

Now is the time. Are we the people?

While our political leaders deny that they are cynically pandering to racism to win votes, a new generation of leaders is exploring different kinds of futures for Australia. Their journey stretches from the topical topic of our national identity to Australia's possible future role as a global hero. Ironically, many of the emerging leaders who are exploring these alternative futures are working with the futurists' futurist... Pakistan-born Australian, Sohail Inayatullah.

A scholar of global stature, Professor Inayatullah is a macro-historian and futurist who draws on deep understandings of the sweeps of human history and applies them with the tools of futuring to highlight the choices available to Australians in 21c. He also uses the power of mythology to reach deep into inner issues of identity and self-image, and helps others to understand how these contribute to the kind of futures we choose.

Some of today's media, however, might describe him simply as "a person of Asian appearance".

The immediate purpose of his work with new leaders is often to help local communities, governments or global business corporations explore their own futures. But you can't explore any future without understanding its context, and the changing context of global affairs now adds urgency to every local human activity within it.



Sohail Inayatullah

Like all serious challenges, this one also offers exciting opportunities -- including the opportunity for Australia to take a leadership role in addressing global issues and creating new futures.

Who better than multicultural Australians to embrace the rich diversity that gives us the dappling of what someone once called a "Pointillist world" instead of the solid slabs of a "Mondriaan world"? It also gives us the creativity we are going to need in even the short-term future: there's no creativity without diversity.

Who better than ingenious, resourceful, bush-mechanic Australians to work out new ways to be and to do in a world

that looks increasingly likely to be very, very short of food as well as water while it battles the catastrophes of global warming, resource depletion, nitrogen cascades and more? Who better than the Ned Kelly culture to challenge the authority that insists on protecting consumption industries, destroying forests and landscapes, wasting water and refusing to see the clear signs of impending catastrophe?

Australian organisations are waking up. A new generation of corporate leaders is finally "getting it". Will they be in time? How soon can they invent new products and services for a sustainable world, building brands that their stakeholders -- and their children -- will value and choose above all others?

Will they grasp the opportunity to be the corporate heroes of the 21st century? (see story p2)

Coming ready or not

- ↔ "Virtual water" threatens global food supply
- ↔ Global warming may be even hotter
- ↔ Nitrogen cycle becomes a fatal cascade

These stories on looming global crises are outlined on page 3. What do we do about them?

Take the companies to the courts, says Myles Allen of Oxford University. He believes the European heat-wave of 2003 was the first weather event that can be linked to climate change and that this opens up the prospect of civil liability.

Or are there more positive approaches? This issue of *Future News* explores challenges and opportunities -- some of the paths forward to alternative futures.

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Make way for the corporate heroes

This story by Jan Lee Martin, published in *The Age* of March 2, invites new responses to global challenges

When future historians study 21c, what will they find? Remnants of societies whose addictions consumed all their resources and destroyed their habitats? Or societies that explored the future and learned how to change course? If it turns out to be the latter, perhaps they'll also discover stories of the corporate heroes who led the way.

Too idealistic? Or is this the new reality?

To put it in more cautious language, perhaps it is time for organisations to examine new ideas of success and to learn about the different expectations of emerging stakeholder groups. These are the people whose changing values are already driving the stakeholder revolution - sustainability, triple bottom line, corporate social responsibility, ethics and the meteoric rise of ethical investment.

It's no passing fad. Our societies and physical environment are suffering serious stresses, heading for worse. Emerging generations know that. A global change of mind about our shared priorities is inevitable. It could happen fast when we reach the tipping point, and after 20 years of exploring the future I believe we're almost there.

Make way for the corporate heroes. They'll be the ones who recognise the new market for leadership. They'll see the opportunities to invent better ways to meet the needs of our societies. They'll create the post-industrial products and services we need, from different kinds of production processes to new energy sources and the elimination of pollution. They'll shift their focus from the next quarter's profits to the rights of future generations because they will learn that that's what their stakeholders want them to do. And they know that their success in the 21st century depends utterly upon successful relationships with their stakeholders (especially top talent).

Market pressures of the 20th century tightened the focus of leaders right up to their corporate noses, blinding them to the possibilities of looking further out. Now we know that those who explore the future instead have more opportunities to succeed. They understand more about critical emerging issues, and the lush fields awaiting a different kind of development.

If this sounds too radical an idea to take to a busy chief executive, try the intermediate step of exploring alternative futures with your stakeholders. Hearing it from them might be more persuasive. Where would you be without supportive staff, customers, shareholders, suppliers, regulators? They have children, too!

Research around the world confirms big value

"Market pressures of 20 C tightened the focus of leaders right up to their corporate noses"



shifts across the generations. These people are not only ready for serious engagement, but actively seeking it. They are the "cultural creatives" Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson wrote about; the "creative class" of Richard Florida. Exploring the future to understand alternatives helps organisations unlock outdated assumptions, challenge current certainties, create visions, open up vast new horizons, design entirely new kinds of success.

It's only common sense to support the systems that support us. Like any living system, an organisation will thrive when it adapts to its changing environment. If organisations adapt to the changes we are seeing already, they'll see themselves as part of a social as well as a physical ecology. They'll work to design new goals in harmony with that ecology, rather than in lonely conflict. And they'll do it collaboratively, working with stakeholders to design alternative futures that align the interests of people, organisations, societies and the planet.

So if tomorrow's generations do thrive, chances are they will owe their prosperity to today's corporate heroes.

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Which futures for China, India, Brazil?

It's watershed time for the world's great economies of the future, writes British author Colin Tudge. Which way they jump over the next few decades will determine what kind of world our children will live in, or whether there will be a world to live in at all.

All three face the same central dilemma. They might choose to follow the ways of the west, conquering nature, turning farming into industrial agribusiness and driving people out of the countryside. Or they might go another way... create another kind of economy, qualitatively different from the western model. It would be essentially a new agrarianism, traditional in structure with small, mixed farms integrated into the wild environment and as high-tech as is needed.

"If new agrarian economies come about, then trees must be at the centre of them. For example, Jose Felipe Ribeiro [*in Brazil*] is showing people how they could make a much better living by exploiting native trees for their hundreds of fruit, drugs and pigments than they ever can from soya farms, which in any case are owned by outsiders and employ as few people as possible in the name of efficiency."

Looking at the ancient arts of agroforestry in India, he points out that cattle are essentially woodland animals: dairy cows given shade yield up to 30 per cent more milk. Trees boost yields more effectively than injections of hormones.

New Scientist 05 11 05

GLOBAL CRISES:

Coming ready or not!

1. "Virtual water" threatens global food supply

It takes 20,000 litres of water to grow 1 kilo of coffee, 11,000 litres to make a quarter pounder and 5000 litres to make 1 kilo of cheese. Economists refer to the water tied up in products like these, traded globally, as 'virtual water' -- a trade estimated at around a thousand cubic kilometres a year, or about one tenth of all water used in raising crops around the world. Meanwhile, back on the farm, it translates into approaching catastrophe: millions of farmers in India, China and Pakistan now use pumps to suck up water beneath their fields, removing about twice as much as is replaced by rain. Where 10 metre wells once yielded water, now tube wells as deep as 400 metres are running dry. "It's a colossal anarchy, a one-way trip to disaster," says Tushaar Shah of the International Water Management Institute. (*New Scientist* 25 02 06)

2. Global warming may be even hotter

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will soon tell world governments that a reliable upper limit can no longer be put on how quickly the world will warm, and that the Earth's temperature could rise far higher in response to greenhouse gas emissions than previously thought, says *The Guardian* in the UK. Meanwhile a new study by the California Institute of Technology reports that Greenland's water loss has doubled in a decade. Virtually all glaciers south of the Arctic Circle have speeded up their discharges as a result of a regional warming of 3°C. And a UK report says that the huge West Antarctic Ice Sheet may be starting to disintegrate.

3. Nitrogen cycle becomes a cascade

Nitrogen is probably a greater environmental threat than carbon, writes Rowan Hooper in the *New Scientist* (21 01 06). Since industrial production of nitrogen fertiliser began, levels of reactive nitrogen began spiralling out of control. Today as much as 70 per cent of reactive nitrogen cycling through the atmosphere, earth and sea is there as a result of human activity. In fact, the nitrogen "cycle" no longer exists. It's now known as a cascade... more like a torrent. According to one professor, the only solution is a revolution to less consumptive lifestyles.

Of course, that's the solution to all three crises. How to achieve it? Take the companies to the courts, says Myles Allen of the University of Oxford. He believes the European heatwave of 2003, which caused 30,000 deaths, was the first weather event that can be linked to climate change and that this opens up the prospect of civil liability.

"The lawyers have a case against the people who caused the warming." (*New Scientist* 1 10 05)



GOOD NEWS:

Stop talking, start acting

There's a growing number of heroes already working to save the future. We'd like to celebrate their achievements. Please help us collect good news stories by sending your favourite to jan.leemartin@futuresfoundation.org.au.

A new breed of entrepreneurs is recognising the opportunity to survive and thrive simultaneously, as they design products and services that promote sustainability while they deliver other benefits to users.

Take 32-year-old Tracy Bialek, who has created a range of water-saving devices for the home while protecting and marketing what will become a valuable brand in sustainability. Her company, Ripple Products, provides water-saving devices for the home and its mission statement shows that profit isn't her only motive: "What we do, what we say and how we act can cause a ripple in our community. Help yourself, teach a friend or educate your children. It will all make a difference. It will create a ripple."

In Canberra, Richard Eckersley reports that a different approach to sustainability has created one of Australia's first five-star rated 'green' buildings at Brindabella Business Park. Driven by the personal vision of Terry Snow, the project began with energy efficiency but has evolved with each building in a much more comprehensive view of sustainability, including use of non-toxic materials, waterless urinals, recycled concrete, fresher air and more. The project has pushed revision of building regulations (in concrete recycling, for example) and has had other spin-offs as contractors applied what they learned in other areas.

Land-based entrepreneurs are combining a love of nature, concern for the planet, and the need to make a living. One exhausted grazing property near Byron Bay has been restored to life by Danielle Leonard, using whole systems farming practices. "No pesticides or chemicals are used, and the farm turns over about \$5000 a week through the sale of vegetables to local restaurants. Food scraps are collected and brought back for compost, forming a closed loop," wrote Mark Todd (SMH).

Not all of the good news stories are located so close to home. Melbourne agriculturalist and aid worker Tony Rinaudo promoted the desert survival skills of Australian Aborigines to help the people of Niger, where drought and locust plagues have combined to create famine, with four million Nigerians -- a third of the population -- at risk of dying from hunger. Using advice from CSIRO he arranged trial plots of Australian desert trees, ran tests to ensure that nuts from the hardy acacia were safe to eat -- they proved very nutritious. The trees also provide fuel and the leaves make good fertiliser.

Two women from Central Australia, Rose Nangala and Kay Napaljarri, went to Nigeria in 1998 to run a "bush tucker" workshop for the locals, making a vital human connection with the local people.

STEALING FROM OUR CHILDREN

Parents in today's western societies are cheating their children by funding their own lifestyles from the future, says Ian Lowe, emeritus professor at Brisbane's Griffith University and president of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

In a powerful presentation to an international audience at Tamkang University in Taiwan, Professor Lowe emphasised that the future is not somewhere we are going, but something we are creating.

"There are many possible futures. We should be trying to establish a future that can be sustained. Not doing that is selling short our children by funding our lifestyles from the future."

Professor Lowe set out to describe how one might go about destroying a planet.

"How could we do it? We could start with exponential population growth.

"Then we could increase the rate of consumption per person. We could base our economy on consumption, stimulating unnecessary consumption.

"We could deplete significant mineral resources, starting with oil, and over-use potentially renewable resources like fisheries and forests and groundwater.

"And we could disrupt the global climate.

"In the social dimension we could widen inequality between rich and poor, ensuring that the future is less socially stable. And we could replace traditional spirituality by promoting materialism.

"A visitor from another galaxy would see these strategies as deliberate, would see that for some reason we wanted to destroy life on Earth.

"Since 1960, the planet's human population has doubled (increasing at 80m a year); water use has doubled; food production has increased by 2.5 times; energy use has trebled; and economic output has increased by a factor of six.

"What about resources? Our most

"A visitor from another galaxy would see these strategies as deliberate, would see that we were intelligent and would assume that for some reason we wanted to destroy life on Earth."

crucial resource is petroleum. Production will decline, price will increase, we will have to make fundamentally different decisions about personal transport and the provision of food, which are currently predicated on the presumption of cheap transport."

Professor Lowe anticipates the peak of oil production will occur in 2009, plus or minus a few years - indeed, it may have happened already. The peak of gas production will be around 2040. After these dates, production will decline with depletion of the natural resources. Yet for all this, he insists that there is no energy shortage.

"The natural flows of solar, wind, tidal, hydro, and geothermal energy are thousands of times greater than any conceivable consumer demand.

"For example, the world's 6.5bn humans, in an entire year, for all purposes, only use about twice the energy that the sun delivers to Australia alone, in one day alone."

"Energy flows are huge, but there is a shortage of the energy generator that is most convenient for transport because of its high density."

Availability of fresh water is another key factor in creating a sustainable future for the planet.

There are many anomalies and contradictions in our relationship with the planet and its natural resources, the professor said.

"The world produces two kilograms of food per person per day, but

850m people are undernourished.

"With facts like these it is clear we need not just a new century but a just new century".

Professor Lowe quoted three scenarios described by Richard Eckersley of the Australian National University:

- apocalyptic nihilism - decadence rules
- apocalyptic fundamentalism - dogma rules
- apocalyptic activism - hope rules.

Turning to the knowledge base that informs our actions, he called for not just more science, but a different style of science. He pointed to the damage that has been done to our planetary system by the application of narrow knowledge.

"We need a better understanding of complex natural systems, including links between the local and the global (noting that these links go both ways). It is vital to use this important understanding to reduce impacts of human activities on the natural world.

"Fortunately there are some signs of hope, with new thinking and the emergence of new values and new practices.

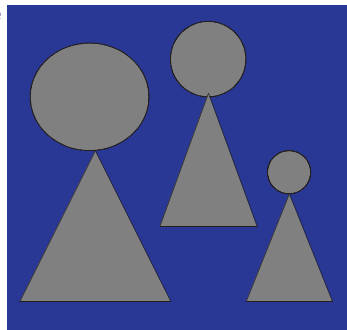
"The underlying drivers of our unsustainable trajectory are

- population growth
- increasing consumption per person
- "societal" values.

"Attacking these drivers in the movement for change will require a new set of values. As Paul Raskin points out, it will require ecological sensitivity to overcome our inherited habit of seeking to dominate nature; it will require new ideas about the real quality of life to overcome our drift to consumerism.

And it will require a new move to human solidarity -- rediscovery of community and recognition of the fact that we share a common fate with 6.5bn other humans -- to overcome our long journey to extreme individualism." ff

Full story at www.futuresfoundation.org.au



Where science meets spirituality: Laszlo

The search for the wholeness of life, of mind and of nature is spreading and deepening from year to year, according to Professor Ervin Laszlo, president of the Club of Budapest and a keynote speaker at the *Global Mind, Global Soul, Global Action* conference in Taiwan. And it's just as well, he says, if we want human civilization to survive.

After a challenging exploration of the frontiers of theoretical physics, including new understandings of the nature of consciousness, he concluded: "Wholeness is a defining characteristic of the kind of planetary civilisation that could overcome problems created by the mechanistic, manipulative rationality of the civilisation still dominant today."

Trends that have been building up will break down. "The meaning of non-sustainability is that you reach a point where something else happens." According to systems theory, fundamental change follows the critical 'bifurcation point' in chaos.

"Everything is possible except the status quo. Systems mutate, societies mutate - not in a genetic sense but in a cultural sense.

"I am talking about the nature of our consciousness. It served us through the natural, the classic and even the industrial based worlds. Now, industrial society is reaching the end of its sustainable trajectory. In economic, financial, social and cultural dimensions we are reaching a point where the process of change has become irreversible and therefore you can't restabilise the system. It is bound to change. Not necessarily to collapse, but to fundamentally change."

We know change is coming. And we know that it has to be a fundamental transformation.

"One element we have to add to this is that if this change is to come in time, before there is a serious catastrophe, if you are to have some kind of controlled change, where we are not victims but masters of the change, then there has to be a much higher level of cooperation and convergence between scientific mentality and the spiritual that is timeless but is growing all over the world - a

"industrial society is reaching the end of its sustainable trajectory."

renaissance of spirituality.

"We need a much higher infusion of the kind of deep understanding of each other and of nature that you get from the spiritual traditions and that we have lost from the engineering, manipulation mentality of the industrial age."

We also need to understand what is happening in science with spirituality so we get a better understanding that the spiritual is not pure fantasy. On the contrary, "it gives you a very deep insight into the cosmos, the human soul, the human being and it is not an insight that is foreign to science."

The death knell of classical concepts was sounded in the 1920s with the advent of quantum mechanics, the physics of the ultra-small domains of reality, said the professor. "The quanta of light and energy that surfaced in ever more sophisticated experiments refused to behave like commonsense macroscale objects. Their behaviour proved to be more and more weird.

"Perhaps the most remarkable feature of these particles is their mutual entanglement. Particles turn out to be highly sociable: once they are in the same quantum state, they remain linked no matter how far they may be from each other."

The physical world is strange beyond description, but it is not incomprehensible, the professor said. Its relevant feature is time- and space-transcending entanglement, known as nonlocality. This is both a microphysical and a cosmological phenomenon. It involves the very smallest as well as the very largest structures of the universe...the whole universe is an entangled quantum system - it always

had been, and always will be, fully coherent.

"'Coherence' is the concept that best expresses the wholeness now discovered in the domains of life," Ervin Laszlo explained in his pre-conference paper. "An organically coherent system is not decomposable to its component parts and levels of organization. In the words of biophysicist Mae Wan Ho, such a system is dynamic and fluid, its myriad activities self-motivated, self-organizing, and spontaneous, engaging all levels simultaneously from

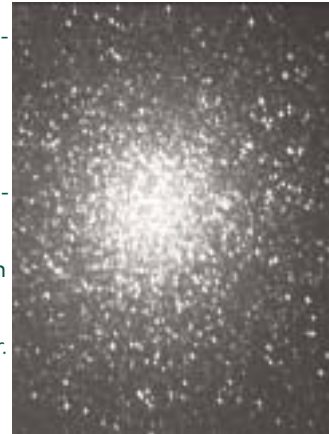
the microscopic and molecular all the way to the macroscopic. There are no controlling parts or levels, and no parts or levels controlled. The applicable concept is not control but communication. Thanks to the constant communication of the parts in the organism, adjustments, responses, and changes required for the maintenance of the whole can propagate in all directions at once....

"Both science and spirituality are trying to make sense, to render coherent, our human experience. Our experience is not coherent itself. It must be rendered coherent. We are building spirituality into higher levels of consciousness, higher frequencies, energies and so on. Both science and spirituality are building the world, making an attempt to make sense of the world...."

Fundamentally the universe is both psychological and physical - a psycho-physical universe that means consciousness is present on all levels, Professor Laszlo said. Our consciousness is part of a cosmic consciousness and all of it together forms something like a noosphere...

"If we can recognise that, we would find ourselves more part of this universe, take more care of each other, create greater solidarity and make our system much more sustainable." ff

Full story at www.futuresfoundation.org.au



21C: strategies for sustainability

The human family, now numbering over six billion, is clearly the most biologically successful species on planet Earth, writes futurist Hazel Henderson in a forthcoming article in the UK futures journal, *foresight* (Vol. 8, No. 1).

"We have evolved from our birthplaces on the African continent to colonize every part of Earth, consuming 40 per cent of all its primary photosynthetic production - leading to the current and mass extinction of other species.

"We have conquered the oceans, the moon and outer space and now set our sights on Mars."

But if we are to continue our spectacular technological success and preserve the options for our grandchildren's survival, she says, we must now face ourselves. It is time to "fearlessly diagnose our major failures".

According to Dr Henderson, these major failures are the fragmenting of human knowledge, and the persistence of violent conflicts, wars and poverty.

"The UN Millennium Development Goals provide an initial agenda," she writes. "Fulfilling these goals and shifting from fossil fuels to renewable resources and their sustainability can employ every willing man and woman on earth and expand global prosperity.

"Reintegrating human knowledge, systems thinking and multi-disciplinary approaches to public and private decisions are widely recognised as necessary to address the human condition in this new century."

The UN Millennium Development Goals

- 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- 2 Achieve universal primary education
- 3 Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4 Reduce child mortality
- 5 Improve maternal health
- 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- 7 Ensure environmental sustainability
- 8 Develop a global partnership for development

MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT

When leading conservationist Vincent Serventy was honoured at a Parliament House luncheon on his 90th birthday, he used the occasion to make a powerful plea for the future of the planet. A passionate campaigner for environmental conservation throughout his life, Dr Serventy is President of Honour of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, after 60 years of membership and 30 years as its president. Honoured globally for his work in this and other roles, he is still campaigning actively.

So what, in the view of this undoubted expert, are the most urgent problems we face as Carl Sagan's planetary clock ticks to midnight?

"The top three problems are global warming, global pollution and over-population, All of these need to be addressed through a major international effort, and soon."

Dr Serventy has been calling for a Universal Declaration of Environmental Rights, along the lines of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. He points out that with a Bill of Environmental Rights in place, the UN would be empowered to challenge any nation that failed to respect the agreed rules of behaviour.

What would those rules be? Dr Serventy distilled the 22 annexes of proposed legal principles from the 1987 Brundtland Report into a list of "Ten Green Values" which could underpin responsible behaviour on the part of all nations. Or rather, into nine green values: the Australian poet Judith Wright, who is patron of the Society, added the tenth in this collection, on issues of values and culture.

TEN GREEN VALUES

1. All people have a right to an earth where they can live in good health and enjoy a fair quality of life.
2. No nation has the right to change the world of nature in a way that will damage the earth's resources.
3. All nations must keep the present diversity of the natural world, its plants and animals and the beauty of landscapes.
4. All nations must use their resources in a sustainable way and plan for a future when present supplies of oil and coal run out.
5. All nations giving aid must make sure this will increase the quality of life of those to whom the help is given.
6. The resources which the world holds in common must be used for the common good.
7. All nations must carry out international agreements and abide by the decisions of the World Court.
8. All nations must check their own environments and warn of dangers ahead.
9. All nations must develop a sustainable population policy, not expecting other nations to accept their excess, due to unwise planning.
10. All nations must educate their people into a new morality which cares not only for the rights of the people but also for the rights of the environment.

Your choice: Hard truths? Or life on a voluptuous cushion?

From the 2005 Nobel Lecture by Harold Pinter

In 1958 I wrote: "There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false.... as a writer I stand by them but as a citizen I cannot. As a citizen I must ask: What is true? What is false?"

And so must we, he says. In an explosive speech, stiff with very ugly facts, Pinter attacked political power, manipulation of truth, American foreign policy and the willingness of citizens everywhere to turn a blind eye, to avoid discomfort.

"The majority of politicians, on the evidence available to us, are interested not in truth but in power and in the maintenance of that power. To maintain that power it is essential that people remain in ignorance, that they live in ignorance of the truth, even the truth of their own lives. What surrounds us therefore is a vast tapestry of lies, upon which we feed.

"As every single person here knows, the justification for the invasion of Iraq was that Saddam Hussein possessed a highly dangerous body of weapons of mass destruction, some of which could be fired in 45 minutes, bringing about appalling devastation. We were assured that was true. It was not true. We were told that Iraq had a relationship with Al Qaeda and shared responsibility for the atrocity in New York of September 11th 2001. We were assured that this was true. It was not true. We were told that Iraq threatened the security of the world. We were assured it was true. It was not true. The truth is something entirely different. The truth is to do with how the United States understands its role in the world and how it chooses to embody it.

"The United States has supported and in many cases engendered every right wing military dictatorship in the world after the end of the Second World War. I refer to Indonesia, Greece, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Haiti, Turkey, the Philippines, Guatemala, El Salvador, and, of course, Chile. [And now Venezuela? See p8 - Ed.]

"Hundreds of thousands of deaths took place throughout these countries. Did they take place? And are they in all cases attributable to US foreign policy? The answer is yes they did take place and they are attributable to American foreign policy. But you wouldn't know it.

"It never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn't happening. It didn't matter. It was of no interest. The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good.

It's a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis.

"I put to you that the United States is without doubt the greatest show on the road. Brutal, indifferent, scornful and ruthless it may be but it is also very clever. As a salesman it is out on its own and its most saleable commodity is self love. It's a winner. Listen to all American presidents on television say the words, 'the American people', as in the sentence, 'I say to the American people it is time to pray and to defend the rights of the American people and I ask the American people to trust their president in the action he is about to take on behalf of the American people.'

"It's a scintillating stratagem. Language is actually employed to keep thought at bay. The words 'the American people' provide a truly voluptuous cushion of reassurance. You don't need to think. Just lie back on the cushion. The cushion may be suffocating your intelligence and your critical faculties but it's very comfortable.

"I believe that despite the enormous odds which exist, unflinching, unswerving, fierce intellectual determination, as citizens, to define the real truth of our lives and our societies is a crucial obligation which devolves upon us all. It is in fact mandatory. If such a determination is not embodied in our political vision we have no hope of restoring what is so nearly lost to us - the dignity of man."

Read the full text of this speech at www.nobelprize.org

"SHAME ON AUSTRALIA"

Leading Australians have also spoken out about truth and deception, and our obligations as citizens.

"I have never before been ashamed of my country," said Professor Peter Baume, Chancellor of the Australian National University, in January. "Now I am." A former senior Liberal colleague of John Howard, Professor Baume delivered a scathing attack on the government (*The Australian 18 01 06*).

"So many shameful things have happened in this country that would not have happened even a few years ago," said the widely-respected former senator. "For one thing, we have had our Prime Minister saying that what were obviously riots with a racial basis were not racist."

He also cited the Government's failure to stand up to the US over the jailing without trial of accused terrorist David Hicks, the Iraq war and the Government's false claims about refugees throwing their children overboard in 2001.

Peter Baume was a federal minister for education, health and aboriginal affairs in the Fraser government. He resigned from the front bench in 1987 over the decision of the Howard-led Coalition to oppose Hawke government legislation on equal opportunity for women. He quit the Liberal Party in 1996 because "there was no point in my remaining a member of a conservative party. I am a liberal," according to the report from Mike Steketee. (*And all this was before media reports of the Wheat Board scandal!*)

In November, former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser had made a similar accusation. Mr Fraser said he found his party "unrecognisable as liberal".

"What I want to do is emphasise in the strongest possible way how serious this is, how people should not just let it fly over the shoulder and say 'She'll be right'.... there ought to be objectives to restore basic liberties and restore a true sense of the rule of law".

Signals in the noise

Internet disaster ahead?

Australia ranks 11th of 100 countries ranked for "networked readiness" in a report from INSEAD and the World Economic Forum, and an OECD report shows that the IT industry has rebounded from the end of the dot-com bubble. But while we're flagging disasters... a warning from "internet elder" David D. Clark of MIT that the utility of the internet may stall and turn downward. "For the average user today the Internet resembles Times Square in the 1980s: exciting and vibrant but with drugs, robberies and insane people. Times Square has been cleaned up, but the Internet keeps getting worse." Security patches aren't keeping pace. Some 43% of US users have reported spyware or adware on their computers; IBM says viruses and criminal attacks jumped by 50% in the first half of 2005; Symantec says spam surged 77% at companies it monitored in the last half of 2004 and that 60% of all email was spam.

Future Survey

January 2006

Young people aren't all totally into "stuff"

Combined youth spending power in the 11 major economies, including Australia, exceeds a massive US\$750bn per year. But recent research shows that against a constant marketing onslaught, young people are beginning to show signs of consumer leadership, becoming more aware of being a key part of the solution to over-consumption and its impact on global resources, and thinking about more sustainable ways of living.

Ecos

August - September 2005

Coke gets a zero for effort

An \$18m viral marketing campaign launched by Coca-Cola Australia to promote its new Zero brand to the youth market has triggered some unexpected responses. The company used non-traditional channels, launching the zero movement on the streets with posters, coasters and chalk drawings, and a website with the same name. The blogging community has issued its own verdict, writes Louisa Hearn, with comments like: "How many ad agencies does it take to patronise a demographic?". A spoof zero movement site suggests readers take the money they would usually spend on soft drinks and give it to charity, while spin-off blog *thezeromovementsucks.blogspot.com* has begun selling T-shirts that say: "I joined the zero movement and all I got was this lousy brain tumour".

Sydney Morning Herald

25 01 06

Is Venezuela next?

A new report - "*US Intervention in Venezuela, A Clear and Present Danger*" - tells a shocking tale of hardening US attitudes and intervention in yet another country. It is at <http://www.globalexchange.org/countries/america-as/venezuela/USVZrelations.pdf>.
www.commondreams.org

New from top futurists

Futures Thinking for Social Foresight

Richard A Slaughter with Marcus Bussey

An entry-level book and CD-ROM to give teachers and students a straight-forward introduction to futures studies. The five main sections are Mapping Futures Studies - Key concepts; Context and Applications; Futures Concepts and Related Techniques; Methods; Futures Thinking for Social Foresight.

In addition to these practical and user-friendly sections, there are 'reflections' or short pieces that invite deeper consideration plus lots of diagrams and figures, many produced especially for these publications.

The CD-ROM also includes some valuable short essays by futures educators, along with a futures glossary and live web links. Futures Thinking for Social Foresight is easy to use. Short sections can be printed out as needed. Overall, the book and CD-ROM provide easy access to some of the best thinking and most useful options available in futures studies and applied foresight.

The book and CD-ROM costs AUD\$40 each + GST, postage and packing.

More at <http://www.foresightinternational.com.au>.

The Seven MegaTrends: Ross Dawson

Technology is far from the only factor changing the nature of professional services. Public perception of business ethics is a powerful industry driver on multiple levels. Domestic and international politics play a powerful role in shaping the competitive landscape at home and abroad. The ever-increasing access to professional education and information changes the role and value of specialist knowledge. Generational change, with baby boomers shifting into retirement, and impatient, switched-on Gen-Yers wanting their share, shakes traditional structures. Professional services firms must strive to understand the critical shifts that are driving their businesses now and into the future. The MegaTrends are: Client Sophistication; Governance; Connectivity; Transparency; Modularization; Globalization; and Commoditization.

More at www.rossdawsonblog.com

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

The last two synthesis reports from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment are now available online. They are:

1. "Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Health Synthesis" released by the World Health Organization at a press conference in Bangkok in December.
2. "Ecosystems & Human Well-being: Wetlands & Water Synthesis", distributed November 2005 at the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Kampala, Uganda.

More information at www.millenniumassessment.org.