

Lingnan University

The Public Lecture of
Vincent Woo Distinguished Visiting Scholars Programme 2001

by

Professor Randall Collins

on

“Geopolitics in an Era of Internationalism”

Tuesday 20 November 2001

5:00 – 6:15 pm

at Lam Woo Lecture Theatre, Main Building
Lingnan University
(Presentation in English)

Abstract

Is the world entering a new epoch in international relations since the turn of the 1990s? With the decline of the big confrontational power blocs, it has been argued that the use of military force will now become limited to the action of international coalitions against 'international outlaws and terrorists' and in support of universal human rights. Nevertheless, geopolitical principles based on Weberian theory of the state suggests that social conditions determining the success or failure of military power will continue to be important, even when force is organized by international alliances, federations or even world government, and when their opponents are international networks and movements. Much of the struggle over 'terrorism' today involves conflict between more bureaucratic versus less bureaucratic parts of the world; and thus any new world order of human rights that will come about will be an extension of bureaucratic legal principles. Viewed in the long-term perspective of sociological theory, these aspects of future world relations are not entirely unpredictable.

Professor Randall Collins

Chair Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania
Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
Formerly, Pitt Professor of American History and Institutions
University of Cambridge

Professor Collins is a world-renowned social scientist who has written extensively on world history from a sociological perspective. The author of pioneering work on social conflict, intellectual networks, and geo-politics, Professor Collins is the foremost American sociological theorist of his generation. His famous paper on *The Future Decline of the Russian Empire*, delivered eleven years before the Soviet Union's Collapse was a remarkable prediction of how it would happen.