



SESSION SKETCHES

Asan Plenum 2013: “New World Disorder”
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Evolving New World Order in East Asia

Panel: Plenary Session II (Regency Room)

Date/Time: Tuesday, April 30, 2013 / 17:00-18:15

Speakers: Philip Stephens, The Financial Times
Choi Kang, Korea National Diplomatic Academy
Ed Feulner, The Heritage Foundation
Pan Zhenqiang, China Reform Forum
Evans Revere, Brookings Institution
Michael Schiffer, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Rapporteur: Moira Alice Kelley, Seoul National University

Philip Stephens moderated the “Evolving New World Order in East Asia” panel and began by noting parallels between the First World War and the current East Asian environment – territory disputes, unlikely alliances, and a region that is struggling to accommodate a rising power; then Germany, and now China. Stephens then opened the discussion to the first panelist, Choi Kang.

Kang noted the “Asian Paradox,” describing rising friction among great powers in the region and current evolution. Two changes in East Asia currently include, first, structural changes such as power transitions, economic recoveries, and the global transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world; second, contextual changes are occurring vis-à-vis as human rights, shifting regional architecture, and non-security issues. Kang’s key focus was the lack of strategic trust between nations and lack of common elements needed to foster this necessary trust. There needs to be a common understanding of history, a realization of management as opposed to forgiveness to establish strategic trust.

The next panelist, Ed Feulner, shifted gears and referenced the importance of the United States (US), “still the only superpower in the world,” bipartisan commitment to Asia. The US is a resident power in East Asia and will remain with support from Asia. The relationships that the US has in the region are based on continued support of a set of principles (i.e. free economy and democratic principles), whereas China has not established

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those same principles. In his concluding remarks, Feulner thanked Obama for the “Asian pivot” and called the US role in the region “steady, reliable, and strong.”

Next, Pan Zhenqiang outlined three types of major power interactions - equality, mutual respect and benefits, and cooperation. Zhenqiang was optimistic about East Asia saying that a foundation for a community exists, as seen in the dynamic economic development and emerging economies of the region, which can foster cooperation. Working together with China, a new vision for security and economy will generate an effective and conducive atmosphere in the region.

Evans Revere stayed on the topic of China and expressed it will not become the dominant regional power player in the sense some have outlined. Rather, the current democratic US alliance system will endure, as the post-World War II structure remains pertinent. Yet, territorial and historical disputes still dominate and are ongoing barriers. While the issue of a rising China and regional obstacles are present, the pillars that were established in the post-WWII system still have life in them and the framework has not lost its utility.

The final panelist, Michael Schiffer, continued on the same thread of bipartisan commitment brought up by Feulner by citing agreement across both US political parties on the importance of Asia. The success of these alliances boils down to a set of commitments to freedom of commerce and open access to sea, air, space, and cyberspace. The US commitment to the region is founded on these principles and the success of these relationships stems from the continuation of these principles.

The dynamic of East Asia is changing with the rise of China, emerging economies and a new outlook for cooperation. The East Asia panelists remained optimistic on the regional outlook in East Asia and the sustained US role.

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