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Amb. Kishore Mahbubani on U.S.-China Relations

by Sarwar Kashmeri | on August 12th, 2016 | 1 Comment

PODCASTS



In this virtual roundtable of six podcasts hosted by Professor Sarwar Kashmeri, the Foreign Policy Association aims to shed some light and serve as a catalyst for developing awareness, understanding and informed opinions on the key issues that face American policymakers as they seek to peer over the horizon to manage the U.S.-China relations.

The rivalry between the United States and China is potentially the most important geopolitical issue facing American policymakers today. Over the past 500 years, 12 of 16 geopolitical confrontations between an existing power and its fast-growing rival have ended in war, including Germany and Britain who collided in WWI in spite of their large commercial relations.

When war was avoided, it required huge, painful adjustments in attitudes and actions from both the challenger and the challenged. Will the U.S. manage to accommodate a rising China as Beijing seeks to expand its influence in the Asia-Pacific region and in particular in the South China Sea?

In this first installment Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, gauges the 'temperature' of U.S.-China relations.

"There is a very high degree of wariness on both sides" noted Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani. "Fortunately, things are not as bad as they should be because when a new great power emerges, like China, and when it is on the verge of becoming the #1 power, there is usually rising levels of suspicion and tension between the two great powers. So what you are seeing now is something that is very abnormal."

Author

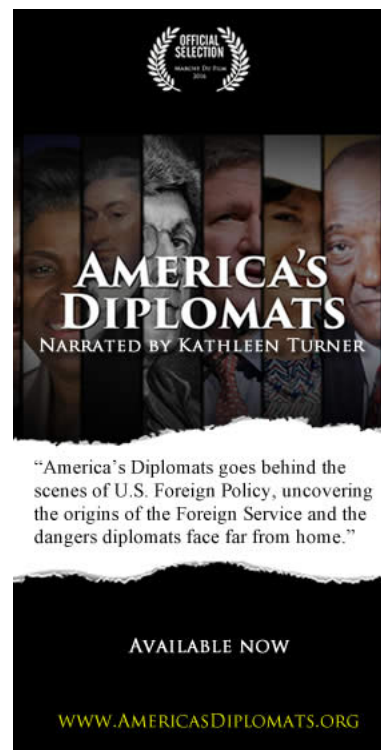
Sarwar Kashmeri

Sarwar Kashmeri is an adjunct professor of Political Science and Applied Research Fellow at the Center for Peace and War at Norwich University; and a Fellow of the Foreign Policy Association. He is recognized on both sides of the Atlantic as a specialist and commentator on U.S.-European relations. His latest book is "NATO 2.0: Reboot or Delete?" (www.2nato2.com)



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Harry Harding • 17 days ago

To say that the relationship "is not as bad as it should be" according to power transition theory is an interesting insight. But while the risk of outright war between the two countries is lower than that theory would predict, thanks in large part to nuclear deterrence and the two countries' economic interdependence, the rivalry that is emerging between China and the U.S. will still be costly, not only because of the military preparations and diplomatic competition it is already generating, but also because it may make it more difficult for them to cooperate in addressing major global and regional issues. War is not the only negative outcome of the Thucydides trap that should concern us. In that sense I am less optimistic about the U.S.-China relationship than is Dean Mahbubani.

Harry Harding
University of Virginia
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