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COOPERATION AND COMPETITION IN THE PACIFIC RIM: THE
CHALLENGE FOR EDUCATION

David P. Gardner, President San Diego
University of California March 10, 1988

The subject of cooperation and competition in the Pacific Rim is a large one, even if one speaks only of education, and I can only hope to touch on some of the issues that I believe to be important. I wish to discuss where we are and where we need to be in terms of the educational challenges presented to California by the Pacific Rim. In doing so, I will concentrate primarily but not exclusively on the institution I know best, the University of California.

In one sense the Pacific Rim--that vast stretch of nation-states bordering the eastern and western rim of the Pacific--has always had a claim on the attention and the imagination of Californians. The founders of the University of California, for example, took their inspiration--and the name that came to identify the University's first campus--from the eighteenth century bishop and philosopher George Berkeley, who wrote the now-famous line, "Westward the course of empire takes its way." The founders of the University, that is, consciously saw their fledgling institution as the western outpost of a civilization poised to forge new links with the great cultures that lay west of California across the vast expanse of the Pacific

Ocean. Daniel Coit Gilman, the University's second president, explicitly mentions the importance of the Pacific nations in his 1872 inaugural address:

A new epoch in history seems opening before us . . . Modern civilization has bordered the Atlantic. Now, face to face, with the great Pacific Ocean intervening, are the oldest and the youngest forms of human society. We cannot be too quick to prepare for the possible future which may open upon us.

And the founders of the University made a tangible investment in that future. The first endowed chair at Berkeley--established in 1872--was in Oriental Languages and Literature.

Just how prophetic these early intuitions turned out to be is reflected in the reasons we are here today. Economically, the Pacific Rim is a major market for California: according to the California State Department of Commerce, in 1985 this state did more than \$65 billion worth of business with Pacific Rim nations and accounts for more than one-third of American trade with Japan. Some 85 percent of our imports come from the Pacific Rim, and roughly half of California's exports go there. As a consumer market, Pacific Rim countries offer a three trillion dollar market growing at the rate of three billion dollars a week.

Politically and strategically, the Pacific Rim is home to nearly half of the world's population, and thus an area of growing significance in world affairs. Scientifically and culturally, the Pacific Rim is also a center of expanding importance to the United States. And in terms of immigration, 30 percent of current immigrants to the United States come to California, most of them from Pacific Rim countries. This state also has the largest and fastest-growing Asian-American population in the country.

So we know that California's future lies with the Pacific Rim. And we know that as a state we have much to do in order to educate ourselves about that vast area of the world. What will California need from education in the years ahead, as we plan for both cooperation and competition as they are played out in the Pacific Rim?

First of all, clearly California will need a well-educated and well-trained workforce. One of the most dramatic developments of the past few decades has been the internationalization of the world economy. Among other things, this means that American business finds itself competing in a truly global marketplace--seventy percent of American products now compete in international markets, and we can expect that percentage to grow.

A parallel development is the fact that the economy of the future, from all we can tell, will demand higher levels of education and skill in the U.S. than is currently the case. The Department of Labor recently issued a study that projects, and I quote, "Between now and the year 2000, for the first time in history, a majority of all new jobs will require postsecondary education."

I am a bit skeptical about that figure, but I am certainly in general agreement with the proposition that the economy of the future will require more education and training, not less. And that presents us with a very large challenge indeed, given that so many employers report that the skills and educational preparation of entering employees are not rising but declining. One of every three major U. S. corporations now provides some form of basic skills training for its employees, according to the Wall Street Journal. The fact that so much effort is expended by business in giving its employees basic skills means that somehow such skills are not being imparted in the schools. And although this country is in the midst of a vigorous movement to reform its schools, it is clear that further improvement remains an urgent domestic priority.

Second, California will need the trained professionals and other key personnel who can function in an international context. We are not producing sufficient numbers of professionals in government, business, and

education to meet California's needs. In a survey of America's strengths and weaknesses in the area of international affairs, Richard Lambert points out that "Perhaps the most ominous of the gaps in our long-range strategy for international business is our failure to focus very much of the training of international business specialists on the conduct of business with a particular country or part of the world. . . . Training in general internationalist business skills relating to all foreign countries is just not enough." Lambert was speaking of the country generally, but his observation is applicable to California as well.

Third, California will need a citizenry that understands the international dimensions that are becoming such a potent force in the lives of all of us. It isn't necessary for every Californian to become fluent in one or more of the languages spoken in the nations bordering the Pacific Rim or to become steeped in Pacific trade figures. But it is essential for the people of this state to understand that the more conventional attitudes of the past will fall short of meeting the requirements of the future. It is usual to dwell on the problems we will encounter in the global marketplace, as in fact I have done, and those are significant. But just as significant are the problems we will encounter here at home given that our population is becoming daily more diverse, and most of these newcomers are from Pacific Rim countries. Thus, there are important social and political

reasons for California to adopt a global rather than a parochial perspective.

Let me now turn to what the University of California is doing about these questions.

First, we are scrutinizing the education we offer our undergraduate students, including the international dimension of that education. Three years ago I asked a task force of UC faculty, students, and administrators to examine lower division education at the University--the first two years of college, before students select a field of concentration--and to make recommendations about how we can improve general education at the University. One of the overriding emphases of the task force's report was the supreme importance of educating students for a world in which the process of internationalization is developing with breathtaking speed. In the words of the report:

Most political thinking and most of the relevant academic disciplines have rested on the assumption that the basic unit of social life is the discrete nation, society, or culture. The fact is, however, that the twin phenomena of internationalization and interdependency are rendering this fundamental premise

questionable and demand novel ways of thinking, analyzing, and understanding.

The report recommends more interdisciplinary courses with a multicultural or global dimension, and more language instruction in areas where our offerings are less developed than one would wish--various Asian languages, for instance. An excellent example of the kind of experience envisioned by the task force report is Fifth College here at UCSD, which is on the Regents' agenda for approval next week and which hopes to welcome its first students next fall. Fifth College will have an international focus, encouraging students to think historically across both disciplines and cultures. An important goal of the College will be to have all students gain at least a familiarity with a foreign language or literature. Virtually all of our eight general campuses, I should add, are responding to the recommendations of the report for a more international cast to the undergraduate curriculum.

We are dramatically expanding our Education Abroad Program, a universitywide program administered at UC Santa Barbara, which permits UC students to spend their junior year at a foreign university. UC has a variety of arrangements under which students, both undergraduate and graduate, can enroll for varying lengths of time in foreign universities. But Education Abroad is our largest single program for undergraduate

foreign study. In 1982-83 UC students could choose to study in one of 46 institutions around the world; this year they can select from among 70, and next year they will be able to choose from among 82. Much of the expansion has been in Pacific Rim countries--Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, and others--but some has been in other areas as well. In 1986-87 a study center at Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest was established, and just recently we concluded an historic agreement with Leningrad State University, the first such agreement ever struck between an American university and a Soviet university without the involvement of either government, and only the second of such scope between universities in the Soviet Union and the United States. Nearly 1,200 UC students are participating in Education Abroad programs this year--significantly more than were participating even five years ago--and we would like to see even more students take advantage of the opportunity to learn firsthand about other languages, other peoples, other countries, other cultures.

Second, we are trying to bring the scholarly resources of the University to bear on questions of importance to California as a Pacific Rim state. The Pacific Rim Research Program, inaugurated in 1986-87, is a major new activity. Faculty on all nine of our campuses work with colleagues at other California universities and at foreign institutions around the Pacific Rim on issues of interest to California--trade, finance, economic

development, public policy, cross-cultural communication, and changing technology around the Pacific Rim. A team of UC Berkeley researchers, for example, is conducting a comparative study of how the United States and Japan promote economic growth and which public and business policies foster or discourage technological innovation. I understand that Professor Krause is also heading up an investigation under this program that will look at the implications, for the United States, of Japan's possible rise to global economic leadership.

Third, we have established the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies--our reason for being here today. As everyone here knows, the School admitted its first students last fall. It is the University's first new professional school in 20 years and the first of its kind in the country to look mostly westward and southward to the nations of the Pacific instead of mostly eastward to Europe. There is a large and expanding need in California and the nation for professionals in business, government, and education who have training in the politics, culture, sociology, economics, religions, and languages of the Pacific peoples. We need to begin preparing them now, not next year.

But it is clear that more--much more--remains to be done.

First, we need to give more students the unique experience that can only be gained by living, studying, and working in a foreign culture. We need to expand the number of international faculty exchanges between colleges and universities worldwide, not only in the established and familiar countries of Europe but also in the growing and less familiar countries of the developing world. And for all of our students--those who study abroad and those who do not--we need to continue working towards incorporating more of an international dimension into the undergraduate curriculum.

Second, we need to devote major attention to the topic of foreign languages. There is no better way to enter into the heart of another country or another culture than through its language: "We infer the spirit of the nation in great measure from the language," said Emerson, and he was profoundly accurate. Yet the United States is the only advanced industrial nation in the world that does not routinely expect its children to learn a foreign language. We do very little in the way of introducing students in grammar school to a foreign language, even though experience tells us that foreign language acquisition should begin at the outset of schooling, not in the more advanced grades. Spanish is the only Pacific Rim language in which any significant amount of instruction takes place. And even in that case most of what is offered begins in junior high school.

At the University, in fact, we have found that students who enter UC from high school, having fulfilled or exceeded our foreign language requirement, typically do not have sufficient preparation to progress to higher levels of study. Since many of our campuses are instituting more foreign language requirements for students working toward their baccalaureate degree, and since foreign language training is becoming more prominent at the graduate level as well, the lack of a strong language base among our entering students is a real cause for concern. Part of the problem is attitudinal and part is a shortage of foreign language teachers.

UC is beginning to work with the schools and the other public higher education segments--the California State University and the Community Colleges--to improve the teaching of foreign languages in the schools. But at bottom it will take a conscious decision by the citizens of California that these subjects matter and should be taught in the schools.

Third, California faces a great challenge in dealing creatively and constructively with the demographic changes under way in this state. As you know, by the turn of the century or a little after California is expected to become the first mainland state with a population consisting predominantly of members of minority groups. A principal engine driving these changes is the wave of immigration I mentioned earlier,

immigration that is coming especially from such Pacific Rim areas as Mexico, Central and South America, and Asia. It is estimated that one out of every six of California's kindergarten-through-twelfth-grade students was born outside the United States. The presence of so many persons who once lived in Pacific Rim nations is a great asset to California; they can make us more economically competitive in the Pacific Rim because of their knowledge and experience, and they are also potential bridges that could help us in our efforts to improve our relations with other countries.

What will California do with this talent that is pouring into the state? Will our state cultivate it and, thereby, use these human resources to help sustain California as one of the most prosperous and attractive states in the nation? Or will we try to shut it out, or take little or no account of these forces, and thus diminish our prospects as a people and a state?

The answer--at least my answer--is that we must begin educating our young people--all of our young people, but especially these newcomers--with a greater level of commitment and dedication than we have tended to display in recent years. And in the course of doing so we need to give students the global perspective, the respect for different cultures and attitudes, that are indispensable in a diverse and pluralistic society like California's.

Fourth and finally, we need to do more to let the interested and the motivated know about the vast resources in international affairs that are available through California's colleges and universities. Scattered among the University of California's campuses, for example, are international area studies centers, language departments and libraries that together comprise one of the great intellectual treasure houses of the world. The world's most exotic languages can be studied and learned here, and it is possible to research in our libraries virtually every area and region of the globe, e.g., to discover the gross national product of Tanzania or the social structures of the Amazonian Indians. Besides the wealth of information on other countries and other cultures, these language and area studies centers are indispensable sources of expertise not only for academics worldwide but also for business and government. We need to do more to connect this unique resource, at UC and elsewhere, with those who could benefit from it.

All of which suggests a final and broader point: education in California at all levels is beginning to mobilize to address the challenges of the Pacific Century. There is a growing public sense that things are changing, and that we need to ready ourselves for change. We have remarkable human and intellectual resources available in this state. Right now we have an unusual, perhaps a unique, opportunity to reorient the perspectives and education we give to the next generation. It is interesting to me that

those in business are among the most conscious of the need for such an orientation--perhaps because they encounter the new international reality not in some abstract fashion but in the concrete experience of their daily working lives. We need to help all the citizens of this state to realize that we are entering not just a new century but a new world, and UCSD's Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies is an evident and timely expression of the University of California's role in this exciting adventure.