Contents

Preface: What to Expect vii	
1 How (Not) to Look Ahead 1	
2 Fatal Discontinuities 9 Natural Catastrophes 13 Encounters with Extraterrestrial Objects Volcanic Mega-eruptions and Collapses Influenza Pandemics 38 Violent Conflicts 49 Transformational Wars 50 Terrorist Attacks 58 Imaginable Surprises 66	
3 Unfolding Trends 71 Energy Transitions 75 Dominant Fuels, Enduring Prime Movers Solar (Nuclear?) Civilization 82 New World Order 91	: 77
Europe's Place 92 Japan's Decline 102 Islam's Choice 110 Russia's Way 120	
China's Rise 129 The United States' Retreat 141 Place on Top 153 Dominance and Decline 154 Globalization and Inequality 163	

4 Environmental Change 171 Global Warming and Its Consequences 172 Rising Temperatures 175 Ocean's Rise, Dynamics and Composition 181 Ecosystems and Economies 187 Other Global Changes 195 Changing Water and Nitrogen Cycles 196 Loss of Biodiversity and Invasive Species 203 Antibiotic Resistance 209 Biosphere's Integrity 212

5 Dealing with Risk and Uncertainty 219 Relative Fears 224 Quantifying the Odds 226 Rational Attitudes 231 Acting as Risk Minimizers 238 The Next 50 Years 243

Appendix A: Units and Abbreviations, Prefixes 255
Appendix B: Acronyms 257
References 259
Name Index 297
Subject Index 299