

Foreign Policy Association
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American Foreign Policy in the 21st Century

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Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State William J. Burns appeared before the Foreign Policy Association of Harrisburg on November 23 and labeled America "the first among unequals in the world."

Military strength, abundant energy sources, and favorable geography have insulated the United States from challenges that other world powers have had to deal with, he said.

But today's international landscape is more crowded and more complicated than in the past, the one-time career diplomat told a special event dinner crowd of 200 at the West Shore Country Club in Camp Hill.

Ambassador Burns retired from the Department of State last year after 33 years in the foreign service, including ambassadorships to Jordan and Russia. He currently is president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

He said the U.S. must follow three main focus points to move forward in foreign policy: reinforce its domestic foundations; rebalance its investments across the regions of the world, especially the Asian-Pacific, and reshape its alliance relationships and international institutions.

It's hypocritical to try to mobilize coalitions overseas without tending to matters at home, he said. The U.S. must "lead by...example," controlling its economy, refining its energy policies, modernizing its education system and reforming its immigration policies.

He said China is key to rebalancing U.S. investments abroad. Strengthening our relationship with China is important because China is an industrial power house while the U.S. is mainly a service provider.

Ambassador Burns said America must reshape its alliance relationships and give more attention to the Southern Hemisphere, particularly Africa.

Finally, he noted that the implosion of Arab states has clouded the future of the Middle East, and he warned against dismissing Russia as a declining power, since it remains America's closest nuclear equal.

2015-2016 Program Topics / Schedule

December 10	Middle East History and Solutions
January 28	Europe's Perception of US Foreign Policy
February 18	DATE CHANGE - Turkey as a Pivotal State Between East and West
March 24	Latin America and Its Emergence on the World Stage
April 28	Africa and the World
May 19	Hot Topic Issue - to be determined
May 2016	Embassy Trip to Washington, DC Date and country to be determined

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