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Parag Khanna Talks Asia at ICI's GMM

BY MIRIAM BRIDGES

How can powerful nations continue to thrive? By being more connected to Asia, said Parag Khanna, the founder and managing partner of the advisory firm FutureMap.

The noted global strategist and author shared this argument and more from his latest book, *The Future Is Asian*, with the guests at ICI's 61st General Membership Meeting in Washington, DC, highlighting that Asia is becoming an ever-more important destination for investment.



Asia Isn't Just China

"The biggest mistake in the view of Asia is that it's all about China," said Khanna. While the Chinese economy continues to decelerate, the Asia story is not over. Far greater than just China, Asia spans Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Russia, Khanna explained. "These are countries that in the previous generation have thought of themselves as leaning toward the West," but today, "you see those economies leaning toward the East."

In addition, Khanna emphasized, the "correct Asian story is Asian countries investing in other Asian countries." Wealthy, aging Asian countries are the leading investors across the region, seeking opportunities in poorer, younger Asian countries. "This is about mutually reinforcing overlapping waves of growth. The growth in Southeast Asia is being driven by the investments from—and trades with—Japan, the tiger economies, and China," observed Khanna.

Connectivity Is Destiny in the Asian Century

Turning to thoughts on how to take advantage of Asia's growing economies, Khanna advised that "Asians trade more with each other than with the rest of the world. So, if you want to sell into Asia and take advantage of that growth, you need to be connecting Asians with Asians." And as more Asian countries become digital societies, "they can become financial players as well," he said.

In the discussion that followed Khanna's presentation—led by Douglas Eu, CEO of Allianz Global Investors US Holdings LLC—Khanna noted that this part of the story of bringing more people into the industry is not only about "more of it happening, but also about how rapidly it's happening." This is in part because fintech innovators have done such a good job using universal mobile connectivity to build financial ecosystems, explained Khanna.

Khanna wrapped up his presentation by noting that it's important for Americans to see that the rise of Asia doesn't mean a decline of the West. "Power is not just how big you are. It's about how connected you are. We are going to continue to thrive if we get more connected to Asia."

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To learn about ICI's global policy priorities, visit www.iciglobal.org. Watch Parag Khanna's presentation at ICI's GMM video page. Find more meeting highlights at the [GMM highlights page](#).

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