spoke about the bankers of Omaha and how they are focused inwardly on their relevance in economics and in politics, do you think that view still exists in the States? And the second question is, specifically with reference to the WTO textile changes, do you think the US will over time move back to more protectionist policies?

**Dr Kissinger**

Are people still thinking like they did in Omaha? Probably yes. The average American doesn’t travel much. He certainly doesn’t travel much abroad. The newspapers in the biggest part of the country do not cover much foreign news and almost no analytical news, and the television, unfortunately, focuses on some dramatic event, and keeps going over that, but they never explain the historic background or the long-term trends. So American leaders, of whatever party, have a very difficult time convincing the public of the long-term considerations.

The American thinking about foreign policy, even of the international specialists, is sort of resistant to the idea of foreign policy as an endless process. If you look at how Americans have justified decisions since World War II, almost every programme is presented to the American public as having a time limit. As late as 1997 when we sent troops to Bosnia, President Clinton, who is a very sophisticated man, nevertheless felt it necessary to say ‘this is a one-year project’ and no Republican challenged him on the time limit. So an American President and Secretary of State have not only to define the policy, they have to educate the public. And it’s one of our problems with respect to China, and also to some extent, as we will learn, with India, because we think in a less strategic way and a less long-range way. But those who are concerned with foreign policy are moving more and more in the direction that I have tried to describe to you.

**Question**

If I understood you correctly, you described a need to move beyond the power framework of thinking and I wonder if, in the Asian context, that is possible considering the powers that need to be balanced, namely Japan and China and possibly Korea. Is there an importance for the United States to create balance in a part of the world that may become unbalanced?
Dr Kissinger

In some of my lectures in America, I make the point that if you look at the world today, one of the problems is exactly as the one you described, namely that there are different foreign policies in different parts of the world. In Europe you have a globalised system in which strategy between the countries is a very low component. In the Middle East you have a system, which is more like the religious wards of Europe of the 17th century. And in Asia you have a system that is more like the 19th century pattern in which the countries think of each other as competitive to some significant extent.

Can the United States play a useful role? Yes, if it does not get over-ambitious and try to tell everybody how to organise their own external and internal relationship. The United States can play a useful role, and the countries concerned, should avoid on the one hand, excessive conflict, and on the other, trying to create blocs that exclude the United States, because that will bring all the tensions to the surface again. I would prefer an American position that works in partnership with the local forces, rather than one that dictates to the local forces, or looks like it is dictating.

Garry Coull

Dr Kissinger, thank you very much for your insightful analysis of the questions.