



"If you want to see a city of the past, go to Paris. If you want to see a city of the present, go to New York. But if you want to see a city of the future, go to Shanghai. Because, this is the future."

The statement comes from the lips of one of the "Top 100 Global Thinkers 2011", Professor Kishore Mahbubani. Network has met the visionary professor in Singapore.

The Visionary



Kishore Mahbubani welcomes Network at the Dean's office of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. This is the daily workplace of an former diplomat and professor with an educational background in philosophy and history. After 33 years of diplomatic service for his native country, Singapore, the accredited professor has returned to the university where he began as a student on his path to the league of the intellectual elite. He has on a number of occasions appeared on the list of the world's top 100 intellectuals in various magazines, most recently of which this past year when Foreign Policy magazine put him on their list of the "Top 100 Global Thinkers".

The professor is friendly and energetic when he takes the time to meet with Network – shortly before he is to go up to the podium at Norwegian Hull Club's major conference, "Global to Individual Challenges for the Maritime Industry in a Rudderless World" – which was arranged in cooperation with Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) in February of this year.

"None of us would sail into an ocean of rapidly changing currents and looming storms without a capable captain and crew at the helm of our boat. Yet, this is exactly what humanity plans to do as it sails into the uncertain waters of the 21st century. Why then should we be surprised if we do badly in coping with global challenges?," professor Mahbubani states in his synopsis for the conference.

"The demand for global leadership is growing by leaps and bounds; the demand is rising, but the supply is diminishing. The traditional leaders, global leaders of the world have been America and Europe. In fact America and Europe created a very benign global order in 1945 that has in fact been responsible for the success of the world for the last 60 years, with the world economy growing, global trade growing expanding. The United States and Europe have always been pushing for greater liberation, a greater opening up – because they believe the more the world liberalizes, the more the population of the United States and Europe will benefit because they were naturally the most competitive countries in the world. But now, the populations of both the United States and Europe - instead of believing that with greater globalization they will benefit - they are afraid that the jobs just will go to China and India, and not to their own countries. They are retreating from global leadership, so when the demand for global leadership is rising, the west is retreating. And at the same time, the new, natural global leaders



Kishore Mahbubani has a 33 year long diplomatic career to look back upon. Here is a young Professor Mahbubani together with US president Ronald Reagan.

should be China and India because they are now the biggest beneficiaries of global leadership. But, China and India are not ready for global leadership. Again, at a time when the demand is rising, the supply is diminishing. And that is one of the biggest challenges the world faces today", Mahbubani says to Network.

There is no quick-fix for this challenge. According to the professor the world has to rely on what he calls "imperfect solutions" until a new global leader emerges. (You can forget about Obama – he will be too busy getting reelected this year).

"But, with the rising force of China and India and the Asian region – should one of them try to jump a little more ahead and 'grab' the situation? Should China and India try to rise to the occasion now, or is it impossible?," Network asks.

"It's impossible because they both have domestic and global challenges. China's number one nightmare is as it emerges to great power, in fact the Chinese economy originally was supposed to become bigger than the US economy in 2024-2027, now the latest "forecast" is 2017. In five years from now, the Chinese economy will be bigger, so when that happens the Chinese geopolitical nightmare is that America will try to maintain a containment policy for China in the same way America successfully had for Russia. So to avoid a containment policy by the United States of America, China is taking a low profile. Deng Xiaoping was a very wise leader of China, and advised the Chinese to keep a low profile, and not aspire for global leadership", Kishore Mahbubani answers. He is seated in a chair near a window still filled with pictures from his long diplomatic career and meetings with great names such as Ronald Reagan, Tony Blair, Kofi Annan and other people of magnitude on the international politics scene. As Singapore's Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) for two stints, Kishore Mahbubani has met them all. With such a man before us, we cannot help but pose him the question:

"How do you view the world in, let's say, twenty years? Where are we then?"

"In twenty years I think it will be very clear that the Asian century will be well on the way, I think twenty years from now, clearly China will have the world's largest economy, and I think India will still be number three, but close to becoming number two. The US will still be number two, but India will be catching up very fast. I don't know who will be number four and number five, but clearly the center of

CV KISHORE MAHBUBANI

- Kishore Mahbubani was born in 1948 in Singapore.
- He is a notable academic and Professor in the Practice of Public Policy, and Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore.
- He has a 33-year-long diplomatic career, serving in Cambodia, Malaysia and the US.
- As a representative to the United Nations he served as president of the United Nations Security Council in January 2001 and May 2004.
- Kishore Mahbubani has written several books, and is presently working on a new one. His articles have been published in several leading journals and newspapers such as Foreign Affairs, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and the International Herald Tribune.

the global economy will be in Asia. In my book "The new Asian Hemisphere", I state it somewhat cruelly - but it is a fact: If you want to see a city of the past, go to Paris. If you want to see a city of the present, go to New York. But if you want to see cities of the future come to Shanghai or Singapore. This is the future. The future will be here," Kishore says.

And as the future comes full speed ahead, and the world is still rudderless and waiting for its new global captain, this is what Kishore Mahbubani hopes will happen with the issue of global leadership within 20 years from now:

"Hopefully, by then we will have stronger, multilateral institutions. In fact I'm writing a new book now called "The great convergence" with the subtitle: "Asia, the west and the logic of one world". And I state there, we have to strengthen multilateral institutions. Up until now, the United States and the west have been trying to weaken the multilateral institutions. For example by a zero growth budget policy on these institutions," Mahbubani says. The institutions he has in mind are the UN, the World Trade Organization, IMF and so forth.

"How do you see the new world order? Who are the crew and the captain to come in the future? Will it be the United Nations or will it be something new?" we ask.

"I think it will be a collection of the great powers, but it cannot be a collection of yesterday's powers. As you know the UN Security Council is losing its legitimacy because it is comprised of the five permanent members. And what is the qualification of becoming a permanent member: That you won the world war in 1945. That is already 67 years ago. Now, why do you have criteria that are 67 years old? You should not have the great powers of yesterday; you should have the great powers of tomorrow in the UN Security Council.

"What about the role of the G20?" Network follows up.

"The G20 can play a bigger role, in fact the G20 played a role in April 2009 in rescuing the world economy, and that's the kind of role the G20 can play. So, if there is a crisis, we hope the G20 will once again be revived", says the professor. However, international solutions for major, international problems pose at the same time demands for a strengthened global cooperation.

"One of the goals of my book is to persuade the west that they should remember they have had a twenty to thirty year policy of weakening multilateral institutions, they should now change their policy into strengthening multilateral institutions. And these institutions were created by the west, you know" Kishore says smilingly at the irony of the point. Outside the windows, the students - the next generation and future - are rushing to reach their classes.

"Thinking about the future, and you being a dean at this school and having a responsibility as to advising young people in these difficult times, I wonder: What kind of advice would you give to the young students now that are entering the world?" Network asks.

"I will give the same advice to all the students: I would say that in a small, globalized world – since we live in the same boat – don't stay locked up in your own cabin" the professor chuckles goodheartedly, and adds: "Leave your cabin and travel around the world – every student around the world. If you for example go to university for four years, you should spend one of the four years in a country different from your own. That should become the global norm – but on a different continent. No point in going from France to Germany. They should go from France to Singapore. Or Germany to China, you know. Or from China to Germany also. Both ways!"

"Do you have a specific message to the shipping community? Something they should be aware of?"

"The main message to the shipping community is that they know how we live in one world, because their ships never stay in one country. The shipping community should become a lobby group for stronger multilateralism. They should persuade the western governments to stop weakening multilateral institutions, but rather to start strengthening them. I hope the shipping community will pay more attention to this", is the answer from the respected professor, Kishore Mahbubani, as he starts to gather his papers and belongings to get ready for the speech he is about to give at the Fullerton Hotel in Singapore in just a short while.

Network leaves the Dean's office knowing that in a few days we will be hitting the right hot-spot in the world today: Visiting Shanghai – the city of the future... The visionary man told us so.

"In twenty years I think it will be very clear that the Asian century will be well on the way."

KISHORE MAHBUBANI

-IMPRESSIVE

Professor Kishore Mahbubani is impressed with the 175 years of company history that Norwegian Hull Club will be celebrating this fall.

"It's extremely impressive, but to keep on going for the next 25 years you cannot carry on staying on autopilot. When the winds and currents change, the ship has to change course. So, in the same way companies must change course also", is the piece of advice Mahbubani gives along the way.

Professor Kishore Mahbubani was the keynote speaker at the Singapore Shipping Association – Norwegian Hull Club seminar "Global to Individual Challenges for the Maritime Industry in a Rudderless World" earlier this year. Please visit our website for more on this conference, www.norclub.no.