



## QIAO YIDE

Vice Chairman and Secretary-General of Shanghai Development Research Foundation

**Steven ERLANGER**

We have with us Qiao Yide, who you heard earlier today is an excellent thinker from Shanghai. What worries China, Mr. Qiao?

**QIAO Yide**

Let me go back to the topic of the session, which is the new foreign policy trend in East Asia. I would like first to share some observations on the policy changes in this area. I guess the major change in US policy was the adoption of the America First policy two or three years ago, which more or less changed the political and diplomatic landscape of this region. First of all, the US defined China and Russia as strategic competitors or adversaries, initiated a trade war with China, which I do not want to go into details, had a wide impact on this region. Second, the US exited from the TPP immediately after Trump took office. Third, Trump tried to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue by establishing personal relations with Kim Jong-un, but so far has not been successful. Fourth, push Japan and South Korea in the economic arena, including raising the payment for US armies staying in these countries, while of course, the US still keeps the relationship with Japan and South Korea.

Having said that, I want to emphasize the major pattern in these regions is unchanged, which means the US still keeps the dominance in this region in terms of a number of alliances, in terms of military existence and building this community. From the Chinese perspective, of course the major focus in this area is how to deal with a persistent US challenge, as I said this morning. Interestingly and ironically you can find in the past two or three years China is now actually in a better position to have better relations with other countries, for example, the improved relations with Japan, with South Korea and even with North Korea. Of course, at the same time it has strengthened the relations with Russia. Part of the reason for that is due to pressure from the US, the US has pushed China and has also pushed other countries so obviously, as in the Chinese say, they have banded together warming-up to try to deal with further pressure from the US, from uncertainty from the US. Those are the sort of things that China is now facing. Also, I guess China also tries very hard, as Kevin described in his lunch speech yesterday, to keep good relations with neighboring countries.

Finally, I guess last year I met Martin Wolf in Indonesia and he chatted with me. He said he would give China three advice; first of all, play long; second, have good relations with neighboring countries; third, have good relations with Europe. It is more or less the direction that China is taking. I will stop here.

**Steven ERLANGER**

Thank you, Mr. Qiao. One thing, when we talk about new foreign policy trends, obviously one trend is Donald Trump and what he has done, another is the way his outreach to Kim Jong-un has changed the landscape. I wonder if I could ask you first, but perhaps others, has Trump's outreach to Mr. Kim, you said it is not successful, but has it helped in China's eyes or has it made things worse?

**QIAO Yide**

I guess it has maybe helped China to improve relations with North Korea.

**Steven ERLANGER**

That was not the idea.

**QIAO Yide**

You made the call. It is unusual since Kim Jong-un took over the office there have never been talks between the leaders of North Korea and China until maybe two years ago, until these kind of things happened between Kim Jong-un and President Trump. I guess from the perspective of North Korea Kim Jong-un is trying to improve relations with China as a leverage, a buffer to deal with the US. You can see in maybe one and a half years they have had maybe three or four meetings between Kim Jong-un and Xi Jinping, either in China or North Korea. Previously, three years ago relations were very cold between North Korea and China.

**Steven ERLANGER**

I will not focus on you all the time. Is it your view, obviously you are speaking for yourself, that Kim would ever give up nuclear weapons? After all, they are partly meant as a deterrent against Beijing as well, one presumes.

**QIAO Yide**

I do not think so. I guess North Korea would set very high conditions for them to give up. If the US met their requirements they might give up, but of course they would set very high conditions and the US would not necessarily accept that. They might even not necessarily ask for agreement between two governments, they want legislation passed by Congress. That might be something very hard for the US to do. That is a lesson they learned from other countries.