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Pro Logis opening Toronto session Joshua Ramo speaks on the Age of Unthinkable

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Toronto The General Session was sponsored by ProLogis with Joshua Ramo speaking on "The Age of the Unthinkable: Why the New World Disorder Constantly Surprises Us and What We Can Do About It." Today the very ideas that made America great imperil its future. Our plans go awry and our policies fail. History's grandest war against terrorism creates more terrorists. Global capitalism, intended to improve lives, increases the gap between rich and poor. Decisions made to stem a financial crisis guarantee its worsening. Joshua Cooper Ramo puts forth a revolutionary new model for understanding our dangerously unpredictable world. Drawing upon history, economics, complex theory, psychology, immunology, and the science of networks, he describes a new landscape of inherent unpredictability - and remarkable, wonderful possibility.

Joshua asked "what is happening that is leading to a global shift?" First, there are more actors; more people on the earth. Second, people are grouping into non-governmental organizations that almost outnumber governments. Terror cells are greater in number now than on September 11th. Third, Chinese towns in the last 20 years have grown from fishing town to cities with over 10 million people. There is a good analogy to think of Physics Revolution. What is happening in the last 100 years is that we have found things like radiation that change the thinking of Newtonian mechanics. Einstein changed thinking. When you have highly complex thinking, you need a different approach. Quantum Mechanics shocked the physics world.

Then there is the sand pile effect. You need an easy way to explain this complex world that we are living in. Take a plate and drop sand grain on the plate and over time the grains would organize this pile and would be an even sand pile. But as the pile gets higher, grains dropping would then fall in an avalanche but guessing when the avalanche occurs is not predictable. Right now you can't stop the transportation hubs but they carry risk. China and the U.S. going to war is slim because they are now partners. Sending computer virus and infection are not controllable as young 17 year olds in China are just sitting around trying to break into peoples' computers. There are no treaties on this and you carry these weapons on a thumb-drive.

What does it mean to be "modern"? Pre-modern times was to determine what you were to be in your life and that was determined by where you were born and who your parents were and you had no control on that issue. Back then, if your dad was a farmer, you were a farmer.

Then we had the industrial revolution and we had factory workers. You could decide which factory you worked and that was a little more flexible. Today, it's a post modern age. It's a process of reinvention, getting re-educated and it's a revolutionary moment. But decisions are very independent. You can't predict what people will want or decide. Some people in the Middle East love

Madonna's music but want to see the US get blown up. Great but then there is no more Madonna. It is flawed to think that the world wants to be like the US. With 3 billion more people adding to the world population is such an unknown in term of its impact and how it will affect us. But this chaos creates great opportunities and we are more networked. Networks are great for business but also transmit risk. The more efficient the network, the more dangerous the networks are if not managed. We are now in a race for disruption for bad and disruption for good. We want policies for disruption for good.

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