

Southeast Asia Observer Dick Pirozzolo, Covers New Book on Power in the South China Sea

Vietnam-US Relations are the key to power balance in Southeast Asia, observes Boston Global Forum member Dick Pirozzolo who recently covered a new book by Anders Corr, titled 'Great Powers Grand Strategies'

June 6, 2017 (FPRC) -- Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc's recent visit to the White House underscores the importance the United States-Vietnam relationship that has evolved positively over the past four decades.

Vietnam, a nation of 90 million people, is today not only a trading partner but a key ally in the projection of US diplomacy and Naval power in the South China Sea. This is a region where China's intrusion into shipping lanes, local fishing, and claims to other natural resources, as well as the building of a military runway on the Spratly Islands has created an ongoing threat to peace.

During the White House visit Phuc told President Donald Trump, the relationship has undergone significant upheavals in history, but that the two countries were now 'comprehensive partners.'

In the mid 90's the US granted Most Favored Nation to establish open and vigorous trade relationships with Vietnam, which was seen as a new frontier to sell US brands, get cheap labor and buy agricultural products.

Said Dick Pirozzolo, who is active in US-Vietnam affairs as part of his role with The Boston Global Forum think tank, 'Prime Minister Phuc is now shifting from low cost labor and rebranding Vietnam as the quality manufacturing nation. This makes a lot of sense, given his country's nearly universal literacy, education, entrepreneurship and eagerness to learn strategies needed to penetrate the US market. This was evident when I took part in a recent panel discussion for Ho Ch Minh City's top 100 CEOs.'

Pirozzolo who is managing director of Pirozzolo Company Public Relations in Boston, adds, 'Vietnam has also become a hip travel destination for the been-there-done-that crowd. Some 400,000 Americans and 100,000 Canadians expected to visit Vietnam this year according to Vietnamese government figures.'

Over the past two decades, The US-Vietnam relationship has become much more intertwined and multifaceted, according to Pirozzolo, 'Americans now buy more Vietnamese products including electronics, clothing, rice coffee and oil than they sell—\$30.6 billion, with US exports to Vietnam at \$6 billion. Cultural and academic ties are far more numerous and Vietnam has also become the key US ally in maintaining the balance of power in the Pacific.'

In this environment comes fresh insight by Anders Corr, PhD in his forthcoming book, *Great Powers, Grand Strategies: The New Game In The South China Sea*, 'This book is relevant to Vietnam, which is especially attentive to shifts in power between global powers in the South China Sea, including China, the U.S., Russia, the U.K., and France.'

The book, '*Great Powers, Grand Strategies* offers the analysis of a dozen experts on big picture

approaches to the South China Sea dispute, 'according to publisher U.S. Naval Institute Press, 'By exploring the international dimensions of this regional hotspot, coauthors Bill Hayton, Gordon Chang, Bernard Cole, James Fanell, and others examine how the military, diplomatic, and economic strategies of the major global actors have both contributed to solutions and exacerbated the potential for conflict.'

As editor of the volume, Dr. Corr juxtaposes the grand strategies of the great powers to determine the likely outcomes of the South China Sea dispute, as well as evaluate the ways to possibly defuse tensions in the region.

As part of his research Dr. Corr, who is also the publisher of The Journal of Political Risk visited all South China Sea claimant countries, undertaking field research in Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Brunei.

Dr. Corr has also conducted analysis for USPACOM, CENTCOM, and NATO, including work in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. Dr. Corr is also an active member of The Boston Global Forum, a think tank with ties to Harvard University Faculty, that focuses on peaceful solutions to global conflicts, including the current tensions that plague the South China Sea.

Boston Global Forum was founded by Tuan Nguyen, who is the UCLA Chair for UNESCO and brought a free and open internet to Vietnam, and former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis.

Great Powers, Grand Strategies by Anders Corr is available from the U.S. Naval Institute Press

Dick Pirozzolo is coauthor of Escape from Saigon with Michael Morris that focuses on the events of April 1-30, 1975, the last month of Vietnam War.

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