

# China in a Multipolar World

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In honor of Dr gold King 3 former deputy prime minister of Singapore Dr goh was one of the founding fathers of the Republic and the leading architect of his economic and financial management in Singapore's formative years many economic and financial institutions will conceive and establish under its leadership when China began its reforms and started opening up to the world in 1978 Dr gold played a key role in developing Singapore ties with China he was also a keen supporter of China's Economic Development and integration into the world economy and was appointed an advisor by the Chinese for some years from 1985. I should add that in 1983 Dr go founded the Institute of East Asia philosophies which has morphed in over the years into the East Asia Institute that you see today this year's go King Street lecture is special for several reasons first as pointed out by Bert Hoffman it marks the 25th anniversary of the East Asian stew second it is the first in-person lecture since the pandemic the last two lectures by former Australian prime minister Kevin Wright and by former IMF Deputy managing director of the IMF Dr Zoomin were given online and third for some reason this is the first time that a Singaporean is given the lecture but it's entirely fitting because Joshua was the cabinet minister who approved EI in his current form 25 years ago the title of Mr Yo's lecture is China in the multipolar world I'm not privy to what he's going to say Joshua is a deep student of Chinese history culture and politics he has made no secret of his sympathies for China and he never misses an opportunity to explain China's position in the world some have called him a China Whisperer I'm inclined to agree with this description of himself as a peace Whisperer he sees the re-emergence and rights of China as a reality and the need for the still dominant West to accommodate her in ways and through policies that enable us all to Live and Let Live the alternative of a world fragmented into economic financial and Military blocks would make for a far more dangerous and poorer world in such a world a small city-state like Singapore will have a precarious existence so ultimately Joshua is also a Singapore Whisperer it now gives me great pleasure to invite George show to give this year's Singapore this year's go King 3 lecture please I thank God paying for his kind words excellencies dear friends ladies and gentlemen I was honored when cockping and but Hoffman invited me to give this year's go King sui lecture it

is a great honor for me I was involved with the establishment of the East Asia Institute in 1987.

go King 3 established the Institute of East Asian philosophies in 1983 principally for the study of Confucianism later the mission was broadened and the name changed to Institute of East Asian political philosophy political economy i-e-aape in 1996 recruited Professor Wong Kong woo to be the director of The Institute Prof Wang was a distinguished visitor at The Institute of civilization studies at the time he was the vice Chancellor of Hong Kong University before the return of Hong Kong to China I remember once chatting with Prof Wang and rather boldly telling him that his center of gravity was in Southeast Asia to which he was right to return not long after he took on his new responsibility in Singapore go King 3 suddenly decided to shut down the Institute profound did not know the reason and came to see me I was shocked to put it in Maori I appeal to Lee Kuan Yew who must have then discussed it with cooking sweet agreed that with the rights of China Singapore needed such an Institute he was then renamed eai Prof one remain director in 2006 to over from him became the chairman in 2019. I remember writing messages for both the 10th and 20th anniversary of above the 10th and 20th anniversaries of the EI and I'm glad to be here at the 25th when I was Minister for trade in Industry I got EI to give senior staff in the ministry short monthly lectures on China after my own ministerial staff meetings the rise of China is an epic story which began with a long decline of the Qing Dynasty in the 19th century the Rocks began earlier during the reign of the qinglong emperor but did not become manifest till later a sure sign was a Dynasty's arrogance in believing that there was nothing he needed to learn from others the decline in Fall of the team Dynasty enabled the Russians to move in from the north and Western powers from the sea to avoid China's fate Japan transformed itself with grim determination and was able to join in the pillage of China he rested Taiwan from China in 1895 defeated Russia in 1905 annexed Korea 1910 and invaded Manchuria in 1931 before China proper in 1937.

it took China more than more than 100 years to fully rounds itself and expel the following Invaders even after the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949 threats to its integrity from the Americans in the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Straits the Americans in French into China and from the Soviet Union along its entire northern border the economic revolution of Chinese Society proved harder than a political revolution which was hard enough China's economic system had to zigzag before things are being put it on the path of Reform and opening up in 1978 Chinese civilization has been able to organize far more human beings it is long history than other civilizations there are many reasons for this of which the one which stands out the most for me is the invention of paper enabled huge amounts of data to be stored and processed a whole civilization grew out of this data intensity including the Imperial Civil Service Countrywide examinations as a way to sift our talent from all corners of the realm and the culture which makes careful traditions in human relations and which reverse education and scholarship a large population the Chinese people has one literature and recognize a common set of Heroes and myths the idographic nature of the Chinese writing system which did not change with changing pronunciations also played a major role it's interesting that China has again become the most data intensive Society in the world China's re-emergence on the global stage repeats another cycle of

History is effects like in previous Cycles are felt throughout Asia and this time around the world unlike the people living on China's periphery who have memories of China's previous incarnations the West is filling the false field of China of an ascended China for the first time long accustomed to his own superiority over others China's growing influence is felt as a challenge to lowest and even as a threat during the first and second world wars the European peoples consumed themselves in orgies of mutual Slaughter using industrial methods on both occasions it was a U.

S which eventually helped to bring the Carnage to an end its own infrastructure and production capacity not physically damaged by War the U.S emerged out of the second World War as the most powerful country on Earth is the economy accounted for an astonishing 40 percent of global GDP U.S Global Leadership was however contested by the Soviet Union well we often see that the war was divided into two camps during the Cold War the reality was more complicated many developing countries joined the non-aligned movement in the group of 77. after Khrushchev renounced Stalin in 1956. Furious exchanges took place between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China I read those exchanges when I was a student in Cambridge in 1957 Khrushchev pulled out all Soviet advisers from China causing many projects to be paralyzed relations between the Soviet Union and China got from bad to worse in the 60s the Soviet Union became Immortal threat to China prepared China for nuclear attack heavy industries were dispersed and tunnels were dug in all the major cities diplomacy led to Kissinger's secret visit to Beijing in 1971 and Nixon's historic visit in 1972.

in 1974 10 Philippine gave a speech at the U.N casting countries into three roles I remember as a student using his speech as a way to study Chinese the first world consists of two superpowers the U.S and the Soviet Union in the second world with the countries in their camps more or less the members of NATO and the Warsaw PAC the third war consisted of most developing countries which proclaimed themselves non-aligned even though many looked to the West like Singapore and a few like Cuba to the Soviet Union for support and inspiration China put itself squarely in the third world the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 was followed by the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. that the Soviet Union could be dismantled without the agony of war and revolution was indeed remarkable this opened a Haiti chapter in world history globalization gave hope to developing countries that they could take off by plugging into the international marketplace it was the age of Davos the stock of the final Triumph of the liberal idea and the end of History learning from the experiences of Japan and the four dragons China wrote this wave of globalization and achieved double-digit growth for many years in 1994 the Uruguay realm of trade liberalization was concluded get became the WTO in 1985 and the first meeting of Ministers of WTO countries was held in Singapore in 1996. after tough negotiations China joined the WTO in November 2001 at the same time as negotiation for a new round called the Doha development agenda was launched a street Minister I was in Doha and I was deeply involved as a chair of agriculture in the WTO ministerial meetings of Seattle before Doha and Cancun after that there were some of the most stressful periods in my life looking back we were perhaps tilting at windmills the pendulum of undiluted globalization had reached its limit in fact in fact the globalizations which enabled trade to be de-politicized

was the result of an American piece which for 20 odd years encompassed the entire world following the the end of the Cold War it was clear to me that without American leadership no progress was possible some saw the U.

S as a new Rome there was a touch of hubris when the new conservatives lived for the U.S and ambitious agenda to reshape the Middle East after September 11. it all ended in grief when U.S and NATO forces evacuated Kabul in 2021 the overwhelming U.S dominance of the world following the end of the second World War was a natural but it had a long tail the U.S still has 60 000 troops in Europe 70 000 in the former Soviet Union and 80 000 in Asia plus 11 aircraft carrier battle groups which believe the world's oceans and seas but as other Advanced countries recovered from war many with U.S help in developing countries with much larger populations made progress the relative economic weight the U.S had to come down when the U.S could not Prevail in Vietnam after the U.S and after sent to the U.S dollar out of the gold standard in 1971. many wondered whether the U.S was in Decline but somehow it always did manage to recover painfully vocal squeezed inflation out of the system the Regal years were a time of optimism his Star Wars program drove the Soviet Union to bankruptcy I was at the Harvard Business School at the time and some friends from MIT told me that an unlimited amount of money was available for research in Star Wars for a few years Japan looked as if you could overtake the U.S but the plaza Accord in September 1985. prevented that from ever happening the innovativeness of the U.S economy enabled it to search ahead especially in I.T and the biomedical Sciences there's also much advance in finance whether once you counted as a blessing is a separate matter of discussion when Obama ran for the presidency few in Asia believe that the U.S could ever have a black president he did and he went on to to win a second term now we have a U.

S vice president who was partly demo in the early upbringing and I'm sure would enjoy a good fish at carry in Singapore the U.S is a society which seems to be constantly in ferment but it does face deep problems now many of my American friends freely acknowledged that the U.S has become a divided nation and do not know how the divisions can be breached the U.S is an ongoing experiment in forging Unity out of diversity from that perspective the entire world has a stake in the outcome of the American experiment U.S attitude to the rights of China went through but doctors would describe as a progression after June 4th 1989 Josh Bush Senior genuinely wanted to help China rejoin the world I was into his conversation with liqu ID Singapore in January January 1992. I was Nikon used Note Taker and Brent Schoolcraft note taker for Bush Senior under Bush senior the U.S helped to broker the ambition of China Hong Kong and Taiwan into Apec as economies That Was Then described as a three-channel problem during Clinton's presidency U.S China relations went through two major crises the Taiwan Street crisis of 1996 following the tongue's visit to Cornell University and the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999 both sides exercise strategic discipline and cap relations on an even cue when the Asian financial crisis happened in 1997 then the eight the U.S was happy that China played a stabilizing role in containing it after the finance piping incident over the South China Sea in April 2001 not long after Bush Jr became president both sides again found a face-saving way out the September 11 China almost became an ally of the U.S in the war against terrorism I was in Shanghai both for the Apec trade Witnesses meeting in June and the leaders meeting in

October and saw how dramatically relations improved within a few months after North Korea exploded its first nuclear device in October 2006.

Bush Jr wanted China to do more to curb North Korea he told me when I met him at an Apec leaders meeting that if China did not do so then China might have to live with the consequences over Japan and South Korea also going nuclear the U.S could take such a relaxed view because North Korea could not reach the U.S the North Koreans knew that and invested in ballistic missiles development in November 2017 North Korea developed an ICBM called the Hua song 15 which could reach most parts of continental U.S and the U.S now knows it needs China to address the North Korean problem Bush Jr convened the first G20 Summit in response to the global financial crisis into in 2008. it was clear that the G7 on its own no longer had the economic health to prevent a global depression in 2009 at the second Summit chat by UK prime minister Gordon Brown in London China step up and undertook to increase spending massively this was the high point of globalization for a few years it seemed that the G7 will be replaced by the G20 China's expansionary policy however created significant distortions in his own economy which took many years to massage out of the system there was also no gratitude for what China did which suggests to me that when the next Global financial crisis hits us China will be more calibrated in this response and Obama bilateral relations gradually got worse China's growing economic and political strength became threatening to the U.S around 2011 Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton began the pivot to the east which was really a pivot against China many moves with me I remember being asked about the deployment of 2 000 U.S Marines to Darwin by pra students in China's national defense Academy when I was a visiting scholar at picking University in November 2001. the trans-pacific partnership with Singapore established together with New Zealand Chile and Brunei as a platform of for Freer trade investment in the Asia Pacific was done by the U.S into a coalition against China pointedly Vietnam was brought into the TPP by the U.

S even even though Vietnam's economy was obviously not ready for the disciplines of the TPP the U.S was prepared to give Vietnam special and differential treatment in the South China Sea the U.S supported and probably encouraged the Philippines to take China to compulsory arbitration over its Maritime claims under the U.N Convention of the law of the sea without tennis participation clever American lawyers argue the Philippine case and outwitted China in the legal game China sees the opportunity before the tribunal gave his verdict in 2016 to carry out with Incredible speed the enlargement of seven features in the South China Sea at asean Regional forums there were sharp exchanges between the U.S and China over the South China Sea in one of which Americans believe that China browbeat Singapore minimally me although I dispute the account it's also been said that the U.S will not have acted or reacted so robustly against China you see something that had adhered to sitting things victim of keeping a low profile filling his own growing strengths China under seizing thing took initiatives to launch the Bluffton Road in 2013 the made in China 2025 strategy and the Asian infrastructure Investment Bank among others the Dual circulation economy was seen as a way to make China less dependent on the world in the world more dependent on China xinjiang Tibet and Hong Kong were added to the list of Western unhappinesses living in Hong Kong during the months of violence in 2019 my wife and I

were relieved with the national security law was introduced because it restored peace and Public Safety and far from uniting Earth in a common fight against a common enemy the covet pandemic added to the division between the U.S and China under Trump bilateral relations took a sharp done for the worse and they did not get better under Biden the repeated use of Taiwan is a bargaining card has been dangerous because Taiwan is a clear red line for China come back and with a certain Detachment now the Army retirement and having left government for many years the current conflict between the U.

S and China was probably not avoidable from the end of 2001 when China acceded to the WTO to the beginning of covet at the end of 2019 China's GDP grew seven times in real terms PPP nine times in birming P terms and 11 times in U.S dollar terms China was getting too big to hide even if you wanted to in fact China's GDP in real terms overtook the us a few years ago around 2016. China might want to buy this time but the U.S was not going to wait sooner or later trial of strength and the context of Wills had to come in the short term Russia's invasion of Ukraine may have taken some heat some U.S Heat of China all the protagonists in that conflict Russia Ukraine Europe and U.S Now now find themselves in positions they'd rather not be and all must be thinking that they can real the world back to the end of last year how they might have played the game differently but there's no way to put Humpty Dumpty back on the wall the U.S cannot allow Putin to win and Putin cannot afford to lose little by little the parties involved are inching each other into a long dark tunnel where no light can be seen at the end of it and from which there is no easy possibility of reversing sooner or later there will be some kind of a ceasefire and partition but without a peace agreement now we have seen that for decades on the Korean peninsula in Kashmir and in Cyprus China and India are determined not to be dragged into that tunnel so too the other two members of brics South Africa and Brazil over time you'll be harder for the U.S to hold the Western Alliance together as tightly as is able to do now Western European countries like Germany and France have their own national interests to look after and know they have to live with Russia to the end of time both have invaded Russia in recent history to their great regret the U.S and its Western allies are currently carrying out a hybrid war against Russia it is a complex operation with many parts involving many branches of governments in many countries there's no guarantee that this strategy will break Russia's will it's also unlikely that the U.

S and its allies will put their own soldiers at risk China is carefully analyzing the Ukraine war in all its aspects knowing that a similar but larger hybrid War may be Unleashed on it to decide to move forcefully on Taiwan from time to time like the bombing of a Polish Village incidents happen Underground or at Sea requiring the full concentration of political and military leaders before life and death decisions are taken and that's why Rishi tsunam had to call off his meeting with sitting Bing in Bali provided China is not provocative on Taiwan the U.S must prefer to focus on Ukraine for the time being I suspect the Ukraine war was a key consideration underlying the long meeting between Biden and XI xingping in Bali which put a bottom to the deterioration of bilateral relations both sex reaffirmed all positions on Taiwan the U.S has been reminded that Taiwan is at the core of China's core interests overwhelming support of the kmt in taiwan's local elections last month despite president tanguin making them a referendum on her China policy must have been disappointing to

anti-china Hawks in the U.S but between now and the next presidential elections in Taiwan it's still a long time overall relations between the U.S and China are however unlikely to get much better the U.S sees China as a challenge to its dominance in the world it wants to slow China down or pull it down if you could it's determined to deny China cutting-edge Technologies especially those which can be put to military use like AI and Quantum computing China does not like what the US is doing but I don't think China is surprised after all China in this history closely guarded the secrets of making paper and gunpowder for centuries one reason for sitting things lightening of controls in China is preparation for the possibility of war the U.

S in all dimensions he don't army uniform until the ple to be prepared for war before his recent meeting with Biden on the U.S side successive in the Pacific commanders in Honolulu in Honolulu have been reminding U.S servicemen to be prepared to fight tonight what will all this lead to for the U.S the global dominance is good not only for the U.S but for the entire world without embarrassment the U.S describes itself as exceptional with a manifest destiny what it does others may not do because there's no moral equivalence and then American peace economies describe the U.S dollar and the International Financial system as public goods for the world to Avail themselves off these and other institutions established after the second World War have been increasingly weaponized by the U.S in recent years countries which have been adversely affected like Russia and China must surely be working on alternatives for the time being however there's no credible alternative to the U.S system but the more and restrained the U.S is in weaponizing the international economic and financial system the earlier alternative Arrangements Arrangements will be found in which blockchain technology will make easier there are two levels to U.S concern about loss of global dominance the first is that China will eventually replace it as a world leader for men for many Americans This is not only a political challenge to the U.S it is a moral challenge of what is good for the world and Humanity itself the long years of Western dominance in the world has led many in the West in general and Americans in particular they believe that their values are Universal values stuff evidently for a period of time Singaporean intellectuals who asserted the legitimacy of Asian values or wrongly criticized by Western commentators China has repeatedly disavowed any intention to spread its values and system to other countries even when it becomes the world's biggest economy but this disavow is not believed in the West due to a lack of understanding of Chinese civilization the hunt people are homogeneous and China is incredibly homogeneous I go to Croatia it's 90 Croatia after the recent Wars and they're homogeneous and they're known to be homogeneous and they create an outstanding soccer team out of a small population but China is 1.

5 billion people and it's over 90 percent this is not the result of this is not an accident for sure it is not the result of policies it is culture and civilization behind people are not xenophobic but they do not want to lose their own distinctiveness which is a trait shared by other ethnic groups like Jews and passes and others I don't think the Chinese want Beijing and Shanghai to ever become like New York London or Paris unlike juice and passes however the hunt people make up a large part of the world's population and I partly fear because of them so China's homogeneity itself becomes a challenge hence he often quoted

remark by Napoleon you know to let China sleep for when she wakes she will shake the world the second level of fear is that even if China does not replace the U.S AS Global leader is distinctiveness is a bad example to others and if enough countries follow China and also one thing to be distinctive then the U.S will lose its dominance to a multipolar world the Ukraine war has quickened this development even though China does not condone Russia's invasion of Ukraine it has not condone it does not condemn Russia and that and that's not one put in to lose because it put in losers China faces more pressure if there is regime change in Russia and the country joins the Western camp China will be in a much more difficult position China much prefers a multipolar role and sees it as inevitable it runs he wants Russia to be a separate Pole and supports it as a separate Bowl India with his long history inside the population will always be a bowl unto itself it will never be a satellite to anybody China also supports Europe's autonomy especially his autonomy from the U.

S even though he knows that the U.S and Europe belong to one civilization thus China has always favored a strong EU and a strong Euro China's attitude to the current Unity of the West is to wait it out and to let cracks gradually appear as national interests assert themselves China knows that the five eyes enjoy a special Unity but will still patiently try to separate them as much as possible by working on their separate interests channel stickcraft is predictable because it is now from the game theory point of view and very much rooted in his own historical experience it's it's transparent it's in the historical novels it's in the Art of War it's the way they philosophize in the Chinese mind and during good relations have ultimately to be based on Mutual long-term interests and not only on the sharing of values if you protest to Canada you're a good friend but you don't share common interests the Chinese don't take it very seriously let me use the Middle East as an illustration China's policy towards the Middle East is completely different from that of the U.S for the U.S the dominant considerations have been hydrocarbons and Israel in February 1945 after meeting churches and Stalin and Yota in the Crimea a few months before he died Franklin Delano Roosevelt on board the U.S Navy Cruiser USS Quincy met King Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia for a few days in the Suez Canal out of that meeting arose an agreement that in return for the U.S protection of the Kingdom oil would always be price in US dollars after the 1956 U.S war the UK could only play second fiddle to the U.S in the Middle East and it was the U.S which ultimately ensured the security of all the GCC countries after the Six-Day War the U.S took over France's role as alternate guarantor of Israel's security so the U.S today has a large military presence in the Middle East with many bases and many thousands of troops in different countries in contrast apart from a small Support Facility in Djibouti for anti-piracy purposes China has nothing every piece on the Middle Eastern chessboard is now moving Russian intervention in Syria prevented Assad from being tapu despite Iranian sanctions despite U.

S sanctions Iran continues to exert influence in the region especially among shared populations and with the Ukraine war is linked to Russia and China are growing for the GCC China has become the most important purchaser of oil and gas and a major supplier of goods and services under the leadership of Abdul aziz's grandson MBS Saudi Arabia is moving into a more equidistant position Xi Jinping made an official visit to Riyadh last week and receive a spectacular and I believe unprecedented welcome King Salman and MBS



hosted meetings for him to meet leaders of the GCC and the Arab world Egypt with his large population has always been a poll in his own right but it's still preoccupied with internal problems putting its own house in order but meanwhile China is quietly helping to build a new Cairo China also maintains good relations with Israel on his own Israel would like to cooperate more with China but it's often prevented from doing so by the U.S despite good relations with Israel Chinese relations with Palestine are also strong and this is not because of the Brilliance of Chinese foreign policy it's because China does not seek political dominance in the region but only pursues his own economic interests China has a little ability to interfere in the politics of the region and has no desire to do so but where Chinese interests are concerned it will reward or punish using the lever of trade and investment at the UN and other International forums China's speeches are usually anodyne except for his own interests are affected even when China's GDP in nominal terms overtakes out of the U.S I don't believe it's behaving in the Middle East and elsewhere it's going to change because it thinks itself too wise to get involved in the Affairs of others when he has enough problems of his own U.

S fear about China's rise should therefore not be that China will replace it as global hegemon but the channel will help to crystallize a multipolar wall the U.S is not used to the idea of a multiple level but it is not necessarily bad for the U.S in fact I would argue that it will help to extend the period of U.S ascendancy in the world in the good way for the world polarity has many dimensions political military economic and cultural in all Dimensions the U.S by at by acting more judiciously it's hard to replace take the Belton Road Initiative for example the U.S currently sees it as an aspect of Chinese expansionism the countries who participate generally one infrastructure development because it's good for them but as they see the economic accounts with China growing they naturally want diversification the U.S insists on the choice between a neighboring country of China on the Belton Road and China the answer will not be will not be to the U.S liking but if the U.S takes a more relaxed approach every country on the Burton Road without the U.S asking will naturally even a stronger U.S presence so that you will have greater negotiating leverage with China I have expressed The View to American friends many times that the U.S is a free rider of the Burton Road and you enjoy the ride instead of opposing it asean we are all hands at this game we understand it very well and we encourage the major powers to compete in mutual rivalry for our affection as prime minister I used to say let China build the north-south connections and then Japan with the East-West connections then we'll have a nice grid to enjoy and I believe that's happening currently the U.S has some 800 400 military bases around the world they are very costly to upkeep a lot of the course is finance by the exorbitant privilege of the US dollar to act like a text on the entire world the dominance of the US dollar cannot however continue forever sooner or later as the relative weights of other countries grow other major currencies the Euro and offshore RMB will play more important roles for the denomination of trade and as Reserve currencies when that exorbitant privilege of the US dollar is reduced when the stock Choice has to be made in the U.

S between guns and butter it'll be harder to justify the American taxpayers the maintenance of these expensive overseas bases the UK went through the same progression after the dismantling of Empire after 56 A Change Is of Suez in 1968 prime minister Harold Wilson

announced pullout of British forces from Singapore at a time British military spending accounted for 40 percent of Singapore's GDP it meanted a lot to us Lee Kuan Yew flew immediately to London to plead for postponement he got three years he's just three valuable Harvest for Singapore which has only just become independent by anticipating an eventual multipolar configuration in the world the U.S can get into a more sustainable long-term position instead of seeking dominance everywhere the U.S should focus on the areas where its political and military power can take the balance and therefore become a critical player such a position can be maintained indefinitely but it means it means that the U.S has to accept many parts of the world for what they are was in all and not to try to transform them it is all image in the South China Sea the U.S can help asean by being Less Direct in these actions no I had a private conversation after I left government with Australian prime minister Bob Carr so I said best for the U.S Navy to be Beyond the Horizon Beyond visual range but can be seen in Loretta as soon as the best position to be in your helpers may be negotiable China but if you come with individual range everybody is very tense and it instead of remaking use of the US we are being made use of I didn't expect vodka to publish it in these Memoirs you know but I don't mind because that's always been my position and maybe it's good that my position has been public so I can sit at a farm like this from a longer term viewpoint it's better for the us to go along with asean rather than try to say dominate the region and pull Asana along but this requires greater understanding of the region and more subtle play whether the U.

S likes it or not other countries and regions were increasingly assert their own separateness on the global stage Iran May soon join the Shanghai Corporation organization after the U.S withdraw from Afghanistan a new chapter is open in the history of inner Asia Saudi Arabia is likely to become the next member of brics of the Seas visit many other countries the Egypt Algeria and Argentina turkey are waiting in nine while the SEO and Bricks will be weak compared to the EU or asean they are not weaker compared to quad unlike they are not explicitly or implicitly directed any anyone else everyone wants options if he can have them and India is a classic example India is in a happy position of being able to sit at many tables for international organizations and the WTO the U.S would do better by intervening judiciously to make keep Provisions fairer for everyone instead of playing a negative role when the rules are no longer seen to be in U.S interests Adventure this proposition that the U.S is more likely to renew itself as a beacon for the world by moving towards multipolarity instead of working to prevent it I'm coming about the current policy of identifying Russia's enemy and China is long-term strategic competitor shows U.S determination to preserve its Global dominance with the help of a Western Alliance I doubt he can succeed if he tries to do to do this even in the medium term the danger is that the U.S will exhaust itself trying to do this and the back pressure as a result of this enormous effort May in turn widen internal divisions in U.S society and could even cause the U.S to attend isolationists we should be very destabilizing for the entire world China is used to conducting statecraft in a multipolar world drugs is history it had to deal with many neighbors a few of whom at any time would have been threatening so the brightest Minds in the Empire are strategic thinkers but to be sure for most of human history the world was multipolar China never had ambition to make itself a single pole because he knew that was impossible to achieve and very unwise for

China to set that as an objective now incorporating other people's would also affect China's homogeneity and make it and make it much more difficult to govern let me think China's covet policy Chinese coffee policy israelian but only China Committee in such a policy the Chinese people may complain cry blue murder but in the end they will comply policies will not work in Singapore and certainly not in London or Paris or New York that's because it is largely homogeneous population with a deep Instinct for peace and stability because it knows in this historical memory that if the country breaks down Generations will have to suffer for the country we reunite again China's strong preference has always been to manage difficult neighbors or what it thinks are difficult neighbors using economic economic leverage rather than to subdue them militarily so when Western commented to see the channel uses economic coercion I thought there's always been in this statecraft read the history like the us today China has always taught itself to be morally Superior to everyone else this however kind of can do to ease the current transition to a multiple level which it seems to be his own interest China should help bring it about and try to make the U.

S part of it and the situation today is very different from the past 100 years ago Chen was kicked around by Western powers in Japan and today's China is built with apprehension by the same powers even feared there is a profound change even though the Persona dramatists might be the same I think many in China have not seen the change over that time and still think in terms of how China was treated 100 years ago China is fond of asking other countries to meet it halfway in negotiations compromise is always good and always to be encouraged in the case of the South China Sea I think China should go more than halfway and meet asean 60 40.

on the code of condom because it's so much bigger and stronger and this will help to diffuse an issue which is easily exploited by external powers I remember when turongti offered asean an FDA in Singapore in December year 2000. asean leaders were shocked and did not know how to respond because they viewed China as an economic challenge at that time Hassan was then just recovering from the Asian financial crisis I was among other trade ministers who met to discuss two room TV's offer in Hanoi the following year we decided to ask China for an early Harvest to benefit Southeast Asian countries in the form of territory access to the Chinese market for Agricultural and mineral products Singapore did not benefit to did not stand to benefit from the early Harbors so we could Advocate it both to us and enter China strongly the early Harvest we saw as a test of China's Goodwill foreign years after this he said just a conversation because he kept a strategic view of Asia in the early Harvest was not difficult to negotiate so a similar portion of South China Sea will help create long-term Trust between Assam countries in China in the case of the broader dispute with India it was a recent incident recently I saw videos of it from the Indian side but the fact that both sides quickly pull back I think was a good sign they're involved in Beijing and Delhi they did not want relations to get worse in fact I was told by an Indian friend in Melbourne who analyzed the bridge encounter between Xi Jinping and Biden in Bali frame by frame and he told me after analyzing frame by frame that Modi was the one who took the initiative and had a translator next to him Modi we all know is very still in media management I think he did it deliberately and that Brief Encounter was Headline News in their newspapers and

television stations it was not reported in China which is self-interesting but in the case of the body dispute India I suggested China should also go more than halfway maybe 55 45.

because India does you itself the weaker power for China the 62 border war is long forgotten but for many Indians the 62 war is still fresh in the memory till today the report of that war called the Henderson Brooks report it's such a long time ago it's still a classified document in India why I think it's not hard to guess the reasons so China should take all this into consideration and when it deals with India allow for it on specific incidents both sides of course think that the other side is the offending party the standoff after the incident in the Govern Valley when the Indian side had over 20 deaths and China had a few I think has gone on far too long to another size benefit both SEO and G20 and revaluation and support on the WTO China should play a helpful role in allowing sample Visions to be really negotiated China acceded to the WTO in 2001 on very tough terms I remember the way the U.S EU and Japan put china put china through a ringer I mean I knew the people involved and exhausted China as Singapore for our past when I was trade Minister I agreed because I knew that all demands were already met but the demands of the big powers and there will be mfn to us so I without paying anything I think I got some good meal from China for doing that nevertheless China grew more than WTO members could have reasonably expected probably more than China itself expected the rules which are appropriate for China then are not all appropriate for China today especially with respect to the disciplines governing state-owned Enterprises intellectual property China continues to enjoy developing country status because it's per capita income is still relatively low but in certain sectors China is an advanced country in a few sectors is actually a leading country rules which others feel are fairer for today's China will help this will help to discourage countries from lightly invoking national security reasons to impose terrorists and other trade restrictions current WTO director General nosy or conjuriella she's a formidable woman those of you who know her I think she can help to bring China the U.

S EU and other countries together in negotiation to update the WTO so that all countries will continue to Value the WTO as a fair and predictable way for the promotion of trade and the resolution of trade disputes but for this to happen China must make initiatives because the U.S cannot and the U.S current policy is to block WTO by Genesis we are prepared to discuss forget the limits and have an understanding with the doctor general what it can do and what it cannot do this will enable the director General to propose amendments which are safe face saving for everybody we should give the U.S fresh reason that the U.S is better off with the WT WTO than without the WTO the WTO is after all a very civilized way of handling problems which cannot otherwise be easily managed without the use of force it puts moral pressure on all countries to behave in a civilized way China's support of WTO reform is crucial to the international trading system which has enabled hundreds of millions of people including Chinese people to rise out of poverty therefore as a multiple level benefits China it behooves China to help bring it about peacefully by easing the transition to it it behooves China to act in a way over time to persuade the U.S that the kind of multipolarity which planet envisages it's also good for the U.S Chinese officials should avoid excessive self-righteousness and belittle and be lasting in responding to criticisms I think a bit of humor will also help but perhaps the most difficult aspect of multipolarity for the U.

S to solo is the acceptance of different value systems co-existing in the world there's bound to be some conflict in values on issues like gender sexuality individualism versus communitarianism drugs gun gun control the nature of democracy the death sentence abortion themselves research and so on but even within a family even within an American family there could be such disputations and this should not be considered abnormal the key question is whether we are bound by a spirit of fraternity that in the end we're all human beings this is the only planet which is our home it is a moral question Maybe let the sin is a moral challenge are we in the end still brothers and sisters in a curious way pop free Pope Francis even though he's the head of a religious congregation best personifies the largest spirit of celebrating diversity within one human family in 2021 in Abu Dhabi he co-signed a document on human fraternity foreign Christians living in their midst not as members of a minority but as brothers and the pope issued an encyclical title fatality all Brothers in the west of Saint Francis of Assisi among Muslim countries the UAE has taken the lead in putting words into action the spirit of the abrahamic Accord in Abu Dhabi where I was recently an abrahamic Center will be open next year early next year encompassing in one triangular complex a moss-facing Mecca a church Facing East and a synagogue facing Jerusalem in one complex in Abu Dhabi it is only by recognizing our fraternity they were able to overcome religious differences in the world we can't negotiate a way of religious differences because they're often in Revelation China has a has a different experience with this historically Chinese mandarins who today are represented by the causes of the Communist Party of China have practice the kind of agnostic morality they acknowledge what Confucius course or many brothers and the confusionist approach towards religion is to keep it in the private space and out of the political Realm so from early from very early on Mahayana Mounds in China or put down for the interferred in politics and became confined in monasteries and today among Chinese singaporeans we associate monks with monasteries and we don't see amongst the way that of other societies sea monks in the Sangha in mahina society plays a completely different role from the Sangha in tarabada society and there is a result of the Chinese response towards the challenge of Buddhism which he eventually Incorporated into a civilization without fraternity there can be no Unity without fraternity religious diversity is divisive without fraternity a multiple level cannot be peaceful the original liberal idea of accepting diversity created the U.

S emitted the greatest country on Earth it was to escape illegalism on the continent that they found freedom in the U.S and wrote the Constitution which guarantee those freedoms in recent years the liberal ideas has somehow become intolerant dividing American society from within you admired the U.S for his ability to attract and incorporate Talent from all over the world you often argue that while China had a talent pool of 1.3 billion people to draw from the U.S had seven from the entire world the America which look when you described was one even Chinese leaders wanted their own children to go to for higher education much has since changed whether the U.S can be pretty much into Paris in a multiple level depends on the outcome of the ongoing drama we see in U.S domestic politics today over which we have no control China should not be embroiled in that drama by making it clear that in a multiple level is quite happy to leave the U.S as first among equals thank you thank you so much George this was a fantastic speech with an enormous

range it I I cannot even start summarizing it but we did touch upon uh well China's history the multipolarity in the world the U.S attitude towards that the morality of of a multi-polar world which I found extremely fascinating and interesting I'm sure there's a lot of questions in the room we have um microphones four microphones if you'd like to ask a question please position yourself behind a microphone I think we have a special microphone for a few people here so if the people here in the first world raised their hand we have another microphone but I'll let me start with one question and my question is so let's suppose the U.

S says yes good we're going to have a multipolar world you already touched upon the trade aspect of it but these seem to be the easy ones um I come from Europe where there was a lot of multipolarity in the past and it was violent and bloody incredibly conflict written how would a multi-polar world prevent such an outcome polarity should Express a view of how we see one another as fellow human beings when I was in Spain recently I visited a Basque country I went to Loyola I wanted to understand what was it that caused men that Francis Xavier and Mateo Richie which almost completely ignorance of Asia to put to put up the heads and say we will go to Asia and christianize it Matteo Richie learned quickly that he didn't understand China he had a encyclopedic mind a photographic memory he mastered the language and the classics and then from within Chinese philosophy he interpreted Christianity so if you look at the judgment Christian tracks of the 16th 17th century in China Jesus Mary Joseph the apostles were all Chinese faces it was only in the 19th century when the Europeans had gunboats and cannons that Jesus Christ could have blue eyes and blonde hair but before you can have a serious interaction you must first understand the other side a multi-polarity is not coexistence multipolarity is you respect my identity I respect yours but we have a deeper identity as human beings and these definitions is that which will unite us if if Earth is threatened by an asteroid about a plague to the first to meet the most difficult challenge in multipolarity is to be humble to understand the other party for what it is in his history and civilization and to see good in it even though we do not embrace all of it thank you very much this gentleman there and then go there and then in the back I take three questions so keep it short please the questions thank you thank you so much Dr George why so many years smart Statesmen and politicians in Europe but they don't share your view at all about China foreign question maybe it's not too dissimilar from the gentleman I noticed a pattern in your Reflections particularly on the domestic affairs of the US and China that with China you take a more careful Garden courteous Stone um and it's quite the opposite with America rightfully so and I can only guess that you are responding to cultural cues right like with as you said earlier the Chinese are much more sensitive to external criticism I wonder if you can comment on whether that's in fact accurate and if you could unpackage it a bit for us um okay um it's about the ipef as you all know uh I think Obama started the TPP uh Trump tore it up now Biden started the ipf do you think the ipef would ever get ratified and whether it was it's just another dinosaur in the making the sense that history repeats itself and it never gets ratified just like itpp and uh the other question I want to ask is all right thank you thank you so much George on Europeans and sensitivities and on rpef I Frankie do you have the full acronym of that maybe not everybody knows I do not know I pass oh iPad okay sorry the eye path yeah on the question about empty China sentiments in Europe I do not want to go into the justifications for that or lack of it I see it more in civilizational

terms that the West is not used to seeing a child that can see eye to eye and which even have to fear and this emotionally is hard to accept so first you deny that you get angry eventually you accept it then you're a bargain I think this is a process which Europe is now going through that you may not like it but you can't change it in the end you have to accept it and you have interest involved so when I speak in Europe I talk about the importance of going back to history and the way the Gen Civics saw China and learn from China it was because of the Jazz reads that French developed a civil service the Europe examinations is structure of polytechnics at the inspiration from China and he came to the dresses so when people realize that what they have also rely on borrowings and sometimes from the very people whom you now criticize or condemned I think you will become more open-minded and China has to do the same so I've long advocated there should be a university for Greek and Roman language literature in China it's not just enough to learn a language you must understand the civilization and China's inability to have proper relations with the Vatican I'm not blaming either side to me is abnormal because without understanding the Vatican you can understand Europe it shoots the shallowness in the way you are dealing with the other party so both sides have got to engage deeply and maybe there could be a project between the EU and China where the Europe and the Vatican have to establish a university for classical literature in China and in Europe find a way to teach Europeans classical Chinese literature you please do not understand the homogeneity of China they are used to talking about those store and Cervantes and Victor Hugo and so on but junior is one literature for a people with twice the population of all of Europe that's how homogeneous China is you got to understand it as phenomenon not something to be criticized now as to the question whether I'm more gentle on China than on on America I think in Singapore we develop a multi-channel capability which is that when you're dealing with Malaysians with Javanese with Australians with Indians we make subtle adjustments to the way we behave to the way we express ourselves even in body language because we respect the other party to be talking Japanese there are 99 ways to say no without saying no so you learn never to say no and when the Indian shakes his head in a particular way you understand that he's not saying yes or no he's just acknowledging and receiving you so it is because in Singapore we have this multi-channel capability there were a center of Arbitrage not a financial Arbitrage we're essentially for cultural Arbitrage that's why we could have Chinese billionaires here Indian billionaires here you could have this remarkable City where people are living side by side and offering us all kinds of opportunities because we're able to access multiple domains deeply now for the question about whether in the Pacific framework proposed by Trump is something which will grow lakes and take the region in a New Direction I seriously doubt it because the U.

S is right now not in the Moon for greater trade engagement that's why you opted out from the TPP I think it's bad for the us but eventually the U.S will come around and the best way to come around in my view is to encourage China to join the TPP Chinese already applied negotiation is a bit difficult and we must be cunning enough in the region to contribute such that China and the U.S will join at the same time negotiations will prolonged during that period the U.S will feel somewhat alarmed and we use that to affect thinking the U.S they're the best bet it's in a multilateral system and not in the system which they are not part of all

right we are officially in overtime but can I do one more round of questions we we loved hearing you you could have gone on for another half hour but so now we're a little short on question time so I'll do one more round the gentleman there here and one in the back and please identify yourself that would be wonderful thank you good evening is Jonathan I'm a lecturer at a local IHL so my question is earlier in your lecture you mentioned that if the U.

S were to actually become a more unrestrained in weaponizing the international economy that there are alternative Arrangements which blockchain can solve what are these alternative Arrangements thank you yeah please uh Minister my name is velour I work for the Straits times uh early in your speech you said you you referenced that meeting uh obviously with the young age where he uh according to the Western narrative as you put it is supposed to have told you that some countries are big some countries are small and that's just the reality but you said your recollection of that meeting is a little different what is your recollection of that encounter uh Winston Ravi is an old friend has the instincts of a journalist right it's another story you you have one more minute to think about it please gentlemen in the back is the final question hello uh firstly thanks for coming I hope you've enjoyed your retirement so far uh secondly I'd like to ask what your views are on Confucius institutes multi-polarity and then cultural hegemony thank you I've gotten the first question the Alternatives but I forgot the alternatives for what because I had my notes also sorry I don't do my job as a moderator well okay yeah so I just repeat the question so earlier you mentioned that um in your lecture that if uh in the event that the U.S becomes unrestrained in weaponizing the international economy oh yes yeah I've got it yeah well um you take safe sanctions in Russia in India and and China and other countries are buying Russian hydrocarbons so since they want to offer extensions they will denominate in other currencies and we'll find a way to settle those currencies so by the U.S very own actions they are seeding an alternative system and Doctrine will help this because it helps you keep track of things without others knowing and eventually not requiring all the complicated mechanisms they are found in Swift today that's what I mean by blockchain facilitating the development of an alternative system as to Robbie's question about what happened at the 20 2010 I know arf where young children had a sharp exchange with Hillary Clinton and according to you.

Accounts glad at Singapore when he said that some countries are big and some are small and just that if it was directed at India would have felt it and it happened that uh Yankee is a friend and we had hosted him to Singapore before before he became foreign minister before anyone knew he was becoming foreign minister and he had told me that the people of China and Singapore shared a common Mutual affection for each other and I see him a day before the ARF meeting and he rehears the same points with me so if you look at me he must have been to say excuse me you know I said this to you yesterday and well so I did not feel it at all but you know they say the the wish is a is the mother the thought maybe the U.S thought that Singapore being bullied by China openly fitted in narrative but frankly I don't think he was in China's interest even if he wanted the bully Singapore to do it that way yeah and the last question is about uh we need to ask for a repeat again it was not a good idea to ask for three questions at the same time I apologize okay thanks so I was asking about your views on multi-polarity Confucius institutes and then specifically grumpskin cultural



hegemony I've forgotten I read him as a student and I'm not sure if I remember him in totality to be Confucius Institute is a very interesting manifestation of the insecurity in the west about the rights of China I grew up going to USA USIS library on Mainland street we always had a British Council Francis early on française they were qualified influences but we didn't see them as somehow subverting Singapore society and when I was in government we viewed these organizations with a certain equanimity and when the Confucius Institute came along it's another one but in the case of Singapore we wanted to make a distinction between China.

Chinese nurse and Singapore Chinese nurse and so when China had its Cultural Center we quickly established a Singapore Chinese Cultural Center in order to make a point uh but for Western countries to fear Confucius institutes as if they were weapons of mass destruction I think is a little laughable but I can understand it fully why they are an expression of a larger sense of the distrust of insecurity.



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