Over forty years ago, John F. Kennedy made the following observation:

Never before has man had such a capacity to control his own environment. We have the power to make this the best generation of mankind in the history of the world—or to make it the last.

Albert Sorel once stated that:

There is an eternal dispute between those who imagine the world to suit their policies, and those who correct their policies to suit the realities of the world.

And, in his classic treatise on *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu proclaimed that:

If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; if you know Heaven and know Earth, you may make your victory complete.

Given these wise observations, the following maxims also come to mind. The first was stated in reference to recently short-listed candidates for the “Australian-of-the-Year Award”—that they were “ordinary people doing extraordinary things!” Perhaps somewhat cynically, one could counter-pose that “sometimes, otherwise extraordinary people do rather ordinary things—or nothing at all!” This is an honest “challenge” to those with “too much ego! The second is D. Weinbaum’s adage that “if you cannot excel with talent, then triumph with effort!”

We believe that these observations have real resonance for persons—wherever they are and whatever they do. But, in today’s world, the “enemy” may not so much be about *who*, but about *what*. And, it well could be that we human beings are our own worst enemies! The rise to prominence of a range of sustainability and broadly defined security issues is intimately associated with contemporary accelerated globalisation (CAG) due to the strain that it places on the Earth’s carrying capacities, viable management processes, and attention to matters of concern about the human condition. Many of the current “non-traditional” threats faced by nation-states and humanity as a whole are now widely perceived to be at least the equal of any other more “traditional” worries. So, in an age marked by a range of “uncertainties”, it behooves us to consider these “issues” as they are of immense consequence to us, our children and our grandchildren!

Arguably, one of the most intriguing questions we might ask is whether we should now redefine the notion of “security” to encompass both traditional and non-traditional threats, including war/conflict, terrorism, environmental concerns (like climate change), global financial (in)stability, energy and resource needs and competition, population and migration phenomena, and law-and-order issues. As publics become more acutely aware of the full magnitude of these challenges, political discourse begins to “securitise” them, that is, to characterise them as “security problems”. Because governments usually prioritise security matters, people wishing to mobilise political attention (and relevant policies) and resources—despite any potentially painful societal adaptations—there nonetheless will be a need to “stretch” traditional notions of security and sustainability.

Finally, to provide “food for thought” in dealing with the highly significant issues to be treated in the 1st Dialogue Forum, it is worthwhile to quote, at some length, the recent considerations of Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler (2008) on the notion of “Uncertainty”:
This certainly does not mean in our view that states and military force are irrelevant: far from it. We would oppose any approach to security studies that eschews the military dimension of world politics, or the referent of sovereign states. However, we do believe that the traditional agenda should be approached through the perspective of what Robert Cox (1981) called ‘critical’ rather than ‘orthodox’ or ‘problem-solving’ theorising. This means shifting the weight of the agenda from focusing on the problems IN the status quo to the problems OF the status quo (Booth 2005). This suggests that insecurity should be understood, first, as a consequence of a wider range of threats (e.g., poverty, the environment, the global economy) rather than that of military violence. Second, it suggests contemplating a wider range of referents (e.g., individuals, regions, common humanity) than sovereign states.

If security studies for the era of globalisation is to produce its own golden age, then it is necessary to reorient its research into a deeper understanding of the role of ‘uncertainty’ in world politics, and its potentialities. The ‘security dilemma’ is fundamental to this, recognising the existential reality of uncertainty in human affairs, but at the same time looking towards a realisation that uncertainty is a house with many rooms.

We believe that by focusing research on ‘uncertainty’, and its acute manifestation in the ‘security dilemmas’ between political entities, there is an opportunity for issues to be addressed by a fruitful collaboration across a spectrum of theoretical [or ‘other’] perspectives—allowing each to bring its own special insights, as opposed to the ‘dialogues of the deaf’ that currently take place.

The theory and practice of trust building must be a priority on the future agenda of academics if we are finally to see the emergence in the twenty-first century of a true security studies, as opposed to the ‘insecurity studies’ that has dominated International Relations since the Second World war.

Thus, the 2009 Dialogue Forum, the first in a series of annual meetings to be alternatively held in the PRC and Australia, will see the presentation of leading-edge analytical research focused on securing sustainable “glocal” futures for humankind in an era increasingly affected by the observations outlined above. To paraphrase a thought expressed by Robert Gamer (2008), it is imperative that China, Australia and other states continue to work at home for solutions to these problems and with external and experts to help seek solutions to these pressing problems at international conferences—as they are unlikely to be solved without dialogue and cooperation at regional and world-wide levels. Thus, the “glocal” nature of these interconnected issues will be analysed and discussed with a view to informing academe, policy makers and relevant publics, as well as to determine key areas for further research and synergy. Hence, some of the most crucial questions that could, and should, be addressed in the Forum proceedings are: What are the most pressing issues? What can be done about them? Who will take real leadership in addressing them? How might such efforts be resourced? How might respective publics be made aware, properly informed, and convinced of the need for concerted actions? How might any such initiatives impact on various communities, and how can the views of differing states and cultures be taken into account? And, what remains to be innovatively investigated, and with what purpose?