



Executive Book Summaries®

www.summary.com

The Extreme Future

The Top Trends That Will Reshape the World for the Next 5, 10, and 20 Years

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

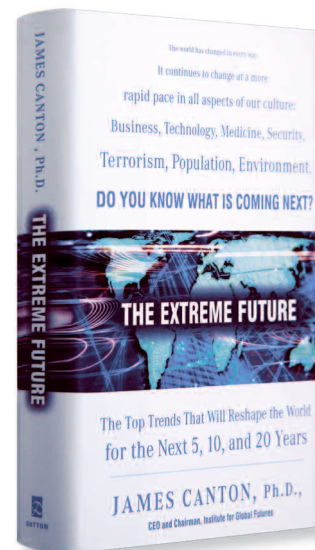
Are you interested in the future of your industry? Where your future customers may come from? What about your current career — or your next one? If so, *The Extreme Future* will offer the insights that may help you derive the answers. The world continues to walk the fine line between light and darkness. Innovation and medical advances are met with equal fervor by invasions of privacy and increasing ecological and terrorist threats. The sheer velocity of change can overwhelm most individuals, but renowned futurist James Canton, Ph.D., is on the front line of the fight to understand tomorrow.

This is not only a book for business leaders. Understanding and preparing for the future — and learning to use the tools that make that possible — is a responsibility we all share, for the sake of our own interests as well as society's.

Canton charts a course to steer you through the volatile changes that lie ahead. *The Extreme Future* is the essential guide for what's next and how to navigate the trends that will shape the future of business, markets and society. He challenges us that with the right information about future trends, it is possible to navigate the Extreme Future.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How climate change and new energy demands will reshape the planet.
- How shifting population trends will transform the workforce.
- How radical innovation trends will create personal wealth and competitive advantage.
- How astounding medical advances will radically enhance people's lives.
- How dangerous terrorism trends will threaten the individual and society.
- How the rise of China will bring on a new global power struggle.



by James Canton, Ph.D.

CONTENTS

Welcome to the Extreme Future
Page 2

Finding Prosperity: The Innovation Economy
Page 3

Help Wanted: The Future of the Workforce
Page 4

Outliving the Future: Longevity Medicine
Page 5

Cultures in Collision: The Future of Globalization
Page 5

Securing the Future
Page 6

The Future of America and Democracy
Page 8

THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE EXTREME FUTURE

by James Canton, Ph.D.

The author: Dr. James Canton is a renowned global futurist and author, and he is chairman and CEO of the Institute for Global Futures, an internationally recognized San Francisco-based think tank he founded in 1990. He is a senior fellow at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management and has served on the Advisory Board at MIT's Media Lab and the Visionary Advisory Board of Motorola Corporation.

The Extreme Future by James Canton, Ph.D. Copyright © 2006 by James Canton, Ph.D. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Dutton, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. 372 pages, \$25.95. ISBN 0-525-94938-0.

Summary copyright © 2009 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries, www.summary.com, 1-800-SUMMARY, 1-610-558-9495. For additional information on the author, go to <http://www.summary.com>.

Welcome to the Extreme Future

The future of our lives, of our work, of our businesses — and most of all, the future of our world — depends on us gaining a new understanding of the dizzying changes that lie ahead. Events such as the mapping of the human genome, the end of the Cold War, the rise of China, the Internet, globalization, existing and potential epidemics, and “weird” science contribute heavily to the need to find new ways to understand the future. We face a new future in which uncertainty reigns supreme.

When there is no future vision, there is nothing to work toward creating. The lack of a goal to work toward will result in failure. This is a starting point for nations, organizations and individuals. Consider John F. Kennedy's challenge to go to the moon, Ronald Reagan's “tear down this wall” call for an end to a divided Germany, Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of racial equality and Gandhi's nonviolent liberation movement. As different as these men were, as different as their stated goals were, all had one thing in common: a clearly articulated future vision and a sense of the trends of the day that enabled this future to become reality.

It is not just one force, one trend, but the convergence of trends that create the future. This convergent thinking is central to making better forecasts. ●

Fueling the Future

Several years ago, a former Saudi oil minister issued what has since become an oft-quoted prophecy: “The Stone Age did not end for lack of stone, and the Oil Age will end long before the world runs out of oil.” It

was a lament, an acknowledgment that a day of reckoning was coming that would change the global balance of wealth and power. A fluke of geology had made the vast emptiness of the Saudi desert the No. 1 source of the most important commodity on earth. But the good times would not, and could not, last forever, and he knew it.

The Myth of Abundance

The United States imports about 12 million barrels of oil a day, or roughly 60 percent of the oil it consumes. In 1970, dependence on imported oil was just 21.5 percent of U.S. consumption. The U.S. is the world's No. 1 oil consumer, using more than 26 percent of the world's oil. Japan and China, the next two leading consumers, together account for 13 percent.

Roughly 11 percent of global oil production is devoted purely to providing gasoline for cars and trucks on American soil. America spends more than \$25 billion a year on Persian Gulf oil. At the same time, the United States possesses only about 3 percent of proven reserves (opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling would increase that by just a fraction of 1 percent). Already, you can see just how close the ties are between oil — especially foreign oil — and what we consider the American way of life.

Looking ahead, world oil consumption is likely to rise by 50 percent by 2020, and the United States is projected to play a leading role in that anticipated increase. If you consider the needs of fast-growing, oil-hungry countries such as China and India, as well as the other emerging developing countries in Asia and Latin America, what you have is an unsustainable energy world.



1-800-SUMMARY
service@summary.com

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries (ISSN 0747-2196), P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions: \$209 per year in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and \$295 to all other countries. Periodicals postage paid at Concordville, Pa., and additional offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Soundview, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331. Copyright © 2009 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries.

Available formats: Summaries are available in print, audio and electronic formats. To subscribe, call us at 1-800-SUMMARY (610-558-9495 outside the United States and Canada), or order on the Internet at www.summary.com. Multiple-subscription discounts and corporate site licenses are also available.

Rebecca S. Clement, Publisher; Sarah T. Dayton, Editor in Chief; Andrew Clancy, Senior Editor; Christine Wright, Senior Graphic Designer; Tom Moore, Contributing Editor

Postindustrial dilemma

The lack of energy to fuel transportation, health care, business, communications or manufacturing would have a devastating effect. The absence of an adequate, cost-effective, abundant supply of energy would doom a society in the developed world for certain. Social stability and growth are linked to a pipeline of abundant energy.

It is in the interest of all nations — developed and developing alike — to pursue energy security. Energy for the developing world may be vital to future economic prosperity, poverty reduction and, perhaps, democracy. Energy enables the freedoms and individual self-reliance that are the foundation of a democratic society. The world needs affordable, abundant, nonpolluting, renewable sources of energy to sustain life, support growth, and maintain or improve quality of life.

The U.S. economy's GDP growth is about 4 percent per year. The Eurozone is at 2.5 percent. China alone is growing at almost 10 percent a year. Governments in China and elsewhere are today locking up future oil reserves in the ground. The Chinese have contracted with the South Americans and Africans for future oil supplies reaching deep into the 21st century. They are defending against Japanese rights to oil-potential deposits in the seas. They are scouring the planet from Australia to Ecuador for all commodities, especially energy-related ones. The energy wars are here, but not everyone has noticed.

Fueling a Prosperous World

If we can't fix the coming energy shortage with existing technology and resources, then we need to identify new forms of energy, since no one would seriously suggest that we roll back the advances in society. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Developing nations need reliable and cost-effective energy to defeat poverty, install democracy, develop the middle class and grow commerce.

The Europeans and the Japanese have invested wisely for energy-independent futures based on nuclear technology and alternative energy sources such as wind. Alternative energy in Germany alone accounts for more than 12 percent of overall energy.

The U.S. — despite having invested heavily in nuclear energy — was never able to deal with the negative public perception about it. Nuclear energy accounts for less than 8 percent of all U.S. energy consumption.

Based on current production and consumption technologies and trends, we as a civilization — not just as a nation — do not have the existing or projected energy

Five Things Everyone Needs to Know About Energy

- The era of cheap oil is over.
- Alternative energy, though promising, is not ready to produce adequate supply.
- We need to invest quickly in new energy sources.
- We need to learn to conserve energy.
- Energy is a national security issue.

resources and production means that we will need to sustain growth, security, quality of life and productivity by 2040 — and possibly sooner.

Even if we were to start feverishly building nuclear reactors, solar and wind farms, hydroelectric plants and other renewable energy sources, we still would not be able to meet the rapidly expanding energy demands in 30 years. ●

Finding Prosperity: The Innovation Economy

Dinosaurs that once ruled the earth weren't replaced by creatures larger or more fierce. They were succeeded by creatures more nimble, more able to adapt, more capable of evolving — in sum, more innovative — at a time of rapid, radical change. This story illustrates a future we all face, one in which we will need to evolve, be nimble and be adaptive, or face individual, economic and even societal extinction.

The coming innovation economy will herald an age of rapid, dramatic change, one in which ideas that create value, offer solutions and fulfill needs will thrive. Innovation will be the prime source of productivity, prosperity, competition and potentially even peace. Innovation will be recognized as an empowering force that will drive individual prosperity and global competition.

An economy is a collective measure of the production, distribution and commerce in a given area, from a small village to a state to a nation to the entire planet. It is the result of the productivity of workers and organizations. An economy is also about the flow of ideas, capital markets, talent and growth.

That textbook definition will be rewritten in the Extreme Future. The new definition will reflect the fact that 21st-century economies will survive and prosper

The Next Workforce

Most organizations and nations are still asleep, unaware that there are problems brewing, convinced that any shortages in talent will be short-lived. Denial runs deep, because no one likes change. The reality is that these are not temporary changes but massive dislocations that will force companies without people resources to move, sell, merge or go out of business.

only if they embrace innovation. If they do, if the individuals within them understand and capitalize on innovation, they will come to enjoy shares of the greatest prosperity generator the world has ever known. ●

Help Wanted: The Future of the Workforce

One challenge has the potential to enhance or destroy the future of the U.S. economy: preparing for the next workforce and the coming talent war. This is a vitally important Extreme Future trend that will affect generations of citizens and corporations, as well as the nation's influence around the world. As a result, it must be addressed soon.

America's workforce is changing in fundamental ways. Today, there are more than 1 million high-tech jobs that are not filled. This shortage is not just about people, but a lack of skills. Companies in the innovation economy, those on the front lines such as Apple, Intel and Microsoft, have gone offshore to conduct research and new product development because they cannot get the same talent here. Talent, skilled human capital, innovative, high-tech-savvy people independent of any nation will be the lifeblood of the future organization.

There are clear actions the nation should take, starting today, to offset the coming challenges, such as remedying the massive dysfunction of the U.S. education system. At the same time, some trends are inevitable, such as lower birth rates, and so we will simply have to prepare to confront them in the Extreme Future workforce.

Population Changes: Changes in population will bring more women into the workforce, along with older workers and more culturally diverse workers. By 2025, one in every three new employees will be female. Also, lower birthrates in the U.S. will mean fewer workers will be available, unless immigration is accelerated. This

trend will accelerate outsourcing as talent — independent of geography — will become the most valued asset to corporations.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. workforce will lose the skills and knowledge of 46 million college-educated baby boomers, who will retire over the next 20 years. They are not being replaced, at least not domestically. This will become a crisis, not just in the U.S. but in Europe as well. Unless we drastically open the doors to immigration to offset low birth rates and low productivity, quality of life will decline.

Those new workers are going to be faced with added burdens. In 1950, there were seven working-age people for every elderly person in the United States, but census figures show that by 2030, there will be only three.

Globalization Changes: The increased skills of foreign workers and the stability of their home countries will be key drivers of U.S. productivity as businesses look to the global workforce for services and solutions they cannot get at home. Outsourcing, which is both cost-effective and holds a competitive advantage, will become a main component of U.S. business. Increased skills of foreign workers, some with skills even more advanced than those of U.S. workers, will drive this trend in the future.

Innovation Changes: Jobs in the future will require even more advanced skills, higher education and more sophisticated high-tech training. Having an innovation-savvy workforce will be the central factor that will drive future growth and success in business and society. Yet without significant upgrades to the U.S. education system, our workforce will not be innovation-savvy.

Ninety-seven percent of our youth hope to go to college: 63 percent actually enroll, but only 30 percent actually receive a bachelor's degree, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Even worse, employers estimate that 39 percent of their current workforce and 26 percent of new hires will have basic skills deficiencies, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Competitiveness Changes: Compared with education systems in other nations, U.S. schools are not preparing the future workforce adequately to compete in the global economy. The U.S. remains below more than 20 other nations in math and science scores, which points to a dangerous future for the U.S. workforce.

The United States ranked 28th of 40 countries in math and 18th in reading, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. With jobs

Summary: THE EXTREME FUTURE

requiring more complex skills like math, science and technology, Americans may lack the skills necessary to compete in the future global workforce. ●

Outliving the Future: Longevity Medicine

The largest global marketplace in the near future will be shaped by longevity medicine, offering a variety of anti-aging and health-enhancement products. Everyone who wants to live longer — and can afford it — will be able to stay healthy.

The ability to extend healthy life will have earthshaking societal, political, financial, environmental and individual consequences. Destinies and futures will be enhanced and broken. Careers and relationships will be shaped and chosen. Longevity medicine is not just about the future of health care; it is about a personal and social transformation in culture that will define how individuals will live, work and interact.

Not all of the choices enabled by longevity medicine will seem fair, morally right or even desirable by all people. There are dangerous decisions ahead that will raise fundamental questions about the nature of humanity and human evolution.

Life Extension

Just as the 76 million baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, have redefined every aspect of culture, from media to technology to sports, so too will they redefine health care, making it about life extension and human enhancement so that they can extend their power, their influence and themselves into the future by living longer and healthier. This is a critical motivation for the most affluent demographic group on the planet. What appears at first to be a narcissistic desire for survival will actually set into motion a (mostly) constructive future.

If you consider this life extension trend in context with the need for society to keep the highly skilled boomers employed in the future workforce longer, you begin to see the larger social issues at play. Longevity medicine will lead not just to longer lives, but to longer, more productive workers. In a future at risk of depopulation due to lower birth rates, longevity medicine will become a much needed social entitlement.

As people live not just longer, but with replenished capacities and even higher performance, the world we live in will change in dramatic ways. Think about this for a moment. How different would your life be if you

believed you had not just 60 or 70 years to live with diminishing capacity in old age, but 125 years, with the vitality of a much younger person along with the wisdom of experience? ●

Tomorrow's Climate

There is abundant evidence that climate change and environmental threats present a real and present danger to life as we know it on the planet. If we do not fix these problems, the safety, health and survival of the world's population is at stake. Some climate change may be irreversible. Fundamental challenges such as clean water, food, health care, transportation and commerce are directly linked to climate.

The idea that individual lifestyles are actually making the climate change is not readily accepted, but it is true. The discrete, seemingly unconnected actions of 6 billion people are leading us every day toward or away from environmental disaster that may signal the end of civilization.

Global Warming Is Real

The rate of temperature warming and rising sea levels will continue into the 22nd century. This is not good. One can simply calculate the risks to life, health and society caused by this increased warming in the future to get an idea of what is in store without fast, sustainable global management of the environment. To date, too little has been done, and we are running out of time.

A United Nations-sponsored report called the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment emphasized that approximately 60 percent of the ecosystem services that support life on earth were at serious risk of being damaged by pollution, overuse and mismanagement. This includes ecosystems essential to human life such as water, agriculture, fisheries and air. The lack of sustainable management of the climate is at the core of what is missing and what will increase risks in the future.

As we move into the future, radical shifts in the environment due to natural causes, industrial pollution, overpopulation and lifestyle will alter the relative stability we have enjoyed, unless significant action is taken now. ●

Cultures in Collision: The Future of Globalization

Globalization is about a new synthesis of ideas, trade, communications and collaboration that should promote future global prosperity, freedom and opportunity. As a force of modern civilization, it may overcome the issues

Summary: THE EXTREME FUTURE

and barriers that create division, conflict and inequities. This new integration of trade, innovation and progress may incite more democracy and freedoms, or it may confuse and complicate a wondering world, suspicious of globalization's risks and unaware of its potential.

Globalization is still very much unraveling and will remain in a state of flux for the next 50 years. Will it become a force for global progress, collaboration and cultural understanding, or will it be hijacked by forces opposed to these values? Our future will be defined by our deepening understanding of other cultures, nations and diverse ideas.

Battle for the Future

In its crudest sense, globalization is either going to be the most successful revolution to accelerate global democracy, free trade and open markets, or it will victimize the poor nations of the world.

The resistance forces of globalization fear that the West continues to move forward with global dreams of free trade and democratic reforms — without including poor nations at the table. The organized global terrorist networks are counting on globalization to provide support for their dreams of global destabilization, which would allow them to continue to lure new recruits in poor nations, raise funds via criminal actions such as drug trafficking and commit acts of terror in the name of those who are being left out of the globalization game.

This is the Achilles' heel of globalization advocates. Unless we find a way to bring the rest of the world on board fast, globalization will fail or drive a 100-year stake into the heart of liberal reforms, open markets and, most importantly, peace and security. This is perhaps the greatest challenge facing our civilization today. People without a future are the most dangerous people in the world. They will do anything to get a future — or to destroy those who they believe are robbing them of that future.

Poverty Will Kill Globalization

Poor countries are generally weak in law enforcement. Without the competence to meet their citizens' basic needs, they are easy prey for extreme religious groups and terrorists. They also become havens for international crime. ●

Securing the Future

In the Extreme Future, there will be two sets of threats, traditional and asymmetric, that will defy logic, create social havoc and alter our world. Traditional risks

are what we might expect — a nuclear or bioterror attack, for instance. Asymmetric risks are what we don't expect, which might be an attack at a mall, a bioagent released into the water supply, a suicide bomber at the Stock Exchange or an Ebola-carrying passenger entering the land. Asymmetric risks, such as flying airplanes into buildings, redefine the risk landscape and will challenge us to think differently.

The risks we will face in the future will be new, complicated, serious, widespread and extreme. These risks to our life, health, society and even our sense of what it is to be human will frustrate our capacity to manage the future. This may be one of the greatest challenges we as a civilization have ever had to face.

The Double-Edged Sword of Innovation

As much as we hail the coming innovations, there is a dark side of innovation. The innovations that will provide greater competitive advantage, improved education, prosperous commerce, increased quality of health care and a higher standard of living might also be used to annihilate civilization as we know it. Think of the Internet used as an e-mail and propaganda tool by terrorists, or computers used to plan attacks and manage networks of people, or biotech used to make weapons.

Privacy for Sale

We don't give much thought to the many eyes watching us, the video cameras following us, the databases monitoring our every behavior. But this invasion of privacy will seem tame as we step into the Extreme Future, where others will watch every act, every behavior, every association, every interest, every transaction and every communication.

If one threat will encroach on our personal liberties more than others, it will be the assault on our privacy brought about by the convergence of technology and social policy amid the insecurity of the future. George Orwell's nightmarish vision of the future, expressed in *1984*, might seem like a golden age of liberty. ●

Invisible War: The Future of the Individual

In the future, there will likely be a more collaborative relationship between nations, even nations of differing ideologies and political systems. Relations between the U.S. and China will be similar to dealings between the U.S. and Europe, which have shared interests yet remain different in many ways. What will emerge in the future is a collaboration of cultures, ideas and economies.

Summary: THE EXTREME FUTURE

China has been changing because of this influence, transforming itself into a market economy that perhaps will be the largest in the world by 2040. Market economies are associated with democratic societies, those that respect individual freedoms and rule of law, those that guarantee free elections and a free press.

Clearly, the fate of the individual needs to be protected — not just in China, but throughout a world influenced by two large superpowers such as China and the U.S. The Chinese political model of today, with limited individual rights, will not be the same model in 2040 or even before that. As prosperity increases, China's population will demand more parity with the people of democratic societies. The age-old dance between the individual and government will persist, but it will take new forms as it meets new threats and confronts new challenges.

Subtle Risks

Democracies won't long survive, or be authentic democracies, if they are not dedicated to protecting the rights of the individual for the long term. If the individual is at risk, then democracy as a viable system for society is at risk. There will be dangerous seductions and subtle risks we may not even recognize until after they have appeared. We must be on guard today to keep these costs from being incurred tomorrow.

Some of these ideas will seem dangerous — and they are. Today's individual is at risk from external forces as innocent as advertising, as intrusive as censorship and as deceptive as pharmacology. Clever, seductive, always-on technology, without democracy and in the wrong hands, will be used to manipulate ideas, fabricate knowledge and even design reality. The individual will be the target. Information will be manipulated. Technology will be used to change what we think, what we do and, most dangerously, what we believe. We must guard against the information engineering of our reality. This is one of the most dangerous risks individuals face in the future.

The individual has always been at risk from the forces of ideology, government and religion. The battle between the freedoms and rights of the individual and attempts at control by government, religion and ideology has been ongoing for as long as civilization has existed.

The risk to the individual will continue into the future, in part from technology but also from old-fashioned politics. An ideal future would be one in which the goal of every government would be to empower the individual to enjoy freedom, prosperity and human rights. But increasingly, the tyranny of radical theocrats and despots reminds us that the very idea of individual freedom is anathema to many world leaders.

The Invisible War

Most people don't even know that a war against individual rights has already occurred. We in the developed nations of the world may face more complex, long-term challenges to our individual freedoms, such as brain implants, drugs, censorship and limits on media choice, but individuals in developing nations that are less than democratic will be vastly more at risk.

For example, consider these questions and the implications for free choice:

- What if you did not have unfettered access to the Internet?
- What if you did not have access to quality education?
- What if you lived in a society that did not offer free elections?
- What if you lived where there was no free press and all the news you read or saw on television was controlled by the government?

In the U.S., these questions seem unrealistic. But more than 75 percent of the world — that's more than 4 billion people — doesn't have access to the Internet, phone service, clean water, regular meals, free elections, or quality education and health care.

The developed world uses 90 percent of the world's resources — water, food, energy and capital. Isn't it realistic that the other citizens of the planet, the remaining 4 billion, might be angry about this? There is something off base when so many have such limited access to the total resources of the world. We must consider this when trying to grapple with global conflict, terrorism and the future. This is not just about fundamentalism. There is a legitimate argument here, one that suggests that better sharing of resources would reduce tensions between ideologies and cultures.

Trading Rights for Security

The real threat to individual rights will emerge silently and over time. It will be the creeping insecurity caused by more identity crime, more terrorism, and even more economic downturns or disruptions. The real threat will come in the form of a deal with the devil, in which we will trade our individual rights and freedoms for more security. We will scare ourselves into giving away our rights unless we are very careful and remain vigilant for danger signals. The manufacturing of "rational" fear will become an industry in the near future. This is a dangerous trend that we want to resist.

It will do no good to create a future where by 2050 we have eliminated poverty and war, created

Summary: THE EXTREME FUTURE

open global trade and increased productivity and standards of living for the 9 billion residents of Earth but have traded our individual rights for this false prosperity. As America moves forward in promoting the model of democracy and capitalism on the world stage, there is nothing more important than the respect for individual freedoms that must be at the heart of this quest. We must be aware of creeping threats to the individual, the invisible war that is encroaching on the very freedoms our nation was founded upon.

The right of the individual to stand free and make his or her own choices must be the central pillar of civilization's future. The track record on this score over the past thousand years often has been hit or miss. Religious fundamentalists, kings and dictators have attacked the freedom of the individual over history. We must guard our rights to freedom or lose this war for ourselves and our children. It is our destiny to forge a balance between the rights of the individual and the government that preserves that individual's right to freedom. Individuals should control the government, not the other way around. ●

Dancing Dragon: The Future of China

If there were ever a time to wake up to the sheer power of China's population, buying power, energy needs, consumer demands and eventual military strength, that time is now. As China rises, the evolutionary needs of 2 billion people in a few scant years will reshape markets, competition and trade on a scale we can only imagine. Trillions of dollars of wealth will be traded, exchanged and moved from West to East.

The engines of productivity in China today are cheap labor, innovation and capitalism on steroids — a supercharged, hyperaggressive need to catch up with the rest of the world's developed economy. In the future, it will be smart labor coupled with even smarter innovation. This represents a new challenge and opportunity for the world and for China. China's growth could bring future stability and peace or chaos and insecurity — both internally and externally. This is the challenge of the future, and it reflects China's immense role in meeting this challenge effectively.

The relationship between China and the U.S. is paramount to the future growth and security of the world. Both nations realize this. It is not often spoken of, but it is widely understood at the very highest levels of government and commerce. Together, they will form the cor-

nerstone of economic and political security that will define the outcomes of the conflicts in the 21st century. ●

The Future of America and Democracy

America's future is bright primarily because of our inherent capacity to adapt, embrace change, confront crisis and continually meet challenges successfully. America's future readiness, this infinite optimism, the capacity to adapt, this continual wave of revitalization, embracing the new, inventing the impossible, seems to be a fundamental ingredient of the social DNA of America.

The landscape ahead will be fraught with many new types or risks that will threaten the future of America. The capacity of America to rise to meet these risks will be great — but not without significant changes in preparing for this Extreme Future. America's readiness for the future will help prepare the nation. But if we do not successfully address every one of the threats to America, the greatness of the past will be lost.

With proper attention paid to education, immigration, the environment, security, leadership and other key challenges, America will prosper in the future. It will require a long-term vision that inspires the people and gives meaning to the direction, the changes and even the sacrifices that might come.

America's future success as a nation is tied fundamentally to the future of democracy and the fate of the world. Though there is much for Americans to do — starting now — to ensure a productive, safe and innovative future, the destiny of America is linked to the destiny of the world's markets, people and economy. The values that we share, of peace, security, free trade, diversity tolerance, innovation and democracy, will greatly shape our future. They should also shape the future of the world. It will be an interesting century. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Extreme Future*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Next Global Stage* by Kenichi Ohmae.** Business strategist Kenichi Ohmae synthesizes emerging trends into a coherent view of the future global economy.
2. ***The New American Workplace* by James O'Toole and Edward E. Lawler III.** Based on thorough research from hundreds of top management scholars, this book offers insight into where we are and where we're headed.
3. ***Get There Early* by Bob Johansen.** Leaders are responsible for understanding how the decisions they made yesterday will affect their organizations five years from now. Learn how to navigate the road to the future.