

China and the World

Scribed by Madison Foley

William P. Kiehl, president and CEO of PD Worldwide, consultants in international affairs, discussed U.S. perceptions and misperceptions of China at the May 28 meeting of the Foreign Policy Association of Harrisburg.

He said China currently is preoccupied by domestic governance rather than territorial ambitions. The Chinese believe they have regained their proper place in the world through their own efforts. They are ready to have a significant impact on East Asia and the world.

Some Americans believe that China eventually will stagnate economically or even implode because of internal contradictions. This is the so-called China collapse theory, which Kiehl called wishful thinking.

President Xi Jinping has guided China to becoming an important economic power. He is working hard to root out pervasive corruption. His goal is to make China "well-off" by 2021, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, and to make his country one of the world's richest by 2049.

Kiehl likened the U.S.-China relationship as managed rivalry, neither friend nor foe. With China's rise in economic power over the past 20 years, the relationship has changed dramatically. China has a more assertive foreign policy, testing the U.S. to find its limits. China has unsettled the U.S. and its Asian allies with its rapid military modernization and its cyber attacks. In China's view, America's pivot to Asia is seen as a thinly disguised attempt to contain the Chinese.

The U.S. and China have worked hard to overcome issues, but difficult issues remain, such as economic policies, climate change, human rights differences and Taiwan. The U.S. perceives China as seeking to push it out of Asia or at least to reduce its influence there.

Kiehl described Xi as more nationalistic, more activist and more assertive than previous Chinese leaders. Xi is more involved in foreign policy with the aim of extending China's economic reach without entering into conflict. As such, China is continually competing with the U.S. for political, diplomatic and security policy space in Asia.

The American perception that China is "on our heels" with its military modernization is a misperception. The U.S. has 10 to 12 times the number of military platforms for fighting around the world compared with other countries, including the Chinese.

2015-2016 Program Topics / Schedule

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| September 24 | Terrorism, the West and the ISIS Threat |
| October 22 | 40th Annual International Fellows Reception at the US Army War College |
| November 23 | US Foreign Policy in the 21st Century with former Deputy Secretary of State Ambassador William J. Burns SPECIAL EVENT - ADVANCED RESERVATIONS REQUIRED |
| December 10 | Middle East History and Solutions |
| January 28 | Europe's Perception of US Foreign Policy |
| February 25 | 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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