

IAED Webinar Addresses East Asian Security and International Business

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United States -- Several hundred were in attendance for a webinar sponsored by the International Association for Peace and Economic Development (IAED) on the topic "East Asian Security and International Business" on March 2, 2021. The panelists were an array of experts in their fields in association with Asian nations. The moderator was Michael Jenkins, chairman of UPF-North America and president of The Washington Times Foundation

Col. Al Short (Managing Partner at Global Resources Network and Consortia for Educational Engagement International) addressed defense and security from a technical perspective, stating that there is potential for business by multinational entities and NGOs. North Korea and China's neighbors' partnerships are important. A cold war between the United States and China has already begun. China was "outed" according to the Trump administration, and the new U.S. administration will not try to "put the genie back in the bottle." There is a new paradigm called "China Plus One." Business with China will continue to develop with more interaction with other Asian nations like Korea (North and South). Northern Asian nations will prosper more than South Asian nations initially. There will be an evolutionary process; in 10+ years other nations will benefit besides China. He cautioned that no one should abandon Chinese markets. Using the example of World War II, he explained that the aftermath of COVID will affect capital investments, resources, and supply chains.

China will not support a conflict on the Korean Peninsula, but it also will not welcome the reunification of Korea. Currently both North and South Korea are business partners with China, and China is dependent on the relationships that have historical roots going back thousands of years. A united Korea could look problematic to China. Colonel Short was not optimistic that any change would come in North Korea as long as the Kim dynasty prevails.

Ralph Cossa (President Emeritus, Pacific Forum; member, ASEAN Forums and Council for Security Cooperation) has intimate experience with East Asia. He addressed if there was a cold war currently and will there be any kind of conflict on the Korean Peninsula. His opinion is YES and NO. Most of the world wants North Korea to just fade away naturally. China has been outed as having no balance of responsibility as a trade nation according to the Trump administration. The new Biden administration is not focused at all on Asia but has a "No War Policy" for now. Mr. Cossa said China is becoming difficult for businesses. Even Hong Kong is a bad example of how China has reneged on its world relationships. It has a rule by law status in its business environment while other Asian nations such as Vietnam have a business environment based on rule of law. His advice is to expand partnerships with other Asian nations while maintaining Chinese business relations by investing in partnerships in such nations as India, Taiwan, Indonesia, and Vietnam. He added to follow the Taiwanese money for the direction of future partnerships.

Mr. Cossa expressed that due to leadership changes in China the philosophy has altered dramatically. If its policies continue to make it difficult to work as a business partner, China will gradually lose partnerships with other nations, and these nations could move out of China entirely. Regarding North and South Korea; there have been relations for a very long time. North Korea in fact is a defense partner for China, and there is no urgency in China for the unification of Korea.

Gerard Willis (Vice President and General Counsel of Asia Pacific at Honeywell UOP) wrapped up the comments of panelists. His 30 years of living in and doing business in China gave a unique perspective. He believes government perspectives are quite different, and it is easy to do business in China. First, there must be an understanding about China and its culture. China is needed by other East Asian nations for success. Success with China must be a long-term strategy. In his 33 years of business, he has seen that often the end result exceeds expectations. China's culture and the environment is "thick." North Korea and China are like "teeth to gums." There is a long, complex history between Korea and China, and China does not want the United States to become a ruling power on the Korean Peninsula.