

JAMBAR

Local Talk On North Korea Informs YSU

Tyler McVicker

October 31st, 2018

Doug Bandow, the CATO Institute's North Korea expert and former Special Assistant to Ronald Reagan during his second term, visited Youngstown State University on Oct. 19. The event was hosted by the John Quincy Adams Society.

"Since the John Quincy Adams Society is a strictly non-partisan organization, we like to bring in people from the political spectrum and pulling the little notes of wisdom, knowledge and experiences we can learn from both sides," Mara McCloud, a senior political science and history major and president of the group, said.

The lecture dealt with the United State's relationship with North Korea, along with North Korea's relationship with the rest of the world. Bandow has been to North Korea twice, once in the early '90s and again this last year.

He discusses his experiences in the country, and how much the social landscape appears to have changed over a 25-year gap.

"When I returned to the country 25 years later, the wealthy class of the country, at least the women, were wearing bright colors and seemed to hold a sense of individuality. This is something that would have never been seen 25 years prior, and it's mostly due to Ri Sol-ju, wife of Kim Jong Un," Bandow said.

Although turnout to the talk was low, what was discussed was detailed and informational, with many of the general preconceived notions surrounding North Korea being untrue or misinformed.

"What is interesting about Kim Jong Un is that he does seem different. That's not to say that he is a nice guy ... He does seem very concerned about economic development. He does seem interested in the international stage. Very different from his father and grandfather, not liberal, but very different than what came before," Bandow said.

That said, he made sure to stress that the government of North Korea was an evil regime, and during his time in North Korea, many strange things occurred.

“Trying to understand North Korea is not to justify them. It is not to give any sense of moral equivalence. This is a monstrous regime. If you had a contest on earth to pick to earth’s most evil regime, North Korea would win most years,” Bandow added.

“The national organization does an amazing job of setting up the chapters with speakers and making sure we get the best events possible,” David Hofsess, junior political science student and vice president of the JQAS, said about the JQAS managing to get such a high profile speaker.