

JOHN ANDREWS

Author, journalist and contributing editor to *The Economist*

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Ladies and gentlemen, my name is John Andrews and it is my pleasure to welcome you to this session. I suppose it is quite a long way from the current obsessions of the news headlines because this is the Indo-Pacific region. We are going to pivot to the Indo-Pacific region, not quite in the way that Barack Obama may have imagined but clearly whatever the current crises are the medium and long-term questions geopolitically and economically will be in the Indo-Pacific region.

I have a wonderful panel here who I will introduce in just a second but let me just say a couple of words about this Indo-Pacific region and about the title of this session. This session is about security concerns and economic opportunities and there is a lot to be said about both. If you take the region, you could argue that it has far too many nuclear powers, you have got the US, Russia, China, and North Korea. You have some real flashpoints, obviously Taiwan, India-China — who may be members of the BRICS but, if not at daggers drawn, actually have a pretty hostile relationship —and plenty of territorial and maritime disputes that include almost everybody in the region.

If we just take security first of all, there are so many acronyms and initials we can festoon over this subject. We have AUKUS, Australia, the UK, and the US, and I am sorry for France which wanted to sell its submarines to Australia, which said no and it came to the Brits and America. You have US security treaties with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand and South Korea. Then there are non-treaty partnerships with the US with India, Indonesia and Vietnam. If you think of that as one particular bloc, then there is the anti-Western bloc, even though Zaki Laidi may not like the idea with China and North Korea, which I suppose is the only mutual aid, cooperation and friendship treaty that China has apart now from its 'no limits' strategic partnership with Putin and Russia. There are a lot of acronyms and initials for the economy with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which I think really came from Central Asia rather than the Indo-Pacific region itself, but now includes lots of players from that region. We have ASEAN, which expands with ASEAN+3. You have RCEP, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which is ASEAN plus China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. They can all see the economic potential of this region and therefore they see the virtue in collaborating and cooperating. Of course, you also have the CPTPP, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, with 11 members so far but not yet China. Rather unfortunately in my opinion, America decided not to go for the TPP way back in the days when Hillary Clinton was running against Donald Trump. Finally, you have got IPEF, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity. I know nothing about this, but perhaps someone else here does: it was launched by Joe Biden in Tokyo last year and I do not know if it will amount to anything.

We clearly have lots of security concerns and lots of economic opportunities and I am going to ask the panel to talk about that in an almost binary fashion. Let me introduce the speakers. We have Jean-Pierre Cabestan, who speaks much better English than most English people



despite being a proud Frenchman, and as he revealed in a question yesterday to the former Chief Executive of Hong Kong, is now a permanent resident in Hong Kong. I hope that this panel will not get you chucked out but you never know. Jean-Pierre Cabestan is a Professor Emeritus at the Hong Kong Baptist University and was a senior researcher with CNRS in France. Yuichi Hosoya is the Professor of International Politics at Keio University in Tokyo. Kim Change-beom from South Korea has a very distinguished career as a diplomat, not just as Ambassador to Indonesia but also to the European Union and is now representing the Korean Federation of Business, and I hope I got the title right. Hervé Mariton has a very distinguished career in French politics and he is also a very important man, Chairman of the Franco-British Council and my plea to him is to try to get back my rights as a European citizen. I do not know why you allowed Brexit to happen but that is my problem. MK Narayanan is former advisor to Manmohan Singh, a very successful and influential prime minister of India, with a long and distinguished career in Indian intelligence, as well as being the former Governor of West Bengal. Last but definitely not least on this panel, we have Douglas Paal who has been a very influential diplomat, a very influential academic and a rather successful businessman — so almost larger than life. However, I think in terms of this particular panel, one should actually point out that he was once the head of the American Institute in Taiwan, which means that in the real world you were the American Ambassador to Taiwan, so I will introduce you as that. That is your panel, I think you are all tremendous.