

This opinion piece by PCI Korea Representative Sang-seok Lee appeared in the Korea Herald on May 26, 2015.



## Representation at the PCI dinner

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As the newly appointed Korea representative of the Pacific Century Institute, I read Chon Shi-yong's May 21 column, "Forgiving Donald Gregg" with great interest. Mr. Chon did a very good job of describing the PCI and the theme of its 25th anniversary dinner in Seoul — that our country's conservative and progressive political parties need to develop a bipartisan, fundamental policy for dealing with North Korea, much like West Germany did toward East Germany.

But I beg to disagree with Chon when he stated that the dinner's more than 300 guests looked like "a gathering of former lieutenants" of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun. The attendees were a broad cross-section of the Korean spectrum. Former foreign minister Gong Ro-myung was there, as were Kim Jin-hyun, Kim Tae-young, Kim Chong-hui, Lee Sang-hui and many more who would never like to be labeled as being aides to Kim or Roh.

Some 60 senior Korean journalists and foreign correspondents were there as was U.S. Ambassador to Korea Mark Lippert. Six high-ranking individuals who have held posts in the conservative administrations offered apologies to the dinner organizers for failing to show up at the last minute when a dinner for visiting U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was hastily organized for the same evening.

The message of the dinner's keynote speaker, former German defense minister Volker Ruehe, about the need for a bipartisan approach on inter-Korean and security issues was delivered to both sides of our political divide. Bipartisanship should not be considered a progressive idea. Such an idea would make Ruehe, a staunch member of Germany's conservative Christian Democratic Union, shudder.

I believe that the PCI dinner was quite a success, given the fact that it was the first such endeavor in recent memory to find a solution to what Lee In-ho, cohost of the dinner, termed in her welcoming remarks "a rift ... which threatens to become a deep chasm over which not even a bridge can be built."

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