

# Kaplan Opens IADC 50th Anniversary Meeting in Hong Kong

BY MARSHA COHEN

“Ninety Percent of world trade is done by sea,” declared Robert D. Kaplan, keynote speaker at International Association of Dredging Companies (IADC) Conference, “From Birth to Boom: Asian Maritime Megastructures,” held at the Island Shangri-La Hotel, Hong Kong on October 23, 2015.

Kaplan is the author of 15 books on foreign affairs, and has been named by *Foreign Policy* magazine as one of the world’s “Top 100 Global Thinkers.”

While geopolitically the world may sometimes seem unstable, Kaplan emphasized that “technology has made the world smaller... The increase in the number of ports has created an interconnected world... This is a great age in history to be a civil engineer.”

The event was one of several celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the IADC. Hong Kong was chosen as the location to commemorate the turning point of today’s dredging and maritime infrastructure sector, which is rooted in the city’s Airport Core Projects – especially the Chek Lap Kok land reclamation in the 1990s.

Other speakers on the program were Kevin Poole, acting executive director of Hong Kong’s Third Runway Airport Authority, Elvis Au Wai Kwong of the Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department, Tyrrell Duncan, technical advisor for transport at the Asian Development Bank, and Peter Scott Caldwell, a chartered arbitrator and director of Caldwell Limited, Hong Kong. Each shared insights from his own viewpoint as to the planning, environmental, financial and legal requirements, respectively, of working with maritime infrastructure



*Julius Sen of the London School of economics, at lectern, introduces keynote speaker Robert D. Kaplan (seated).*

development in Asia.

With more than 100 top-level executives and sponsors attending, the atmosphere at the pre-meeting networking event and during the conference was electric. Sponsors included ABB, ABN-AMRO Bank, Ben Line Agencies, CGNMB LLP, DAMEN, Royal IHC, ING Commercial Banking, Offshore Independents bv, and Royal HaskoningDHV.

After a lunch pause, the conference resumed with a panel comprising the speakers and Peter de Ridder, IADC’s president, and moderated by Julius Sen of the London School of Economics. The ensuing question-and-answer session was dynamic: Attendees seized the opportunity to probe more deeply into the proposals for the construction of the third runway at Hong Kong airport, as well as investment information on financing infrastructure for developing nations and the global need and search for energy, which continue to shape the policies of China and the Russian Far East. ↩



*Kaplan displayed this map showing the Indian Ocean the center of the geopolitical world. It illustrates the ratio of water to land, and the extent of the coastlines needing expanded maritime infrastructure.*