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Global California: Rising to the Cosmopolitan Challenge By Abraham F. Lowenthal (Release Date: March, 2009)

“In today’s world, it is wrong for Californians to think that international issues are not our concern, or that we cannot or should not effectively promote and advance our global interests. When private actors have such large roles in production, finance, investment, communications, culture, and trade, it is misleading to think of “policy” on international questions as uniquely made by the federal government in Washington... Californians are often making international policy, though like M. Jourdain, the Molière character who did not realize that he was speaking prose, they may not always recognize that they are doing so.”

California is a megastate with the dimensions and power of a nation. It is more populous than Canada, Chile, Peru, or all of Scandinavia. Its economy is greater than that of all but six or eight nations, depending on the year and the exchange rate—larger, for example, than that of Canada, Mexico, India, Russia, Brazil or Korea. It is the biggest US producer of both agricultural and manufactured goods, and the nation’s principal exporter, importer, tourist attraction and locus of foreign investment.

The state remains at the cutting edge of the high tech economy. With its dominance of cinema, television, music and multimedia, California exerts global influence. In turn Silicon Valley and Hollywood depend on international markets, capital and talent. California’s economic dynamism rests on immigrants, both highly skilled and less skilled.

But despite the state’s size, strength, and international engagement, Abe Lowenthal argues that Californians still have a mindset that dates back from the mid-20th century when the state was turned inward. California today lacks ideas, policies, and institutions commensurate with its global stakes and clout.

In sharp contrast to those who propose that closing our borders is the best way to protect jobs and solve our current economic crisis, Lowenthal argues that meeting the challenge of international engagement will ultimately pay off in higher paying jobs, security, and innovation. The book examines such thorny issues as globalization, trade, infrastructure, immigration, energy and the environment, climate change, and California’s ties with neighboring Mexico and the dynamic Asian economies.

Global California shows how Californians can enhance their engagement with the rest of the world. The book highlights three important strategies:

First, mobilizing the state's potential influence on federal policy, especially through the state's powerful Congressional delegation, starting with a recommended initiative by the Governor and the Assembly Speaker to convene top state speakers to assess California's international aims and how to achieve them.

Second, taking full advantage of the scope allowed by the courts for state and local action on issues ranging from infrastructure to education, integrating immigrants to health care, from procurement and investment policies to border management.

Third, building the "cosmopolitan capacity" of ordinary citizens, firms, labor unions and other NGOs so they can pursue their own global interests. The state can empower its residents in practical ways through international education and exchange programs, public seminars, corporate briefings, and by strengthening the institutions and processes California needs to think its way into remaining competitive in a globalized world.

Too much is at stake for Californians to leave thinking and acting on international affairs to the federal government and to east coast think tanks. *Global California* shows how to succeed in an ever more interconnected world by turning "think global, act local" from a bumper sticker slogan to a quotidian strategy. It is a manifesto for Californians and offers lessons relevant for every state of the union.

About the author

Abraham F. Lowenthal, professor of international relations at the University of Southern California and president emeritus of the Pacific Council on International Policy, has combined two intersecting careers: as a scholar who has published a dozen well-regarded books on Latin America, inter-American affairs and US foreign policy, and as a founder of think tanks at the nexus between the worlds of ideas and action, including the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington and the Pacific Council, a west coast leadership forum. Lowenthal has published articles in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy* and *World Politics*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Miami Herald*, *Dallas Morning News*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Jose Mercury News*, and *San Diego Union Tribune*.

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