Easternisation

Asian power and its impact on the West

by David Howell MP
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The rising power and influence of the Asian world is the most compelling theme of our times and will come to pervade the whole political debate in the old West and inside our Western societies. For some time now, in speeches and articles, I have been trying to explain to a British political establishment mesmerised by Europe, that the real future lies in the Asian region – which of course is much more than a region and amounts to half the planet.

The message is a vastly important one for a number of reasons. First, our economic life and our industry need to be prepared for, and live with, Asian dynamism and competition and Asian capitalism which will dominate global markets.

Second, the shifting centre of gravity in world affairs affects the way we see our interests, and shape our policies, especially our foreign policy.

Third, and most fundamentally, we need to adjust not only our economies and our policies but our whole way of thinking about non-European and non-Western values and systems, and to adopt those elements of Asian success which will benefit us and which suit us.

There is a need to be quite ruthless about this. It has to be asked what it is that gives energetic Asian cultures their amazing cohesion and drive, and having asked the question intelligently, to see it answered frankly – much more frankly than most established Western ‘thinkers’ have been prepared to do. We have to apply the same methodical zeal as that used...
by the Japanese in the Meiji period, when they took ‘the best of the West’ and grafted it on to their own culture, with spectacular results, using as they did so, the slogan ‘Western techniques, Japanese values’.

Of course that is not quite what happened. With Western techniques came bits of Western values and culture, just as some of the leading Japanese opponents of the opening up process feared would happen. Others realised that Westernisation and modernisation could never be confined to mere techniques and some values and attitudes would have to change as well.

Now the boot is on the other foot. The issue is not Westernisation but Easternisation. We, too, have to be clear-headed not just about adopting the business techniques of those now in the ascendant, the Asian dynamos, but about some of the values and attitudes which lie beneath their success both as economies and as societies.

So the question is not just about Western economic and industrial methods which are no longer at the cutting edge of modernisation in the information age. We also have to ask whether Western philosophy itself is still the commanding force it is assumed to be. Does it ‘deliver’ the kind of civic order, and personal values on which that order depends, which once we believed was the Western monopoly, with all other cultures either palely copying or branded as ‘lesser breeds without the law’? Or has the Asian world stolen a march on complacent Western societies? Have we some much deeper lessons than economic ones to learn from increasingly evident Asian superiority in so many spheres?

In short, do we accept, and if so to what extent, the total bouleverse-ment implied when some Asian leaders now speak of the hollowness of Western liberal democratic values and the moral decay, the rising crime, the collapse of family loyalties, the spread of drugs and the grotesque abuses of freedom and all civilised codes of behaviour which this value system now seems to permit, even encourage? And have they anything better to offer, except a mirror in which we see more clearly our own faults?
The Asian Phenomenon: do we even know what has already occurred?

In the last decade almost every Western prediction about Asia, and especially about Japan, has proved wrong. Especially ridiculous have been those confident treatises prophesying the imminent collapse of the Japanese financial and economic system, which they insist on judging by Western theories of behaviour, both economic and social. Far from collapsing in the nineties the Japanese economy has sailed through the recession, with exports rising forty per cent in the last five years and the yen the world’s strongest currency. Excess strength is now its problem.

As with Japan, so with other Asian regions. I watched a BBC TV news programme recently which carried, as background to some story, a few quick pictures of Kuala Lumpur, followed by some shots of Singapore. A fellow viewer, usually well-informed, exclaimed that the BBC had got its pictures muddled up. How could these glittering skylines and boulevards, and these Manhattan forests of skyscrapers, be in teeming impoverished Asia? There must have been some mistake.

Similar reactions occur in face of the statistics. Income per head is already higher than the UK in Japan (much higher), and in Singapore and Hong Kong. It is about the same in Taiwan. Incredibly, Japan alone now accounts for 56 per cent of world net savings – as against America’s five per cent. Add in the savings flows from the rest of high-saving Asia and we now see clearly where the twenty first century will get its finance. He who saves the money plays the tune.
These are not questions of projections or puffed up forecasts so beloved of futurologists but of hard, achieved results. However if one dares to project the past only a little way into the future the comparisons are even more devastating. At present growth rates hundreds of millions of Asians will live at sharply higher standards than their European counterparts in ten years’ time.

The European Commission has an even shorter timescale. It believes that in only five years’ time, by 2000, four hundred million Asians ‘will have average disposable incomes, as high as, if not higher than, their European or U.S. contemporaries’. These hundreds of millions will include Indians, Chinese, Malays, and numerous other Asian races living in immensely prosperous regions with a total purchasing power which will exceed that of the entire European Union.

Australasia has also been caught up in the Asia-Pacific advance. The ill-informed British impression is that Australia, having been ‘dumped’ by the British when we joined the EC in 1974, has struggled bravely back by selling its farm products to its Asian neighbours, to Japan and to the Arabs. New Zealand is seen in much the same light – sheep-farmers all, gamely fighting back.

The reality is light years away. States like New South Wales are now pouring out high-technology exports and services to the booming Asian market. Their machinery and their software go into markets we hardly know exist. Meanwhile, New Zealand has emerged as one of the world’s strongest and zippiest modern economies, with a respected currency and magnetic attraction to new industrial investment.

The ignorance does not finish here. Even those who concede that Asia is marching ahead comfort themselves with the belief that it is all done by autocratic regimes and state driven investment which will get its come-uppance. Energy starvation will dish them, we are reassured if nothing else does.

Yet these ‘autocratic regimes’, which are supposed to need lectures on the rule of law, are privatising their industries and divesting themselves of economic power at an accelerating rate. Whilst the British are once again losing their nerve over privatisation, Asian governments are pushing ahead towards ultra-flexible and decentralised economic
structures, whether in utilities and public administration or private manufacturing.

As for energy supply, most of these societies have long since made the decision to go nuclear and to build power supply structures which simply detach them from the vagaries of Middle East oil supply, not to mention the unreliability, as well as the environmental undesirability, of domestic coal producers. While Western societies agonise and argue about energy futures many Asian societies have made a clear and unwavering commitment to civil nuclear power and the associated technologies.

Thus, the prospect emerges not just of richer regions and societies with far better public amenities but of cleaner environments with more reliable power supplies than European governments can promise their peoples for decades to come.
Confucian philosophy – passive influence or superior moral and modernising force?

The colossal misapprehension, or failure to catch up with what has occurred with such staggering speed and power in parts of Asia in the last decade, is widespread. It extends not just to the environment and physical infrastructure of modern Asian societies, which people are amazed to find leave British and many other European cities looking quaint and slummy, but to the moral and social order they house.

European and American leaders are never happier than when orating about basic values, by which they mean good family life, self-discipline, hard work, prudent saving as against spendthrift consumption, respect for elders, dedication to children’s education and training, crime-free and integrated communities, suppression of drugs, freedom from Aids, responsible civic leaders, emphasis on duties as well as rights.

What, then, are we to make of the accumulating evidence that these ‘basic values’, so sadly deficient in our own societies nowadays, are flourishing in allegedly backward Asia? Were we not told that Confucian philosophy imposed a fatal passivity on these peoples, and that they could only be energised by good doses of Western capitalism and market values? Or could it be that the secret lies in a mixture – between selected elemental parts of the Western order, combined with some but not all Confucian values into a blend uniquely suited to the information age?

A particularly sobering comparison between Asia and Europe emerges in the state of education and the skills of the younger
generation. Not only in the obviously booming cities and regions of Asia but in the impoverished areas as well (how long will they stay impoverished?) one can see an intensity of parental commitment to their off-spring’s acquisition of modern skills which our own society is failing to match.

Put baldly this means that millions of children – Indonesian, Indian, Malaysian, Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese and countless others – are coming out of school more brightly attuned to the age of computers and electronic knowledge than their European counterparts. If their parents, who often started in the age of primitive agriculture, have already lifted their societies to the front rank of economic performance, the mind spins to think of the impact as a fully educated and highly skilled younger generation takes on the Asian baton and leaves Europe still more laps behind.

Of course the scene is patchy. Asia, we are constantly reminded, is not a block nor even a region. In the last four decades it has been more of an unfolding drama roughly in five parts – with first Japan leading, then the initial charge of the ‘tiger’ economies – Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan (all now going ahead of the West) – then the second set of ‘tigers’ – Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand – then yet another set – the Philippines and Vietnam – and then the opening up of the giants, China and India, turning almost the entire Asian landmass into an alternate patchwork of glittering modernisation and traditional over-populated agrarian poverty.

In Gujarat, Bangalore or the Pearl River delta we now see developing the new Ruhr, the new Midlands, the new northern France or Italy, but in metamorphosed shape. Instead of smokestacks and energy-gulping plants and steel mills there now emerges a new industrial structure consuming new raw materials – knowledge and supplies of highly skilled workers.

Less visible, but no less important, are the underpinning structures of behaviour and attitudes which maintain social coherence in these revolutionary conditions of work. While the Western lens focuses on systems of government and degrees of democracy the lattice-work of grass-roots relationships right inside modernising Asian...
societies – what might be called the micro-moral order – goes largely unanalysed.

In particular, there has been a dismal reluctance to face a central implication of the Asian scene. This is that the social institutions of modern Asian society, and especially the family, are now quite clearly proving more resilient and robust, and a better source of security, in the East than in the West.

None of the most advanced and dynamic Asian states has any kind of structure resembling the welfare state or a universal system of benefit and care provision. Yet nor are these countries experiencing the disastrous decline in both the nuclear and the extended family, as well as in the binding pattern of the extended family, which is everywhere so evident in Western societies.

The implication is growing clearer all the time – and more and more difficult for Western social planners and experts to face as it does: the internalised moral standards of Asian life are providing a better underpinning for strong family life and real social security than the whole edifice of universal welfare provision and benefit arrangements of Western life.

So the poles of western debate about social security turn out to be set wrong. The choice is not between state provision and the jungle of individualism. It is between the failure of welfare state provision to provide personal and family security and the greater security which flows from families and neighbourhoods which understand and accept their full obligations and duties to all around.

So the sobering thought has to be faced that not only are the Asian nations, or at least growing regions within them, now better equipped economically and technically to succeed in the information age, but that their underlying philosophies of life, duty and work, reflected in personal, family and community behaviour, may be more suited to support this success – indeed, may actually account for it.

The Confucian adage is that the master in the art of living makes little distinction between his work and his play. He simply pursues his vision of excellence in whatever he does.
The distinction between labour and leisure, the pattern for measuring ‘work’ and ‘time-off’ and so-called leisure time in parcelled hours – all these are concepts rooted in Western industrial society. Could it be that a more Confucian-influenced world provides a better foundation for twenty-first century prosperity and social vigour than the Christian work ethic and the now mutated and plainly tiring – or disregarded – values of the Western world?
As the enormity of this whole ‘Asian shift’ dawns on western thinkers and societies we may be sure that, with or without political leadership, whole attitudes, whole sets of hopes and fears, will alter fundamentally.

These changes will go far beyond the sphere of public policy, or political action, or anything in which Governments can take the lead. The dictum of G.M. Trevelyan – that politics are the outcome, not the cause of social change – will once again be reinforced.

Nevertheless, the duty of policy-makers and political leaders is at least to understand what is really happening (as Keynes used to plead), to give unfamiliar trends some shape and direction in public debate and, where possible, to respond through policies and measures so as to prepare society.

What, then, are the economic and social priorities now to be addressed, and – perhaps even more important – what are the new priorities of a foreign policy needed to protect and promote British interests in this new international environment?
Let us begin with one piece of mild exoneration so far as the UK is concerned. The British are by no means the worst prepared for the coming onslaught on economies, attitudes and ways of life which the Asian challenge threatens.

With labour unit costs at roughly half the German level, with a reformed and flexible labour market, an excellent support structure of professional services and with relative, although by no means complete, freedom from the heavy necklace of state costs which the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty places on European Union member states, the British economy stands a better chance of adaptation to the new conditions than its neighbours.

It is no accident that, with these relative advantages, the UK continues to attract the lion’s share of investment from outside Europe and is eyed with increasing favour by the new wave of Asian investors and entrepreneurs.

Nor is it by chance that around 60 per cent of all major European corporations have their headquarters in London, nor that London’s pre-eminence as a financial centre continues, despite some battering.

Perhaps the first task is therefore a psychological one – to reinforce confidence in what is already being achieved by Britain in these fields and to move away from the posture of near-apology which often seems to attach to Britain’s obvious advantages in contrast to other European economies.
Beneath the British situation lies a deeper benefit, which is the basic sympathy of all British policy for open markets and anti-protectionism. The appeal of industrial and commercial protection is very great, and the Asian competitive challenge increases it for those who already think this way. The basic choice has to be made between the protectionist reaction – which is natural enough in face of upheaval – and the open market response, which is far more difficult to sell.

It is no surprise that the ideas of Sir James Goldsmith, who would put up the shutters in an effort to protect European life-styles and values, have had great appeal in France. The British have chosen the other route, which is to combine open markets with maximum alliance, partnership and involvement with Asian enterprise, and with adjustment of the home economy to fit this tougher climate.

This adjustment has to take account not just of new markets but of an entirely transformed pattern of international economic activity – one in which trade is increasingly interwoven with capital investment.

In this new pattern the emphasis switches away from the classic categories such as exports of manufactured goods towards the selling of expert services of technology and of human resource ‘packages’ in such diverse fields as research, medical services, architecture, policing techniques, every kind of management consultancy and financial service skill, military training and, perhaps above all so far as Europe is concerned, design.

In other words entirely new niches of expertise and competitive advantage have to be developed and set within a context of a partnership of equals, in which there is no room for assumptions about superior Western technology or other vanities.

Just as in today’s world manufacturing defies categorisation as between goods and services, knowledge inputs and physical inputs, so ‘exports’ are merging into a wider process of investment and capital movements, services and skill transfers, knowledge and high technology flows.

Booming Asia is not going to want motorcars, videos and lap-tops, or even the software that they contain. But it is thirsty for managerial and investment skills, for professional training and advice in areas
such as accountancy, civil engineering, the law, medicine, scientific research, for consultancy and management skills right across the public sector, from policing and military training to traffic management.

Success for the UK in these new areas depends upon shaking off certain deep prejudices about how economies work. One – already mentioned – is that there is a definable separate activity called manufacturing which must somehow be boosted. The modern reality is, of course, that ‘manufacturing’ is now an interconnected chain of activities, both knowledge-based and physical, all of which contribute to the competitive success of the economy.

The British criticise themselves for being weak in manufacturing, in the traditional sense, and strong in services. But it may be precisely this bias that is needed in the new conditions and in seeking a stronger relationship with an Asia-dominated global economy.
Training, education and how to treat the younger and older generations

An essential part of this new relationship lies in the field of training and education. The first and most obvious task is for Britain, along with its European neighbours, to match the commitment and zeal of Asian societies in the development of their human resources – meaning not just the education and training in skills of children, but also an equal commitment to training and education throughout adult life, and even into old age.

It is striking, in this context, that Japan, with characteristic positiveness of approach, regards its aging society not as a burden but as a resource to be mobilised to encourage still further economic vitality and social cohesion.

Behind this positive attitude lies a deeper consideration still. This is that in societies free from the abdicating incentives of the welfare state, attitudes to the older generation, and the vital role the elderly play in the whole balance of life in any community, are much more respectful. They are not a problem, more a cornerstone. Inter-generational cooperation becomes not a concession or even a wearisome duty, but a central part of a good existence.

A second educational strategy must be to build on Britain’s undoubted strength in ‘exporting’ its education and schooling. There are now more foreign students in higher education in Britain than...
ever before, growing numbers of them from Asian countries. The economic benefits, both direct and indirect, are obvious and considerable.

But does public policy do all it can to reinforce this success? To take one example, around nine thousand students now come from Taiwan for education in Britain. Yet the British authorities, alone amongst European countries, require all Taiwanese to have not just an entry visa, but a visa on a separate piece of paper.

Even when all allowances have been made for the delicacies of Sino-British relations and the problems of Hong Kong, this looks like a total failure of policy to adjust to new and growing British interests.

A third educational point is that too few British students are going to Asia’s superb universities. The attitude of generations past that studying abroad meant going to European or American universities now has to be revised.

The same set of past prejudices operates when it comes to studying and adopting Asian innovation and technology. Too many industrial and scientific leaders remain locked, consciously or unconsciously, in the belief that technology is something the East wants from the West, and that we have nothing to learn from Asian methods.

The leaders of the Meiji restoration had no scruples about studying closely, and then seizing, every aspect of Western knowledge that would help them. It is high time our own leaders showed the same combination of perceptiveness, appreciation of British long-term interests and proper humility towards Asian learning and research.

As Asian superiority impinges on Western society, governments need to rethink their roles. One that needs deep re-appraisal is overseas development aid. Aid in the classic form of government-to-government grants and loans has played no part in Asian development and should play no part in the new Europe-Asia relationship. The concept is now out of date.

The resources of former aid budgets should now be increasingly focused on technical assistance (and some humanitarian assistance in certain Asian regions) and in promoting investment and enterprise.
The large sums expended on traditional aid programmes could now be far better spent in Britain’s new interests by enlarging the budgets for cultural diplomacy (see foreign policy section below).

Meanwhile, much higher Asian living standards create novel problems for European governments – such as responding to a massive new wave of tourism from rich Asian populations who want to spend their wealth, new immigration pressures and drug and crime problems on a global scale.
The priorities of British foreign policy require revision on the same drastic scale in face of the rise of Asian power. The central point is that the absurdly Euro-centric character of British foreign policy has now to be left behind. This is not to suggest that Britain has no interest in the European Union. Of course it does. But the point is that the focus should not be Europe alone.

With pitiful slowness it has dawned on policy-makers that links outside western Europe, and particularly our links with English-speaking Commonwealth countries, could be just as important for British business and trade in the coming years as our access to the European Single Market. The Commonwealth network, so long dismissed as marginal by foreign policy gurus, is especially interesting as a basis for developing British interests. Britain starts with a huge advantage over its European competitors in having ready access to a world-wide system influenced by British culture and sympathetic to British business methods.

The statistics of trade and investment should long ago have alerted British leaders to the new situation, but it seems to have taken events like the Queen’s glittering successful tour of South Africa, a recent Commonwealth re-entrant, to bring home to official minds that not only Southern Africa, but large parts of high-growth Asia, are already part of this fortunate Commonwealth legacy.

The required shift so that British policy begins to march in step with national interest and with the new forces of Asian power has
three sequential elements to it:

First, Britain has to regain enough confidence in its own European policies to allow energies and attention to be released elsewhere. A Britain transfixed by its European concerns, as though scarcely being able to take its eyes off EU issues for fear of being outwitted and outfoxed by Franco-German strategy, is poorly placed to pursue its worldwide interests confidently.

Although the evidence is now mounting, on all sides, that British arguments for maintaining the Single Market in its present form, and resisting any further moves towards federal/centralist structures (including the dubious single money venture) are prevailing, it is extraordinary to see how little this is reflected in public policy and statements, where apologetic timidity still seems to reign. It is even more extraordinary that while the UK is far ahead in its commitment to the completion of the Single Market, and in compliance with its rules, the British nonetheless succeed in getting themselves branded as the least good Europeans, when they are in practice the best. The scene is now changing and there are now no grounds for assuming that the Franco-German agenda is always going to dominate.

With the European issue in its proper place our policy can then move on to developing new friendships and interests outside Western Europe without fear that the British position will be undermined.

Our new friends are in fact our old friends. That is to say, we have ready-made opportunities, based on historic ties, in what are now some of the world’s most dynamic and fast-growing markets. South Africa has been mentioned. India is welcoming British investment and know-how with open arms. Beyond the Commonwealth network friends also await. The Gulf States, despite all their vicissitudes, remain extremely well disposed towards the UK and long to increase business links. Above all, the UK has quietly developed a superbly good relationship with Japan. This relationship, which has already produced enormous benefits for the British and promises many more, is tied to British European policy in the sense that Japan is totally supportive of
the British conception of Europe’s future – above all, that the EU should be an open trading entity and not a protectionist bastion.

It has been falsely suggested that because the UK dislikes the rigidities of the single currency idea, and because this has led to denunciations of the British as bad Europeans the Japanese are hesitant about further investment here. Nothing could be wider off the mark. Japan sees the UK as the most attractive and liberalised economy in Europe. It also sees the British, with their highly efficient financial services sector and their excellent business support services generally, as a reliable and intimate partner in dealings with other countries and is actively seeking still closer links on this front.

For almost a decade travellers have been returning from Japan with the news that the Japanese regard the UK with extreme favour, look back on the Anglo-Japanese friendship in the early years of this century as their golden period and want to renew that spirit – only to be greeted in Whitehall with polite smiles by officials too pre-occupied with Europe to give much attention to such ideas.

In cementing our new relationships – with Japan and others – we have to consider new priorities in our choice of foreign policy instruments. Cultural diplomacy is going to count for far more in the new network of trade relations than aid donor activities in the traditional form. This suggests that resources should be switched out of aid programmes and into bodies like the British Council and the World Service of the BBC – two bodies among several which are doing far more, indirectly, to promote British interests than overseas aid disbursements.
Some conclusions

The Japanese, and many other perceptive Asians, see our country in a way that we have not been able to see ourselves – as better equipped than most to handle the coming fact of Asian dominance and as psychologically far better prepared for equal partnership with Asian nations, on a basis of mutual respect, than many of our Western neighbours.

It remains for us to see ourselves as others see us, to abandon all tendencies towards an apologetic stance on European matters, to identify quite openly our true friendships and interests, and to strengthen both with the utmost determination.

That millions of people in parts of Asia, comprising huge new markets, will shortly be living at standards higher than their European counterparts, in superior physical surroundings, is not in dispute. To some extent they are already doing so. The changes to our work patterns and to economic policy, and the upheavals in outlook and thinking in the West, at the deepest level, are all on a vast scale. But the hardest part (although slightly easier for the British than others) is to adjust to the thought that Asia may actually be leading the world in moral as well as economic terms, and that tomorrow’s ideas may well be found there already in practice.

It is symptomatic of British self-doubt that some opinion-formers should have turned to writings by such eminences as David Selborne and Amitai Etzioni as though these had something new to offer. In particular, enthusiasts have grasped at the thought (a far from novel
one) that the civic order is built from the ground up and rests on the sense of duty and obligation within each citizen. It is a measure of national tiredness and timidity that people should be grasping at the words of these preachers, as though they offered salvation, when similar philosophies in practice, in both Japanese and other Asian societies, have been there for us to study and adopt at any time for decades past.

The concept of obligation on the part of each citizen towards others and towards the civic order is a central part of Japanese philosophy and the key to the dynamism and direction of Japanese society. The ideological debates over the state and the individual have long since been left behind. Indeed, they scarcely ever occurred. There is no place in the Asian phenomenon for lofty state ‘solutions’ to social questions. This is just not the level of conception upon which the political and moral order of modern Asia is built or from which thinking about the welfare of the community and those within it begins. Above all, a comparison has to be frankly made, free of prejudice, between the obvious fragmenting consequences for Western society of universal welfare provision and the apparent cohesion of Asian communities that have avoided, or leapt right over in their development, this kind of statism. We face, in essence, the same choices of policy and culture as the fathers of the Meiji restoration. How do we cherry pick and copy the best features of Easternisation – first having intelligently and painstakingly analysed them – and how do we graft them on to our own indigenous traditions?

There are no alternative escape routes, even though some are seductively peddled. And nor is there any cathartic clash of neatly delineated civilisations to be fought for, as some commentators have suggested, because the Asian, European and American economic, commercial and cultural systems are already far too globalised and interwoven for such separatism.

Nor again are there any protective barriers strong enough to withstand for more than a moment Asian competitive advance, or islands of traditional western ground on which to stand aloof. Nor are there any short cuts to Western renewal through Nietzchean will and superstrong leadership, although many will call, with a child-like yearning for simple answers, for just that.
Reactionary, state-loving governments in the West may delude themselves that the tide can be halted. They may cling to the hope, and try to reassure others, that Asian societies are behind, not ahead, and that they, too, will come to embrace the welfare state and the decline of individual and family responsibility that goes with it.

But these are indeed just delusions and hopes. The only viable choice is to adapt. And the principles compulsorily imposed by the progress of world events on all Western societies (although we must start with ourselves, because no-one else will) are as follows:

1. The security of the welfare state, now proving so insecure, must be replaced by the greater security of the community, the extended family, the nuclear family and the sense of obligation and duty inculcated in each individual from the earliest years.

2. Schooling expected to be provided by the state must be vastly reinforced by the duty and commitment of every parent to the education of their offspring in and out of school, during and after school hours, in the skills required by a totally transformed future (which may be glimpsed in parts of Asia).

3. Reliance on the state to care for the disadvantaged and the elderly must be progressively replaced by inter-generational respect for the status and role of the older members of society, by the dismissal of the belief that the old are ‘dependent’ and by the resurrection of the senses of obligation and duty on the part of family and friends towards the aged.

4. Conceptual divisions between work and leisure (enshrined in much misplaced legislation) must be phased out. All work and all play are part of the art of living. Consequently, the related debilitating concept of being ‘unemployed’ must leave the language and cease to be reinforced by public policy. A role exists for each and all in the societies of the future and a duty exists on all (not just the authorities) to provide the conditions to ensure this.

5. Western leaders must have the courage and candour to explain that the struggle now is not for ever higher living
standards but to maintain what we have – at least in economic
terms. It follows that ideas such as annual automatic pay
increases for all have no place in the world we must adapt to.

6. We have to become accustomed to the sobering thought that
higher and more civilised norms of behaviour than those in
the West now exist elsewhere, and we have to bend efforts to
the task of comprehending how those higher standards have
been achieved and the foundations of belief and custom on
which they rest.

If these new truths are hidden from our society by the refusal to
prepare opinion to receive them, and by the pretence that people can
be insulated against them, then the shock of their intrusion will be
very painful, even overwhelming. But if we act in time, if such prin-
ciples as these, amongst many others, are fully recognised and boldly
translated into both attitude reform and policy reform, then the shock
of Easternisation can be controlled and managed, with gradual reform
being introduced and understanding gradually awakening to the new
imperatives.

We have an almost unlimited amount now to learn from the cul-
tures on the other side of the planet, in terms of philosophy and values
as well as techniques and methods. We should now bend ourselves to
this learning task with energy, humility and profound respect.