



4.18 View toward Puxi and the Bund, Shanghai.

too often political and jurisdictional fragmentation thwarts the development of good urban policy. In Bilbao, over a period of some fifteen years, the clarity of the vision and the commitment to its execution was unwavering. Despite political and administrative changes the progress of the revitalization plan was never impaired. The success of such commitment and cooperation is now evident.

Shanghai shares many of the same elements as Bilbao. The city is, of course, an international business, trade and finance center. Its role as gateway to China has secured it a competitive position within the hierarchy of cities in the Pacific Rim. Shanghai, however, recognized the need for a vast improvement in its urban infrastructure. This occurred at about the same time as in Bilbao and its development program is simply phenomenal. For those of us in the American context, the extent of infrastructure under construction in Shanghai is staggering. Likewise, the speed of this construction is hard to imagine. We are inclined, perhaps naturally, to view such construction with cynical eyes. Indeed, North American central cities have after all been in decline for some time now, even when our suburban sprawl is expanding at astonishing rates. The development of Shanghai is analogous to the tremendous expansions that occurred in North America over a hundred years ago. Indeed the dynamics of development are similar in terms of the desire to provide infrastructure to a large population in a very short amount of time.

As planners and architects, the thought of building a city suitable for the habitation of 14 million people is completely paralyzing; yet the city administration of Shanghai simply has no choice. Given the speed and size of the construction in Shanghai it is somewhat comforting to realize that issues of environmental regeneration and urban redevelopment are playing so heavily on the minds of decision-makers. There is a commitment to