

THE AGE OF THE
UNTHINKABLE

ALSO BY JOSHUA COOPER RAMO

No Visible Horizon

THE AGE OF THE
UNTHINKABLE



WHY THE NEW WORLD DISORDER
CONSTANTLY SURPRISES US
AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

JOSHUA COOPER RAMO



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
New York Boston London



Copyright © 2009 by Joshua Cooper Ramo

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Little, Brown and Company
Hachette Book Group
237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017
Visit our Web site at www.HachetteBookGroup.com

First Edition: March 2009

Little, Brown and Company is a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc.
The Little, Brown name and logo are trademarks of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ramo, Joshua Cooper.

The age of the unthinkable : why the new world disorder constantly surprises us and what we can do about it / Joshua Cooper Ramo. — 1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-316-11808-8 (hc) / 978-0-316-05651-9 (int'l. ed.)

1. United States—Foreign relations—2001–2009. 2. United States—Military policy. 3. World politics—21st century. I. Title.

E902.R3588 2009

973.931—dc22

2009000854

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

RRD-IN

Printed in the United States of America



For my mentors

CONTENTS

PART I

The Sandpile Effect

1. The Nature of the Age 3
2. The Old Physics 20
3. The Sandpile 41
4. Avalanche Country 64
5. Budweiser 82

PART II

Deep Security

6. Mashup 103
7. The General and the Billionaire 132
8. The Management Secrets of Hizb'allah 169
9. The Limits of Persuasion 200
10. Riding the Earthquake 226
11. The Revolution and You 255

Acknowledgments 265

Selected Sources 267

Index 277

Forgive my vehemence, which has deep causes in my hope for the future. This is my subject. I know, or partly know, what I want. I know, and clearly know, what I fear.

—JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES TO DEAN ACHESON,
AUGUST 1941

PART I

• • •

The Sandpile Effect

CHAPTER ONE

The Nature of the Age

1. Split Screen

The thick coffee, in two small gilt-edged cups and with that bitter bite of near-burnt Arabic chicory, has gone cold. We are sitting more or less in silence, each of us thinking, staring idly at a muted television nearby. It is the early fall of 2008, and the headlines, even on the station we are watching—Al Manar, the TV channel of Hizb’allah here in Lebanon—are about the global financial crisis. Fouad and I have a settled peace about us at the moment, the slow calm of an early afternoon, each of us getting ready to return to our respective lives. He will, when he leaves, go back to his work as a chief of information technology for Hizb’allah, the guerrilla and terror group that is, as one Israeli general has said, “the greatest in the world” at what it does.

Fouad and I have had a long conversation about the Koran, about the demands of martyrdom, about his sense of himself as “already dead,” simply walking the earth doing the work he is meant to do before ascending to heaven, probably at some moment chosen in Tel Aviv. We’ve talked about his children

and his brothers and sisters. He has asked me questions about China, which is where I live and is a place he wants to understand better. I had come to see Fouad because, in all my dealings with Hizb'allah over the years, I had found myself particularly fascinated and intrigued by their capacity for creativity and innovation, even in the pursuit of shocking ends. Their obsession with finding better ways to fight and survive under the full pressure of Israeli attack seemed to me a signpost of sorts, but I had always struggled to figure out what precisely it marked. It meant, at the least, a record of defeat for the Israeli army. In 2006, for instance, fewer than 500 Hizb'allah fighters had frustrated a 30,000-man Israeli attack, including one of the most extensive air campaigns in Middle East history. Hizb'allah, to prove their point, had made a show of firing the same number of missiles on the last day of the war as they had on the first.

In trying to understand how our global order is now working and changing, I knew I needed to be intimate with the ideas Fouad carried around, no matter how repellent they might be. In a way, the passion for innovation and the geeky curiosity of fighters like Fouad reminded me of friends of mine who had started great Internet companies or people I knew who were managing gigantic hedge funds. They were mostly around my age, in their thirties and forties. And if I had encountered them first in my role as foreign editor of *Time* magazine, these people had remained interesting and fascinating to me once I left journalism precisely so that I could better feel how our world was changing, instead of merely observing its shifts and lurches from a reportorial distance. The instinct for change, an eager fluency with the tools of serious disruption, I had noticed, seemed particularly alive in my generation. This was the generation that had built the Web into something useful and revolutionary, that had assembled huge and

unregulatable financial firms churning out billions in profits while creating trillions of dollars of risk. It was a sense you could also find in many people I knew in China as they struggled to build an economic and political order against the unpredictable demands of constant newness. Change is at the center of all of their lives. They seek it out and, when change is proceeding too slowly, accelerate it. They operate with the self-regard and courage of people who believe that the tide of history is on their side, bringing us closer to whatever dream they find most exciting, whether it is fast universal connections to data or wholly new types of government. They see this process as one in which destabilization of the existing order is not only necessary but inevitable.

You don't dare draw a moral equivalency between the crimes of Hizb'allah and, say, the innovations of Google, but you can see in each the workings of a powerful energy: the imbalance of 500 fighters against 30,000 soldiers or two university students remaking the whole Web from a dorm room. These hot cells of innovation draw the very best minds of a generation: quantitative-math geniuses to hedge funds, computer savants to tech startups and, well, darker corners. "Our e-mail is flooded with CVs," Fouad told me. "But of course some people don't have the courage to be on the terrorist watch list, even if it is to serve a sacred cause."

When I thought of these rebels I knew in the context of other friends of mine, such as the suits working in the National Security Council or the U.S. Army or IBM or Time Warner, I realized that there was no chance those conservative places could ever compete. They were locked, from top to bottom, from young to old, and in every level of their bureaucratic life, in a vision of the world that was out of date and inflexible. As a perplexed Alan Greenspan confessed to Congress about his own thinking

in 2008, just a few weeks after Fouad and I watched financial news together: “I have found a flaw. I don’t know how significant or permanent it is. But I have been very distressed by the fact.” The congressman questioning him asked, “In other words, you found that your view of the world, your ideology, was not right. It was not working?” Greenspan replied, “Absolutely. Precisely. You know that’s precisely the reason I was shocked. Because I have been going for forty years or more with very considerable evidence that it was working exceptionally well.”

You probably didn’t need to hear it from Greenspan to have a sense of the confused navigation of our leaders. How can the president of the United States declare a war won just as it becomes more violent? Why are Russian bombers flying off American coasts again? How did China, a country with an average daily income of \$7 per person, amass nearly \$2 trillion in U.S. debt in less than a decade? How is it that the secretary of the treasury of the United States, a near-billionaire financier, can say that the worst of a crisis is over in May and then find himself in August furiously battling to save the global financial system? Why is it we can agree on an immense collection of problems, such as global warming or the spread of nuclear weapons, that must be solved now—and then make no real progress or only move backward?

After I left Fouad, I recalled a conversation I had had a week earlier with a friend who has a key role in the Chinese banking system. He explained to me how he had locked down his own financial institutions in 2007 to avoid just the sort of crisis now sweeping the globe. He was shocked, he said, that the United States had not seen it coming, had not acted. He had seen it, had *felt* this incipient crisis. It began to dawn on me that what Hizb’allah, China, and those friends of mine working in places like Google shared was something more than just ambition for

change. Remember how, in advance of the tsunami in 2004, animals all around Indonesia and Thailand and Sri Lanka ran uphill well before the waves that killed 250,000 people arrived, how they were responding to some instinct for cataclysm, one now comforted out of existence in our own psyches. Well, I realized that afternoon with Fouad that he and the other people I had been talking with had somehow rediscovered this instinct, had mastered it. In every twitch of their keyboards or investments or suicide bombs there was the mark of a much larger change that they knew was, even now, surely rolling toward us.

The night before I was with Fouad, Hizb'allah's deadly and charismatic leader Hassan Nasrallah had exulted that the U.S. government had told the Georgian military they should study Hizb'allah to learn how to fight the Russians more effectively. The White House recommending the tactics of Hizb'allah as a study text? It was impossible, given the rumor mill that is Beirut, to know (or even hope to verify) if such self-inflating gossip was true. But even if it wasn't, *should* it have been? Was there something to learn from Fouad and Nasrallah and their few-thousand-man unholy army? Anyhow, if you were sitting in Beirut on that fall 2008 day, watching allegedly unbreakable billion-dollar financial institutions snap on one TV channel and Nasrallah celebrating his imagined endorsement from Washington on another, this much at least was obvious: we had arrived firmly in an age in which the unthinkable had become, frankly, inevitable.

2. The Cascade

We are now at the start of what may become the most dramatic change in the international order in several centuries, the biggest

shift since European nations were first shuffled into a sovereign order by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. This change is irresistible. It is infectious. It will spread to every corner of our lives, to our businesses, our bank accounts, our hopes, and our health. What we face isn't one single shift or revolution, like the end of World War II or the collapse of the Soviet Union or a financial crisis, so much as an avalanche of ceaseless change. It is change that will render institutions that look unshakable weak and unstable; it will elevate movements that look weak into positions of great power. As much as we might wish it, our world is not becoming more stable or easier to comprehend. We are entering, in short, a revolutionary age. And we are doing so with ideas, leaders, and institutions that are better suited for a world now several centuries behind us. On the one hand, this revolution is creating unprecedented disruption and dislocation. But it is also creating new fortunes, new power, fresh hope, and a new global order. Revolutions, after all, don't produce only losers. They also—and this is the heart of the story I want to tell here—produce a whole new cast of historical champions. This book isn't the tale of our inevitable doom. It's a guide to how we can save ourselves. What you'll find on the following pages is meant to be a decoder ring for the perplexities of our current world, for the dangerous magic that seems to be unspooling everywhere. And it is also, once you've understood it clearly, a way for anyone, from eight to eighty, to begin to see what this world means for you—and to see what you can do about it.

Unfortunately, whether they are running corporations or foreign ministries or central banks, some of the best minds of our era are still in thrall to an older way of seeing and thinking. They are making repeated misjudgments about the world. In a way, it's hard to blame them. Mostly they grew up at a time when the

global order could largely be understood in simpler terms, when only nations really mattered, when you could think there was a predictable relationship between what you wanted and what you got. They came of age as part of a tradition that believed all international crises had beginnings and, if managed well, ends. They share as background a view in which the spread of capitalism is good and inevitable, in which democracy and technology produce an increase in general stability. Such a view represents a shared consensus of elites, the best-mind conventional wisdom of our day, found everywhere from Geneva boardrooms to Whitehall corridors to Washington war rooms. These ideas fail both tests of good science: they neither predict nor explain our world. But too many of our leaders are incapable of confronting this disconnect. They lack the language, creativity, and revolutionary spirit our moment demands. In many cases, they have been badly corrupted by power, position, and prestige. We've left our future, in other words, largely in the hands of people whose single greatest characteristic is that they are bewildered by the present.

The sum of their misconceptions has now produced a tragic paradox: policies designed to make us safer instead make the world more perilous. History's grandest war against terrorism, for instance, not only fails to eliminate terrorism, it creates more dangerous terrorists. Attempts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons instead encourage countries to accelerate their quest for an atom bomb. Global capitalism, intended to boost the quality of life of people around the world, claws the gap between rich and poor ever wider. Decisions taken to stem a financial crisis appear, in the end, to guarantee its arrival. Environmental techniques engineered to protect species lead to their extinction. Middle East peace plans produce less peace. We stare now at a long list of similar looking-glass problems, challenges in which

our best intentions and their terrible results exist in a horrific mirror-image dance. The integrity of our leaders, our ability to trust that they understand what we are confronting—or, for that matter, that they are telling us the truth about it—is leaching away. Why should we believe what they say about the war on terror, the safety of our food, the global financial crisis, or any of a dozen essential issues when, over and over, their policies endanger us?

Little in the current discussion of our shared problems suggests the radical rethinking our world requires. There is now hope and even the first hints of substantial changes in policy, but the basic architecture of ideas and theories necessary to back up such difficult work remains profoundly underdeveloped. No debate about terrorism, global warming, destructive weapons, economic chaos, or other threats can make sense without a grand strategy, though this is the thing most obviously missing today. Instead, the most likely course for our future is the most dangerous: minor adjustments to current policies, incremental changes to institutions that are already collapsing, and an inevitable and frustrating expansion of failure. And this will happen fast. Among the things our leaders seem to be missing is a comprehension of the staggering speed at which these change epidemics occur: one bank fails, then fifty; one country develops an atom bomb, a dozen try to follow; one computer or one child comes down with a virus, and the speed of its spread is incomprehensible. The immensity of the challenges we now face, the disturbing failures that likely lie ahead, and our inability to deal with problems effectively with old ways of thinking will assuredly lead us to question many fundamental values of our society. It will put even the nature of our government and our democracy into the debate. These discussions are important and

legitimate. But they should occur only on a basis of security and confidence. Today we have neither, and that fundamental uneasiness could lead to some awful betrayals. It would be nice if we lived in a time when technology or capitalism or democracy was erasing unpredictability, when shifts could be carefully mapped and planned for using logic that originated centuries ago. This is the world that many politicians or foreign and financial policy experts have been trying to peddle to us.

It bears very little resemblance, really, to the future we do face.

3. Virtuosos of the Moment

This book is the story of a new way of thinking. It is one that takes complexity and unpredictability as its first consideration and produces, as a result, a different and useful way of seeing our world. It explains why unthinkable disasters are blossoming all around us and—as important—what we can do about them. The main argument of the book is not particularly complicated: it is that in a revolutionary era of surprise and innovation, you need to learn to think and act like a revolutionary. (People at revolutions who don't act that way have a particular name: victims.) When I say the ideas here are useful, it's because all of them are already at work in the hands of people who are thriving in this new order. The concepts have been field-tested in places where the consequences of ignoring the rules of the new power physics are often catastrophic: bankruptcy, social chaos, even death. As we travel from Hizb'allah guerrilla camps in Lebanon to the offices of billionaire investors in Silicon Valley, as we listen to a brilliant spymaster and a game-changing innovator in Kyoto,

you'll see that what marks them all is a relentless urge to avoid models of the world built with the language of the past.

One of the lessons of this new model is that we can harness the change we see all around us, and if we do so, we shall gain a clearer sense of what sort of nation America should be. In a way, the most ambitious goal of any international policy—improving as many lives as possible around the world while securing our own safety—is more important than ever. But our only real chance of delivering such a result, our only hope of guaranteeing the human rights and moral decency this world demands, is radically new language and thinking. Today we are generally neither secure nor decent. This is, profoundly, not a moment to abandon decency for pure power, not the time for cold and brutal calculations that treat states like gears and humans like lubricant. This poses some hard questions on subjects like rights and the uses of national power.

In the days of classical foreign policy, back when the old rules seemed to make more sense, the best statesmen, the honest ones, admitted that they were always trying to manage a physics that lingered beyond real control, that confounded old ideas pretty quickly. This is the sense, a sort of bashfulness in the face of history, that emerges from the private letters and diaries of men like Metternich or Castlereagh or Eisenhower or Bismarck (or the testimony of a former Fed chairman). This isn't simply the natural worry of brilliant men who have found the limits of their intelligence. Rather, it is an instinctive sense of the weird, impenetrable, and complex magic that seems to linger in global politics, marking the line between triumph and disaster. It is an awareness that enforces a constant alertness—an eagerness, even, to discard old models for new ones. August Fournier, one of Metternich's more arch biographers, once derisively labeled

him *ein Virtuoso des Moments*—a virtuoso of moments. It's hard to imagine that the Austrian prince would have been offended; mastery of the passing instant is often the most that even the best statecraft can hope to deliver. As the great seventeenth-century statesman François de Callières wrote: "There is no such thing as a diplomatic triumph." Even when you think you've reached the end of a problem, you are usually simply at the start of new troubles.

Louis Halle, an American diplomat and strategist of the 1950s, once observed that foreign policy is made not in reaction to the world but rather in reaction to an image of the world in the minds of the people making decisions. "In the degree that the image is false, actually and philosophically false," Halle warned, "no technicians, however proficient, can make the policy that is based on it sound." Our image of the world now, constructed by people we once thought we could rely upon for such work, is false, actually and philosophically false. It's time to replace it with an image that actually works. What we need is a framework for the sort of change that fits our world—and that lays a foundation for the widespread personal involvement of millions of people that will make such change useful, durable, and sustainable. Without these two elements, hope for change will dissolve quickly into lethargic frustration at best and, at worst, panic.

4. Looking out the Window

In the physical sciences, dramatic shifts to very different ways of thinking are common. In fact, they are regarded as essential. Every once in a while a big idea will arrive, thundering in from a great genius or slipping quietly in from an obscure research

corner, to replace all of the old thinking in an instant. Albert Einstein started such a revolution with his theories of relativity. James Watson and Francis Crick did the same when they described the double helix of DNA. The fundamental challenge of adapting our old thinking about power to this new world is similar. It resembles nothing so much as the problem physicists confronted in the twentieth century when they found that Isaac Newton's physics failed to explain how things worked at a subatomic level. It didn't mean junking Newton altogether but, rather, augmenting his ideas with a set of theories that fit a complex subatomic landscape. Moving into that smaller world required a revolution in thinking, creative concepts so inventive that they appeared at first blush to contradict much of what was assumed to be true in conventional physics. Einstein's theory of relativity showed that Newton's laws had to be modified for objects moving at high speed; the same might be said of our international system. The old laws of power, confronted with a faster-moving and more intricately ordered system, are now in need of modification.

Such a paradigm shift isn't easy. It certainly wasn't simple for physics. As the Danish physicist Niels Bohr once told friends, "If quantum mechanics hasn't profoundly shocked you, then you haven't understood it." The goal of this book is not to give stylized, simple answers—what honest thinker would hope to answer questions that are still being created and that exist outside our current language? Rather, it's to explore a new way to think about problems as they arise, to develop new instincts. Some of the ideas here or those you may dream up as you read should shock you at least a bit—*Stop trying to create a peace agreement as a way to make the Middle East more peaceful? Redesign much of the State Department? Let illiterate farmers manage complex health-care programs?*

Understood fully, however, the same forces now making our world more dangerous contain the ingredients we need to make it safer. In every roadside bomb in Tal'Afar, in every death from drug-resistant tuberculosis, in each hiccup of global financial markets, we can see the workings of powerful forces that, once mastered, offer hope at the same time they present new dangers.

It is difficult to overstate the difference between our world today and that of just one hundred years ago, when many of our ideas about nations and global politics originated. We may think of 1900 as the modern era, but in fact the world was then struggling hugely with the demands of the simplest aspects of modernity. Sixty percent of Europeans and Americans were still essentially preindustrial, living off the land and just beginning the earliest march of urbanization. Factories and assembly lines were new and tenuous inventions that created wealth for some and a new sort of wretchedness for others. The unrest that resulted helped plant the seeds of economic dislocation, which blossomed into socialism and fascism. Yet, that shift from agrarian to industrial was also accompanied by an acceleration of interconnection, transportation, and education. These forces in turn helped drive a vast increase in productivity, which, combined with our more recent shift from industry to information and service, means that economies now double in size about every thirty-five years, quadruple the rate of a century ago. But perhaps nothing has changed so much as the speed with which we can transmit information. A letter carried on horseback 150 years ago would have moved information at a rate of about .003 bits per second (the average note carrying, say, 10 kilobytes of data, though of course that measure didn't yet exist). As late as the 1960s those same 10 kilobytes might have moved at 300 bits per second. Today global

telecom cables transmit at a rate of billions of bits per second, a many-billion-fold increase in speed over 150 years.

All of these trends follow what Internet watchers like to call a “hockey stick” curve: they start slowly and then rapidly accelerate. And while we might feel as if we’re at the end of some historical process called “modernization,” for most of the world it is just beginning. Today only ten of the world’s fifty largest cities are in Europe or North America. And all around us, new actors are streaming one after another into the mix once optimistically described as the global order. States matter less, interconnections make it very hard to trace simple lines between cause (home mortgages) and effect (declining oil prices), and, as we’ve seen, our smartest-looking policies backfire over and over.

Scientists speak of systems like this as “complex” because their internal dynamics confound easy description and often defy prediction. Change in complex systems, whether they are ecosystems or stock markets, often takes place not in a smooth progression but as a sequence of fast catastrophic events. Not surprisingly, these systems are very hard to manage or design from the outside. They also stump the classical approach of physics, the one we associate with Newton or Aristotle, which relied on the idea that you could reduce the world to building blocks and then assemble everything from them.

Complex-systems scientists, when asked, “What’s a complex system?” usually just reply: “Look out the window!” Clouds, mountains, rivers, the whole jumbled and surprising landscape of our world, are expressions of what results from unpredictable interactions. Per Bak, a magnificent scientist whom we’ll meet in a bit, once explained the importance of complexity by saying, “Most phenomena around us seem rather distant from the basic laws of physics.” He meant that what you see out your window

usually can't be explained by the rules of energy or motion that most physicists rely on. They require a leap into a more complex, buried logic. Bak used to tell a joke popular among more rebellious scientists, about the dairy farmer who hired a theoretical physicist for help raising cows that would produce more milk. The physicist came to the farm, spoke with the farmer, disappeared for several years, and then returned with the good news that he had found an answer. "Imagine," he began, "a spherical cow..." Bak's frustration with old ways of seeing the world in science was that they too often began with these sorts of assumptions and simplifications. We'll spend more time with complex systems as this book progresses, so there's no need to be exhaustive here, but keep in mind that their most marked feature is a departure from the idea that our world can be reduced to simple models, that the real dynamics of the world make prediction nearly impossible and demand a different way of thinking. They demolish poor Alan Greenspan's hope that even forty years of experience is a reliable guide to the future.

"Complex systems," as Bak wrote, "can exhibit catastrophic behavior where one part of the system can affect many others by a domino effect. Cracks in the earth's crust propagate this way to produce earthquakes, sometimes with tremendous energies." That is our world now, filled with propagating cracks and surprising energy. Radical change in one area produces radical change elsewhere. Simple interactions, easy-to-map dynamics—they are as common as spherical cows. But this infectious energy of change now exploding around us *can* be harnessed. In fact, it can be understood and used by each of us. It's true that we can no longer rely only on our nations or companies or armies to guarantee our security, that we have to take this responsibility at least partly into our own hands. But as we'll see, such a shift

also offers a chance for a profound improvement in how we live and in the sort of planet we'll leave behind. I'm guessing that if you've felt nervous about how little comprehension our leaders seem to have of our financial or security order, you've also felt at least a twinge of moral worry as well: how is it that the most basic problems of human decency are so hard to solve? Well, as we will see, a really dynamic and accurate view of power now can offer a way to engage our world that is not only more reliable but also—and this is crucial—more decent.

Before making this jump to a new model, I want to turn to the underlying physics of our world. We'll begin with a look at where our old ideas about power come from and where they have led us and then move to a different model, one that better incorporates inevitable dynamism and newness. With that done, we'll look around to get a clearer picture of the dangers and possibilities that suddenly become visible, the *unthinkable* made *thinkable*. Then we'll turn, in the second half of the book, to an approach to our future I call "deep security." This is a way of seeing, thinking, and acting that takes the best ideas from the playbook of revolutionary forces and combines them with the demands and responsibilities that our established power places on us. It is a revolutionary approach for a revolutionary age, one whose goal is a return to real safety and prosperity. What we need now, both for our world and in each of our lives, is a way of living that resembles nothing so much as a global immune system: always ready, capable of dealing with the unexpected, as dynamic as the world itself. An immune system can't prevent the existence of a disease, but without one even the slightest of germs have deadly implications. The idea of deep security as an immune system is useful also because the stakes here could not be higher. The problems we are failing to

confront now, from nuclear proliferation to global climate change to the rise of new and angry powers, are on a historic scale, and their cost will ultimately be weighed in the lives and deaths of tens of millions of people.

Shortly after World War II, George Kennan, arguably the greatest geostrategist of the last century, holed up at the National War College for a year simply to sit and think and lecture. Kennan had a full, adventurous life, but he later said that no time was as exciting as the year he spent in his Fort McNair office, looking out the window and trying to come to terms with a world whose order was only just becoming apparent. “Today you cannot even do good unless you are prepared to exert your share of power, take your share of responsibility, make your share of mistakes, and assume your share of risks,” he said in one of the thirteen magnificent lectures he gave that year. He saw, he said, the phenomenal urgency of finding a new way to think about power. This, in a sense, is where we sit again today, in need of fresh large-scale ideas. I don’t propose the instant junking of ideas and institutions—such a move would yield yet more problems. But urgent, steady, ceaseless reform and innovation must begin immediately so that in five years, or at most ten, we will have a new, revolutionary architecture of financial, environmental, and national security built with fresh language and stocked with new minds. This is the most exciting possible moment to be working in international affairs, to be thinking deeply about the forces now violently reordering the globe, to try to change the corporations where we work or the communities where we live. Decades from now, much about how we engage the world will be different as a result of the tsunami whose vibrations I was feeling that day sitting with Fouad sipping coffee. Ahead of us is the invigorating possibility of discovery and reinvention.