

DOMINIQUE MOÏSI

Conseiller spécial, Ifri

Thank you. I would like to thank all the speakers and we now have time to discuss what they have been saying. This is the first time that the WPC has been to Asia and that of course has physical consequences on the bodies of European travellers. However, what we have lost in sleep we have gained tremendously in optimism. We have arrived in a country that is booming with energy and has a guarded optimism in a continent that is carried by this sense of hope.

Of course, not everything is perfect. There is the rise of nationalism and our Japanese participant went very far in comparing the Chinese at sea with the Russians on the ground. I think that that was a very strong statement which will remain with us. At the same time, if we compare the debates that are taking place within ASEAN between the Koreans and the Chinese despite the past, there is a huge difference between the nature of the debate in Asia and the debate in the Middle East or, for that matter, in a less dramatic way, in Europe.

If there is a place that could come closer to global governance and the ideal which Jeffrey Frieden alluded to, it might be Asia. In some ways, I would make a daring comparison between Korea and Europe. Korea is caught between China on the one hand and, in some ways, Japan on the other. It has a long historical tradition and a long and legitimately proud civilisation, but it knows that around it are bigger actors. In some ways, Europe has to realise that it is now the inheritor of a great tradition but it is also caught between the traditional United States and the new China and it is also in a process of adjustment.

Mohamed told us quite correctly in his introduction that the world has changed dramatically and that we have to face up to the new realities of this coming world. However, we were told later that although the world had changed, everything had changed and nothing had changed, which is to say that the identity quest is even stronger today as a result of globalisation. This is what we have been discussing in Asia, the tension between the changes brought about by globalisation, but which are leading in terms of identity to fragmentation and identity quest.

How do we adjust to these contradictions? I think that this was what we, as Europeans, perceived by coming to Asia and I find that it is very symbolic that, apart from the moderator, who should say nothing and just give the floor to others, there was no European on the panel. In the last discussion with Robert Gates, the word 'Europe' never came up. There was no question on what he had been thinking and what he would think in the future about the European Union, as if it was something of the past and not something of the present or the future. I think that that is wrong, but this lesson of modesty is badly needed when we come to Asia.

I have spoken for much too long and this is now the time for me to give the floor to the audience.