The Expert's Opinion

An speech by Jeffrey S. Arpan
University of South Carolina

Jeffrey S. Arpan is the James F. Kane Professor of International Business and Chairman of the University of South Carolina’s International Business Department. His Department has been ranked number one in the nation by U.S. News and World Report in March 1990 and April 1991. Following is the text of the keynote address that Arpan delivered at the 1992 Information Resources Management Association International Conference. The title of the speech was, “Economic Development and International Education: Link or Lose.”

It is really amazing when you think about it. How most of the world seems to think that the world has turned upside-down in the past several decades and there are a number of good examples of that.

Certainly, the once seemingly unassailable corporate America has been battered at home and abroad by foreign competition. The ominous evil empire of the Soviet Union is somewhat like a black hole; virtually overnight it collapses on itself and is now history. Democracies and market economies now exist in nations that haven’t seen them for decades and, in some cases, not at all. Several countries that were truly feudal societies less than half a century ago have now become world class competitors in specifics products. The “Made in Japan” which, certainly when I was growing-up, was the symbol of poor quality and shoddy workmanship has now clearly defined the world quality standard on a wide range of products. And the “poor tigers” of East Asia: Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea and Singapore are clearly nipping at Japan’s heels. And that part of the world is clearly leading the world in terms of economic growth. The whole economic integration of Western Europe is no longer just rhetoric but truly an unfolding reality. The economic integration of North America with the US, Canada and Mexico, also appears quite likely to become a reality by the end of this century.

But at the same time, the rich nations have gotten richer and the poor nations have, unfortunately, gotten poorer and more populous. The environment has become more hostile and the world resource depletion has increased. To get to this backdrop of truly momentous changes in the global political economy, all companies are having to redefine how they are going to face these new challenges, especially how to compete effectively in the global economy. Equally important, virtually all countries face the identical challenge of redefining their national interests and in many cases their regional interests and certainly their global interests.

International business is turning toward the business community simply because markets are standardizing worldwide and competition is increasing worldwide and many, if not most, markets are growing faster outside the United States. This would also apply to European companies. And virtually industries everywhere face significant foreign competition, even at home. In short, there are opportunities and threats out there; the challenge is to be suitably prepared.

Of course many people say, “That’s all interesting but it doesn’t affect me at all. And the answer to that is — wrong! It does affect everybody. International business is somewhat like a hurricane, you don’t have to go to it, it comes to you. All of us are affected by international business whether we think we are or not. In terms of consumers — the quantity, quality and price of all the goods and services that we consume is clearly impacted by international business. The interest rates and availability of funds that...
Related Content

An Extended Trust Building Model: Comparing Experiential and Non-Experiential Factors
www.igi-global.com/chapter/extended-trust-building-model/10099?camid=4v1a

An IT Project Management Framework for Assessing the Dynamism of Culture under Globalization: Evidence from Zimbabwe
Sam Takavarasha, Gilford Hapanyengwi, Donald Chimanikire and Gabriel Kabanda (2013). International Journal of Information Technology Project Management (pp. 66-81).
www.igi-global.com/article/an-it-project-management-framework-for-assessing-the-dynamism-of-culture-under-globalization/102481?camid=4v1a

IT Alignment: Stakeholder Dynamics Perspective
www.igi-global.com/chapter/it-alignment/137481?camid=4v1a

Comparative Study of the Usefulness of Online Technologies in a Global Virtual Business Project Team Environment
www.igi-global.com/chapter/comparative-study-usefulness-online-technologies/44608?camid=4v1a